

# 1 Samuel 24 Commentary

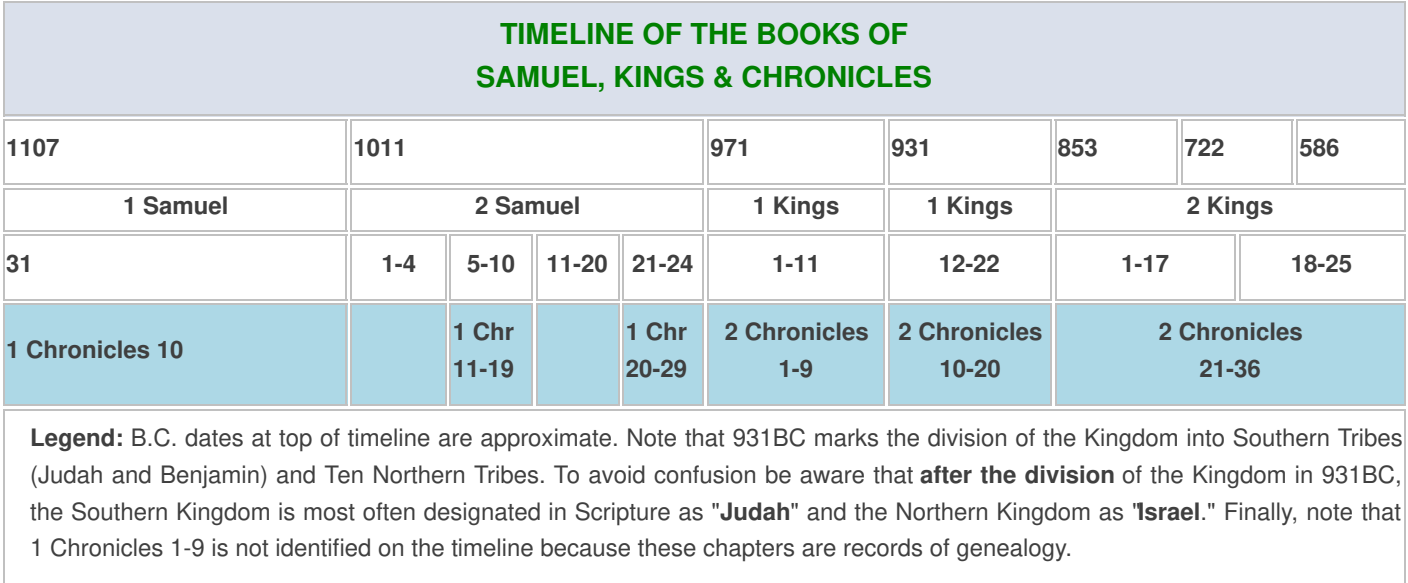
PREVIOUS

CLICK VERSE  
To go directly to that verse

NEXT

- [1 Samuel 24:1](#)
- [1 Samuel 24:2](#)
- [1 Samuel 24:3](#)
- [1 Samuel 24:4](#)
- [1 Samuel 24:5](#)
- [1 Samuel 24:6](#)
- [1 Samuel 24:7](#)
- [1 Samuel 24:8](#)
- [1 Samuel 24:9](#)
- [1 Samuel 24:10](#)
- [1 Samuel 24:11](#)
- [1 Samuel 24:12](#)
- [1 Samuel 24:13](#)
- [1 Samuel 24:14](#)
- [1 Samuel 24:15](#)
- [1 Samuel 24:16](#)
- [1 Samuel 24:17](#)
- [1 Samuel 24:18](#)
- [1 Samuel 24:19](#)
- [1 Samuel 24:20](#)
- [1 Samuel 24:21](#)
- [1 Samuel 24:22](#)

Chart from recommended resource [Jensen's Survey of the OT](#) - used by permission  
[1 Samuel Chart](#) from Charles Swindoll



## MAPS TRACING DAVID'S FLIGHT FROM SAUL 1 SAMUEL 19-24

[Click here for an excellent map with DAVID'S FLIGHT FROM SAUL with Numbered Movements of David](#) - Copyright Faithlife / Logos Bible Software (<https://www.logos.com>).

