

Day 288 - SUNDAY: November 19th

1 Samuel 23, Psalm 54 & 63

1 Samuel 23:1-29 NKJV

Then they told David, saying, "Look, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah, and they are robbing the threshing floors." 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." 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?" 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." 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. Now it happened, when Abiathar the son of Ahimelech fled to David at Keilah, that he went down with an ephod in his hand. 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." Then Saul called all the people together for war, to go down to Keilah to besiege David and his men. When David knew that Saul plotted evil against him, he said to Abiathar the priest, "Bring the ephod here." 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. 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." 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." 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. 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. So David saw that Saul had come out to seek his life. And David was in the Wilderness of Ziph in a forest. Then Jonathan, Saul's son, arose and went to David in the woods and strengthened his hand in God. 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." So the two of them made a covenant before the LORD. And David stayed in the woods, and Jonathan went to his own house. 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? 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." And Saul said, "Blessed are you of the LORD, for you have compassion on me. 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. 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." 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. 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. 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. But a messenger came to Saul, saying, "Hurry and come, for the Philistines have invaded the land!" Therefore Saul returned from pursuing David, and went against the Philistines; so they called that place the Rock of Escape. Then David went up from there and dwelt in strongholds at En Gedi.

Psalms 54:1-7 NKJV

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?" Save me, O God, by Your name, And vindicate me by Your strength. Hear my prayer, O God; Give ear to the words of my mouth. For strangers have risen up against me, And oppressors have sought after my life; They have not set God before them. Selah Behold, God is my helper; The Lord is with those who uphold my life. He will repay my enemies for their evil. Cut them off in Your truth. I will freely sacrifice to You; I will praise Your name, O LORD, for it is good. For He has delivered me out of all trouble; And my eye has seen its desire upon my enemies.

### Psalms 63:1-11 NKJV

A Psalm of David When He Was in the Wilderness of Judah. O God, You are my God; Early will I seek You; My soul thirsts for You; My flesh longs for You In a dry and thirsty land Where there is no water. So I have looked for You in the sanctuary, To see Your power and Your glory. Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, My lips shall praise You. Thus I will bless You while I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, And my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips. When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches. Because You have been my help, Therefore in the shadow of Your wings I will rejoice. My soul follows close behind You; Your right hand upholds me. But those who seek my life, to destroy it, Shall go into the lower parts of the earth. They shall fall by the sword; They shall be a portion for jackals. But the king shall rejoice in God; Everyone who swears by Him shall glory; But the mouth of those who speak lies shall be stopped.

### Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading program states: "As we study the life of David, we see some similarities between his life and the life of Jesus Christ. In chapter 23, we see David as "savior."

Furthermore, David does not act on his own initiative. Instead, he inquires of the Lord whether or not to fight the Philistines, who are assailing the city of Keilah, a city about 15 miles southwest of Jerusalem belonging to Judah (see Joshua 15:44) and just south of David's stronghold at the cave of Adullam. Likewise, all of Christ's saving work is subject to and in harmony with the will of God the Father. Moreover, David renews his inquiry as conditions warrant, the condition in this case being the fear David's men naturally have in facing such a formidable foe. Though not fearful himself, David is understanding of his men's fears and goes back to God for their reassurance. Jesus is the same way with us. He knows our frame (Psalm 103:8–14), sympathizes with our weaknesses (Hebrews 4:15) and intercedes for us with the Father. (The Father, of course, knows our frame too—yet He has appointed Christ, who has actually walked in our shoes, as intercessor.)

David then saves the inhabitants of Keilah (verse 5). But in doing so, he puts himself in jeopardy by giving away his position to Saul. In Christ's saving work, He divested himself of divine glory to die an ignominious death in human flesh (Philippians 2:5–8). Part of Christ's saving work, which we must all learn to emulate, was laying down

His life for others (compare John 15:13). While David did not literally die for others in this case, it is clear that he was willing to. He certainly endangered himself.

Saul, in 1 Samuel 23, makes a classic mistake in the way he deludes himself and takes God's name in vain—crediting God for his own evil plan seeming to work out (verse 7).

Sadly, people sometimes use God's name this way to lend credibility to their clearly *ungodly* wrong motivations or actions. In verses 6 and 9, we find out how David was able to inquire of the Lord—through the use of the ephod, to which was attached the Urim and Thummim. Abiathar had managed to take it when he escaped from the scene of Saul's massacre (22:20).

