

Day 291 - WEDNESDAY: November 22nd

1 Samuel 26

1 Samuel 26:1–25 NKJV

Now the Ziphites came to Saul at Gibeah, saying, "Is David not hiding in the hill of Hachilah, opposite Jeshimon?" Then Saul arose and went down to the Wilderness of Ziph, having three thousand chosen men of Israel with him, to seek David in the Wilderness of Ziph. And Saul encamped in the hill of Hachilah, which is opposite Jeshimon, by the road. But David stayed in the wilderness, and he saw that Saul came after him into the wilderness. David therefore sent out spies, and understood that Saul had indeed come. So David arose and came to the place where Saul had encamped. And David saw the place where Saul lay, and Abner the son of Ner, the commander of his army. Now Saul lay within the camp, with the people encamped all around him. Then David answered, and said to Ahimelech the Hittite and to Abishai the son of Zeruah, brother of Joab, saying, "Who will go down with me to Saul in the camp?" And Abishai said, "I will go down with you." So David and Abishai came to the people by night; and there

Saul lay sleeping within the camp, with his spear stuck in the ground by his head. And Abner and the people lay all around him. Then Abishai said to David, "God has delivered your enemy into your hand this day. Now therefore, please, let me strike him at once with the spear, right to the earth; and I will not have to strike him a second time!" But David said to Abishai, "Do not destroy him; for who can stretch out his hand against the LORD's anointed, and be guiltless?" David said furthermore, "As the LORD lives, the LORD shall strike him, or his day shall come to die, or he shall go out to battle and perish. The LORD forbid that I should stretch out my hand against the LORD's anointed. But please, take now the spear and the jug of water that are by his head, and let us go." So David took the spear and the jug of water by Saul's head, and they got away; and no man saw or knew it or awoke. For they were all asleep, because a deep sleep from the LORD had fallen on them. Now David went over to the other side, and stood on the top of a hill afar off, a great distance being between them. And David called out to the people and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, "Do you not answer, Abner?" Then Abner answered and said, "Who are you, calling out to the king?" So David said to Abner, "Are you not a man? And who is like you in Israel? Why then have

you not guarded your lord the king? For one of the people came in to destroy your lord the king. This thing that you have done is not good. As the LORD lives, you deserve to die, because you have not guarded your master, the LORD's anointed. And now see where the king's spear is, and the jug of water that was by his head." Then Saul knew David's voice, and said, "Is that your voice, my son David?" David said, "It is my voice, my lord, O king." And he said, "Why does my lord thus pursue his servant? For what have I done, or what evil is in my hand? Now therefore, please, let my lord the king hear the words of his servant: If the LORD has stirred you up against me, let Him accept an offering. But if it is the children of men, may they be cursed before the LORD, for they have driven me out this day from sharing in the inheritance of the LORD, saying, 'Go, serve other gods.' So now, do not let my blood fall to the earth before the face of the LORD. For the king of Israel has come out to seek a flea, as when one hunts a partridge in the mountains." Then Saul said, "I have sinned. Return, my son David. For I will harm you no more, because my life was precious in your eyes this day. Indeed I have played the fool and erred exceedingly." And David answered and said, "Here is the king's spear. Let one of the young men come over and get

it. May the LORD repay every man for his righteousness and his faithfulness; for the LORD delivered you into my hand today, but I would not stretch out my hand against the LORD's anointed. And indeed, as your life was valued much this day in my eyes, so let my life be valued much in the eyes of the LORD, and let Him deliver me out of all tribulation." Then Saul said to David, "May you be blessed, my son David! You shall both do great things and also still prevail." So David went on his way, and Saul returned to his place.

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading program states: "This is the second time the Ziphites attempt to deliver David into the hands of Saul. Saul's respect for David's knowledge of battle is evident as he takes 3,000 soldiers with him in his pursuit of David and his 600 men. After a 25-mile march south, from Gibeah to the wilderness of Ziph, where David is hiding, Saul and his troops make camp. It is here that God directly intervenes for David. Abishai, David's nephew (1 Chronicles 2:16), volunteers for what seems an extremely dangerous plan. In any given troop deployment, there are always sentinels who stand watch over an encampment. From 1 Samuel 26:12,

we find that God causes a deep sleep to come on Saul and his troops, allowing David and Abishai unrestricted access to the campsite. As David has constantly been on the run from Saul, fearing for his life, this miracle no doubt greatly encourages David. But we should also observe that he resists the natural inclination to read it as license to take matters into his own hands.

As these scriptures are intended for examples (1 Corinthians 10:11), let's pause here for a *self*-evaluation of this incident. Would we have acted as *Abishai*, and assumed that the intent of God was to have Saul killed? Or would we have thought like *David*, a man who made many mistakes yet who is referred to as "a man after God's own heart"? It is important for us to ask the question in light of any given situation, What is God's will? David knows that Saul is king over Israel by God's direct decree, and he feels strongly that it will be God's hand that will remove him.

Indeed, Acts 13 says: "And afterward they asked for a king; so *GOD gave them Saul* the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. And when *HE had removed him*, *HE raised up for them David as king*, to whom also He gave testimony and said, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a

man after My own *heart*, who will do all My *will*"" (verses 21 – 22).

So David does not take Saul's life, but he does take his spear and his canteen—symbolic of Saul's strength and sustenance—as proof of his venture. After returning safely from the campsite, David chastises Abner (captain of the guard and the one ultimately responsible for Saul's safety). This embarrassment may be instrumental in Abner's temporary refusal to acknowledge David as king after Saul's death.

But David's humility ("...for the king of Israel has come out to seek a flea," 1 Samuel 26:20) causes Saul to acknowledge his foolishness, at least for the time being. David still keeps his distance as he knows that Saul has a habit of quickly changing his mind and attitude. Though not yet written, we find here, in principle, Christ's admonition of Matthew 10:16 in use: "Be wise as serpents and harmless as doves." After this incident, it appears that David and Saul never see each other again." [END]

Verse 6 – Abishai is a skilled warrior. In 2 Samuel 21:17 he slays the giant Ishbi-Benob and two chapters later in Samuel 23:18 we will see where he kills 300 men by himself.

Verse 8 – Sometimes we receive advice that we may want to hear, but here David being centered and grounded in God, doesn't listen to the advice and trusts God. What a tremendous example of faith and a tremendous example to all of us of the right way!

Verse 10 – David understands God doesn't need him to kill or remove Saul. God can do anything He wants.

Verse 19 – Adam Clarke's commentary states: "His being obliged to leave the tabernacle, and the place where the true worship of God was performed, and take refuge among idolaters, said in effect, Go, serve other gods."