Below is a summary from the [ESV Global Study Bible](#) of 18 places David fled

[Click to Enlarge](#)

The following notes are modified from ESV notes to include the related Scriptures.

David's growing reputation fueled Saul's jealousy which soon flamed into a desire to murder David (1Sa 19:9-10).

- (1) David fled from Saul in Gibeah (1Sa 19:9-10) and then from his home (1Sa 19:11-17)
- (2) After Saul tried unsuccessfully to kill him in his home, he fled to Samuel at Naioth in Ramah (1Sa 19:18)
- (3), Saul sought David in Naioth of Ramah, but the Spirit saved him (1Sa 19:19-24), and he fled back to meet Jonathan in Gibeah where Jonathan sent an "arrow-gram" warning David of Saul's determination to kill him (1Sa 20:1-42)
- (4). David then fled to Ahimelech the priest at Nob where he collected food and Goliath's sword. (1Sa 21:1-9)
- (5), David briefly sought refuge in the Philistine city of Gath (1Sa 21:10-15)
- (6) David then escaped to set up headquarters at the cave of Adullam where his army swelled to 400 men. (1Sa 22:1-2)
- (7), In order to protect his parents from harm, David left them in the care of the king of Moab at Mizpah (1Sa 22:3-4)
- (8) and went to live in "the stronghold", the cave of Adullam (1Sa 22:1, 4)
- (9). Prophet Gad warns David and he went to the forest of Hereth (1Sa 22:5)
- (10) and then left to rescue nearby Keilah from some Philistine raiding parties. (1Sa 23:1-5)
- (11) When David heard that Saul was coming to Keilah, he and his 600 men fled Keilah. (1Sa 23:9-13) David relocated to the wilderness of Ziph (1Sa 23:14)
- (12) After the men of Ziph betrayed David to Saul (1Sa 23:19-20), David and his men went to live in the wilderness of Maon (1Sa 23:24-25) and narrowly escaped capture there by Saul (1Sa 23:26-28)
- (13) . Fleeing the strongholds of Engedi (1Sa 23:29) David again evaded capture by Saul and refused an opportunity to take Saul's life. (1Sa 24:1-22)
- (14) After Samuel's death (1Sa 25:1) David went to the wilderness of Paran (1Sa 25:1)
- (15). While he was there, David was again betrayed to Saul by the men of Ziph and refused another opportunity to take Saul's life. (1Sa 26:1-25)
- (16) Finally, David and his men sought refuge with Achish, the king of Gath (1Sa 27:1-12)

---

Below is another map from the Holman Bible Atlas ([digital book](#); [Hardcover](#))

1 Samuel 24:1 Now when Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, he was told, saying, '**Behold**, David is in the wilderness of Engedi.'

BGT 1 Samuel 24:2 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) καὶ γενθῆς ν στρεψεν Σαουλ π πισθεν τ ν λοφ λων κα πηγγ λη ατ λεγ ντων τι Δαυιδ ν τ ρ μ Εγγαδδι

LXE 1 Samuel 24:1 And it came to pass when Saul returned from pursuing after the Philistines, that it was reported to him, saying, David is in the wilderness of Engaddi.

KJV 1 Samuel 24:1 And it came to pass, when Saul was returned from following the Philistines, that it was told him, saying, Behold, David is in the wilderness of Engedi.

NET 1 Samuel 24:1 When Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, they told him, "Look, David is in the desert of En Gedi."

CSB 1 Samuel 24:1 When Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, he was told, "David is in the wilderness near En-gedi."

ESV 1 Samuel 24:1 When Saul returned from following the Philistines, he was told, "Behold, David is in the wilderness of Engedi."