With the ephod, David learns very distressing news—the people of Keilah will betray him to Saul. In this world, loyalty is too often only one-sided. David has been loyal to the Keilahites, but they do not reciprocate. How often Jesus Christ has experienced this with mankind. He has laid down his life for us but even the whole professing Christian world, though considering Him Savior, betrays Him time and again through failing to always honor and obey Him. God saves David by revealing to him that the ungrateful Keilahites are about to betray his presence (verses 10–12).

God's plan is sure. Our prayers are always answered when they are in accordance with His will. David and his men depart to the Wilderness of Ziph (verses 13–14), "about four miles southeast of Hebron [in Judah]. This region had many ravines and caves in which David's men could hide" (*Nelson*, note on 23:13–14).

Psalm 63 is introduced as being written by David "when he was in the wilderness of Judah," so it was likely written around this time. Though still pursued by Saul, things are going somewhat better for David as God continues to give him victories. David remains humble and gives God all the credit. As we read this psalm, we sense that David is more secure, realizing that God is working out His plan. David, enjoying true fellowship with God, knows he has God's protection: "Because You have been my help, therefore in the shadow of Your wings I will rejoice" (verse 7).

When David mentions "the king" in verse 11, he is referring to himself. Despite present conditions, He knows that he is the rightful king—anointed of God by Samuel. And he knows that God will yet fulfill this purpose in him. As Christians, we too can be confident in God's promise to make us kings and priests in His coming Kingdom (see Revelation 1:6)." [END]

Verse 1 – Keilah was a city in the tribe of Judah (David’s tribe), which bordered the Philistines.

Verse 14 – What a wonderful reminder of God’s protection. This chapter clearly shows that when David was in danger and needed direction, he turned to God for guidance, direction and deliverance. Saul tried to find David every day, but God was watching over and protecting David. David’s life wasn’t easy during this time and would have been stressful, yet God was always right there with him.

Verse 16 – Jonathan was a “son of encouragement”. He knew his friend must have been struggling and he came alongside his friend and encouraged him (which is one way the KJV translates this Hebrew word translated here “strengthened” in other places in the OT.

PSALM 63 – The UCG reading plan states: “In its introductory note on Psalm 63, The Expositor's Bible Commentary says, "In spirit it is close to Psalm 42:1–2 [given the reference to thirsting for God and longing to be in His presence] and fits well with Psalms 61 and 62 as a collection of psalms bound by a common concern for closeness and fellowship with the Lord.”

According to its superscription, Psalm 63 was written when David "was in the wilderness of Judah"--and verse 6 tells us that people were then seeking to kill him. The setting is likely when he was living in the Judean wilderness while on the run from Saul, and we earlier read this psalm in that context (see the Beyond Today Bible Commentary on [1 Samuel 23:1-14; Psalm 63](#)). It is possible, however, that it was written much later, when David fled during Absalom's rebellion and stayed for a brief period in the wilderness (see 2 Samuel 25:23-28; 2 Samuel 16:2, 14; 2 Samuel 17:16, 29). Advocates of this view cite David's reference to himself in Psalm 63:11 as king. Yet, as was pointed out earlier in the Beyond Today Bible Commentary, even as Saul pursued him, David knew he was the rightful king, having already been anointed so by Samuel. Moreover, he was looking to the future in this verse.

At the opening of the song, David expresses his faith in God and how earnestly he desires to be in His presence. The NKJV translation of the second line of verse 1 reads, "Early will I seek You," while the NIV reads, "Earnestly I seek you" (as does Green's Literal Translation). The Jewish Tanakh just has "I search for you." Expositor's explains that the phrase "earnestly I seek" (NIV) is derived from a root



word related to the word for "dawn." This relatedness "gave rise to the tradition of treating Psalm 63 as a morning psalm with the translation 'early will I seek You' [but] The NIV correctly emphasizes the eagerness rather than the time of the 'seeking,' as the verb [elsewhere] denotes a diligent search for godly wisdom as most important to life (cf. Proverbs 2:1–4; Proverbs 8:17–21)" (footnote on Psalm 63:1, emphasis added).