NIV 1 Samuel 24:1 After Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, he was told, "David is in the Desert of En Gedi."

NLT 1 Samuel 24:1 After Saul returned from fighting the Philistines, he was told that David had gone into the wilderness of En-gedi.

NRS 1 Samuel 24:1 When Saul returned from following the Philistines, he was told, "David is in the wilderness of En-gedi."

NJB 1 Samuel 24:2 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) Once Saul was back from pursuing the Philistines, he was told, 'David is now in the desert of En-Gedi.'

NAB 1 Samuel 24:2 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) And when Saul returned from the pursuit of the Philistines, he was told that David was in the desert near Engedi.

YLT 1 Samuel 24:1 And it cometh to pass when Saul hath turned back from after the Philistines, that they declare to him, saying, 'Lo, David is in the wilderness of En-gedi.'

GWN 1 Samuel 24:1 When Saul came back from fighting the Philistines, he was told "Now David is in the desert near En Gedi."

- **when Saul:** 1Sa 23:28,29
- **was told:** 1Sa 23:19 Pr 25:5 29:12 Eze 22:9 Ho 7:3
- **the wilderness:** 1Sa 23:29
- 1 Samuel 24 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



David Falls at En-Gedi

## SAUL'S SPIES SPOT DAVID

Some writers have entitled this chapter "Self-Restraint" or "Love Your Enemy." This chapter is about opportunity. The saying is opportunity only knocks once. For David we see an opportunity, but we also see a temptation. The opportunity is to take out his pursuer Saul and take his place as king. Remember that David is in the classroom of adversity and God is honing his character to make him more and more a man of God after his own heart. This chapter is one of the biggest "pop tests" David has had up to this point in his life. This begs a question for all of us to ponder - do we sometimes confuse opportune circumstances with the Lord's providential leading?

**Robert Vannoy** has an excellent introduction to chapters 24-26 writing that in 1Sa 24:1-26:25 "each of the three episodes in these chapters, David is put to a severe test in the desert as the Lord's anointed (1Sa 16:1-13; cf. Dt 8:1-20, the testing of Israel in the desert; Mt 4:1-11, the testing of Jesus in the desert). In all three events, circumstances place **David in a position of power with opportunity to use that power for purely personal ends** (avenging wrongs done to him) rather than in the service of the Lord and Israel. **To have failed this test would have disqualified David—as it had disqualified Saul—from serving as the Lord's appointed king over Israel.** Within these three chapters the final two confrontations between Saul and David take place. In both, the tables are turned and Saul is at the mercy of David. These two episodes (chs. 24; 26) bracket another (ch. 25) in which David has dealings with Nabal, a wealthy Judahite whose flocks David and his men have protected—as they have protected Saul's "flock" from Philistine aggression. In this center episode, Nabal serves as a literary picture of Saul, who is thus exposed as a fool whom the Lord will soon strike down (see 1Sa 25:38; cf. 26:10; 28:19; 31:4). (Borrow [NIV Study Bible](#))

**Matthew Henry** - We have hitherto had Saul seeking an opportunity to destroy David, and, to his shame, he could never find it. In this chapter David had a fair opportunity to destroy Saul, and, to his honour, he did not make use of it; and his sparing Saul's life was as great an instance of God's grace in him as the preserving of his own life was of God's providence over him. I. How maliciously Saul sought David's life (1Sa 24:1, 2). II. How generously David saved Saul's life (when he had him at an advantage) and only cut off the skirt of his robe (1Sa 24:3-8).

**Now when Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines** - Recall that it was God's providential intervention (1Sa 23:27,28+) which forced King Saul to pursue the real enemy, the Philistines, thus enabling the "pseudo-enemy," David and his 600 men, to escape "Slippery Rock" and almost certain defeat by Saul's forces. Saul does not seem to get the message that God is sending -- He will protect David from Saul's sword - whether by sending the Philistines or by making Saul prophesy in 1Sa 19:18-23, 24+.

**He was told, saying, "Behold (hinneh; Lxx = idou) David is in the wilderness (midbār; Lxx - eremos) of Engedi."** - Were these spies or regular folks who sought to curry favor with the king (cf Ziphites in 1Sa 23:19+)? Either way, it is clear that [the beat goes on](#), the beat of hatred in Saul's dark heart against David.

**Guzik** - The **En Gedi** canyon runs westward from the Dead Sea. One can still see the good-sized creek flowing down the canyon, making **En Gedi**, with its waterfalls and vegetation seem more like a tropical paradise than the middle of the desert. One can also see the numerous *caves* dotting the hills. This was a great place for David and his men to hide out. In the middle of barren desert, scouts could easily detect approaching troops. There was plenty of water and wildlife and many caves and defensive positions.

[Anderson](#) notes that Engedi has "many caverns and caves, one being so large that it is reported that it once sheltered 30,000 people from a terrible storm. Scholars believe this was the cave David used as a hiding place from Saul.

---

**EN-GEDI - en'-ge-di, en-ge'-di ('en gedhi, "fountain of the kid")** Identical with the present Ain Jidi. According to 2 Ch 20:2 it is the same as Hazazon-tamar, mentioned in Gen 14:7 as occupied by the Amorites and as having been attacked by Chedorlaomer after leaving Kadesh and El Paran on his way to the Vale of Siddim. The place is situated upon the West shore of the Dead Sea about midway between the North and the South ends, and was included in the territory of Judah (Josh 15:62). The spot is rendered attractive by the verdure clothing it by reason of immense fountains of warm water, 80 degrees F., which pour out from beneath the limestone cliffs. In the time of Solomon (Song 1:14) palms and vines were cultivated here. Josephus also mentions its beautiful palm groves. In the time of Eusebius it was still a place of importance, but since the Middle Ages it has been almost deserted, being occupied now only by a few Arabs. The oasis occupies a small area a few hundred feet above the Dead Sea marked by the 650 ft. sedimentary terrace heretofore described (see [DEAD SEA](#)). The limestone borders rise so abruptly to a height of 2,000 ft. immediately on the West, that the place can be approached only by a rock-cut path. Two streams, Wady Sugeir and Wady el-Areyeh, descend on either side through precipitous rocky gorges from the uninhabitable wilderness separating it from Bethlehem and Hebron. It was in the caves opening out from the sides of these gorges that David took refuge from Saul (1 Sam 24:1). During the reign of Jehoshaphat (2 Ch 20:2), the children of Ammon, Moab and Mt. Seir attempted to invade Judah by way of En-gedi, but were easily defeated as they came up from the gorges to occupy the advantageous field of battle chosen by Jehoshaphat. -- George Frederick Wright

**Engedi** - 6v - Jos. 15:62; 1 Sam. 23:29; 1 Sam. 24:1; 2 Chr. 20:2; Cant. 1:14; Ezek. 47:10

---

#### **QUESTION - [What is the significance of En Gedi in the Bible?](#)**

**ANSWER** - En Gedi ("Spring of a Young Goat") was a town in the wilderness of Judah, on the west coast of the Dead Sea (Joshua 15:62). Today, En Gedi is a nature preserve known for its waterfalls and a botanical garden. This city in the desert was an oasis during biblical times and is still a destination for visitors to Israel.

Originally called Hazezon Tamar ("Division of the Palms") because of the surrounding palm trees (2 Chronicles 20:2), the area of En Gedi was once inhabited by the Amorites (Genesis 14:7). Once the Israelites entered the Promised Land under the leadership of [Joshua](#), En Gedi was allotted to the tribe of Judah (Joshua 15:1, 61–62).