It is also interesting in verse 1 to note the parallelism of "soul thirsts" and "flesh longs" or "body longs" (NIV). Expositor's states: "The longing for God consumes the whole being. The NIV rendering 'soul...body' reflects the M[asoretic] T[ext], but it should be remembered that the Hebrew for 'soul' (nepesh) signifies one's whole being, as does 'body' (lit[erally], 'flesh'; cf. 84:2)" (same footnote). Note that the word "soul" or nepesh here does not refer to some inner immortal spirit personage, as many today imagine, but the whole living being. While other verses do refer to a spiritual component within human beings--which together with the workings of the physical brain forms the human mind--that spirit is not conscious apart from the body. This is why a future resurrection is required for an awakening of consciousness.

David compares his longing to enter the sanctuary of God with his continuing thirst for water in the desert, again recalling Psalm 42. God's lovingkindness (hesed, also meaning loyal love, covenant faithfulness or mercy) is "better than life" (verse 3), so David finds great satisfaction in praising and blessing Him (verse 5).

David refers to his meditations during the "night watches." Among the ancient Israelites, the night was divided into three watches of four hours each, and at times David focused his thoughts on God to pass sleepless hours (verse 6). Because God had helped him in the past (verse 7), David trusts that he will continue to remain sheltered under God's wings (as in Psalm 61:4) and even rejoice there (Psalm 63:7). And he will go forward with God as a little child whose parent holds his hand while walking to keep him from falling (verse 8).

David declares that his enemies will not succeed in killing him because they will die instead (verses 9–10). Everyone who "swears by" God (verse 11)—in this broad context meaning that they live by promissory commitment to God and follow through (see Deuteronomy 6:13)—will receive honor. But those who live by deceit—including those who are hypocritical in their faith—will be silenced." [END]

PSALM 54 – The UCG reading plan states: “Psalm 54 is the third maskil of David out of four in a row. Neginoth in the superscription, which may be part of the postscript of Psalm 53, is probably correctly rendered in the NKJV as “stringed instruments” (and in the next superscription, which may be part of the postscript of this psalm).

Psalm 54 begins a cluster of seven prayers of David for help against enemies and betrayal at the center of Book II of the Psalter (Psalms 54–60). Note in going through these psalms that the main weapon of the enemy in most of them is the mouth. We earlier read Psalm 54 in conjunction with the account of the event mentioned in the superscription—when the people of Ziph informed Saul that David was hiding in that area (see the Beyond Today Bible Commentary on [1 Samuel 23:15–29; Psalm 54](#)).

These informants put David's life in danger, as Saul was out to kill him. So David prays for God to save him by His “name” (verse 1), meaning everything God's identity implies—*who He is and what He stands for*. He further asks God to vindicate him (same verse)—*the context here meaning either to prove David right for trusting God (by God coming through for him) or to prove David, though a*

fugitive, in the right (by saving him and judging his enemies).

The "strangers" who have risen against David (verse 3) apparently refers to the Ziphite informants. And the "oppressors" seeking his life (same verse) would seem to refer to Saul and his officers. None of these, David says, are following God.

In verses 4–5, David declares his confidence in God to help him and his supporters and to punish his enemies. He prays, "Cut them off in Your truth." The Expositor's Bible Commentary states: "The resolution of the prayer lies in the conviction that God is just. He will not permit his children to suffer without vindication. The imprecation [or curse] is not vindictive but expressive of trust in divine justice. Evil must be repaid. The people of God believed in the boomerang effect of sin: 'Let evil recoil [i.e., come back on those who perpetrate it]'" (note on verse 5).

Trusting in God's deliverance, David says he will "freely sacrifice" to God (verse 6)—or "sacrifice a freewill offering" (NIV). This refers to a peace offering (see Leviticus 7:11–18; Leviticus 22:18–30; Numbers 15:1–10), "given only when the worshipper wanted to say an extra-special thanks to God for his gracious, saving love" (George

Knight, Psalms, Daily Study Bible Series, comments on Psalm 54).

God's name, hearkening back to verse 1, is good—and worthy of praise (verse 6). Verse 7 may mean that deliverance has come in the midst of the song's composition, though it perhaps more likely means that David has foreseen it clearly. Rather than including the NKJV's interpolated words "its desire," a better sense might simply be "My eye has seen what will come upon my enemies." [END]