When [David](#) fled from Saul, he hid in En Gedi among the rocks there (1 Samuel 23:29). The specific location where Saul searched for David was called "The Crag of the Wild Goats," because of the rocky terrain of En Gedi (1 Samuel 24:2). Saul followed David to En Gedi and, while in a cave, David had the opportunity to kill his pursuer (1 Samuel 24:2–4). Instead of killing Saul, he cut off a piece of Saul's robe, but even that act struck his conscience (1 Samuel 24:4–7). When David confronted Saul outside of the caves of En Gedi, he stated, "See, my father, look at this piece of your robe in my hand! I cut off the corner of your robe but did not kill you. See that there is nothing in my hand to indicate that I am guilty of wrongdoing or rebellion. I have not wronged you, but you are hunting me down to take my life" (1 Samuel 24:11).

Not only was En Gedi known for rocky terrain and waterfalls, but it was also renowned for its aromatic plants and vineyards. The Song of Solomon mentions vineyards and the henna plant in En Gedi: "My beloved is to me a cluster of henna blossoms in the vineyards of Engedi" (Song of Solomon 1:14, ESV). Although the exact identification of "henna blossoms" is unknown, they are probably part of an aromatic blooming plant used to make perfume and dye.

In the [millennial kingdom](#), En Gedi will be transformed into a place that will have access to fish—a big change, given the fact that the [Dead Sea](#) is currently devoid of fish. Ezekiel prophesied that the Dead Sea will become a freshwater body, teeming with life (Ezekiel 47:8–9). In fact, "fishermen will stand along the shores of the Dead Sea. All the way from En-gedi to En-eglaim, the shores will be covered with nets drying in the sun. Fish of every kind will fill the Dead Sea, just as they fill the Mediterranean" (verse 10, NLT). As part of Christ's reign on earth, the oasis of En Gedi will be expanded to the point of even turning the Dead Sea into living waters.

En Gedi was a place in the Bible known for beauty and refuge amid the surrounding wilderness. As an oasis in the land of Israel, En Gedi served to protect David as he fled from Saul and was referenced in a beautiful poem about love. In the future, En Gedi will witness the miracle of the renewal of the Dead Sea. God's provision is amply displayed in the beauty and natural resources of En Gedi. [GotQuestions.org](#)

---

#### **1 Samuel 24:1-15 Not My Hand**

There are times when it's best to wait for God to act instead of trying to make things happen ourselves. It's a lesson we see clearly

when David refused to take King Saul's life, even though the king was trying to kill him (1 Samuel 24). When Saul was alone and vulnerable in a cave, David's men told him this was a God-given opportunity to take the kingship that rightfully belonged to him (1 Samuel 24:4). But David refused, saying, "The Lord forbid that I should do this thing to my master, the Lord's anointed, to stretch out my hand against him" (1 Samuel 24:6).

After Saul left the cave, David called out to him, "Let the Lord judge between you and me, and let the Lord avenge me on you. But my hand shall not be against you" (1 Samuel 24:12). David knew that God had chosen him to become king. But he also knew that killing Saul was not the right way to make it happen. He would wait for God to remove Saul from the throne.

Is there an obstacle between you and something that is rightfully yours? You believe it's God's will, but the method of obtaining it and the timing don't seem right. Think long and pray hard before taking a bad path toward a good goal.

Waiting for God to act is the best opportunity for the right things to happen His way. —David C. McCasland [Our Daily Bread](#). Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

O God, make me one of those rarest of souls  
Who willingly wait for Thy time;  
My impatient will must be lost in Thine own,  
And Thy will forever be mine.  
—Bowser

**God's timing is always right—wait patiently for Him.**

---

### Is It a Sign?

I desire to do your will, my God; your law is within my heart. Psalm 40:8

Today's Scripture & Insight: 1 Samuel 24:1–7

The offer looked good, and was exactly what Peter needed. After being laid off, this sole breadwinner of a young family had prayed desperately for a job. "Surely this is God's answer to your prayers," his friends suggested.

Reading about the prospective employer, however, Peter felt uneasy. The company invested in suspicious businesses and had been flagged for corruption. In the end, Peter rejected the offer, though it was painful to do so. "I believe God wants me to do the right thing," he shared with me. "I just have to trust He will provide for me."

Peter was reminded of the account of David meeting Saul in a cave. It seemed like he was being given the perfect opportunity to kill the man hunting him down, but David resisted. "The Lord forbid that I should do such a thing . . . for he is the anointed of the Lord," he reasoned (1 Samuel 24:6). David was careful to distinguish between his own interpretation of events and God's command to obey His instruction and do the right thing.

Instead of always trying to look for "signs" in certain situations, let's look to God and His truth for wisdom and guidance to discern what lies before us. He will help us do what's right in His eyes. By: Leslie Koh

What could help you discern between a personal interpretation of events and what God would want you to do? Whom can you turn to for godly advice?

God, our Provider, grant me the wisdom to discern opportunities before me and the faith to follow Your way, that I might always do what pleases You.

For further study, read [Making Decisions God's Way](#).

---

### Wisdom From Above

The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable. — James 3:17

Today's Scripture: 1 Samuel 24:1-10

If Kiera Wilmot had performed her experiment during her high school science class, it might have earned her an A. But instead she was charged with causing an explosion. Although she had planned to have her teacher approve the experiment, her classmates persuaded her to perform it outside the classroom. When she mixed chemicals inside a plastic bottle, it exploded and she unintentionally unsettled some fellow students.

The Old Testament tells the story of another case of peer pressure. David and his men were hiding from Saul in a cave when Saul entered (1 Sam. 24). David's companions suggested that God had delivered Saul to them, and they urged David to kill him (vv.4,10). If David killed Saul, they thought they could stop hiding and David could become king. But David refused to harm Saul because he was "the Lord's anointed" (v.6).

People in our lives may sometimes suggest we do what seems most gratifying or practical in the moment. But there is a difference between worldly and spiritual wisdom (1 Cor. 2:6-7). Wisdom from above "is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy" (James 3:17). When others are urging us to take a certain course of action, we can invite God to influence our response.

By: Jennifer Benson Schuldt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way!  
Hold o'er my being absolute sway!  
Fill with Thy Spirit till all shall see  
Christ only, always, living in me.  
—Pollard

One is truly wise who gains his wisdom from above.

---

## Wisdom From Above

The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable. — James 3:17

Today's Scripture: 1 Samuel 24:1-10

If Kiera Wilmot had performed her experiment during her high school science class, it might have earned her an A. But instead she was charged with causing an explosion. Although she had planned to have her teacher approve the experiment, her classmates persuaded her to perform it outside the classroom. When she mixed chemicals inside a plastic bottle, it exploded and she unintentionally unsettled some fellow students.

The Old Testament tells the story of another case of peer pressure. David and his men were hiding from Saul in a cave when Saul entered (1 Sam. 24). David's companions suggested that God had delivered Saul to them, and they urged David to kill him (vv.4,10). If David killed Saul, they thought they could stop hiding and David could become king. But David refused to harm Saul because he was "the Lord's anointed" (v.6).

People in our lives may sometimes suggest we do what seems most gratifying or practical in the moment. But there is a difference between worldly and spiritual wisdom (1 Cor. 2:6-7). Wisdom from above "is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy" (James 3:17). When others are urging us to take a certain course of action, we can invite God to influence our response.

By: Jennifer Benson Schuldt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way!  
Hold o'er my being absolute sway!  
Fill with Thy Spirit till all shall see  
Christ only, always, living in me.  
—Pollard

One is truly wise who gains his wisdom from above.

---

## 1 Samuel 24:1-22 David's Restraint

The relationship between David and King Saul is one of the strangest and most volatile recorded in the Bible. David came to Saul's rescue on several occasions (as a harp player and as a warrior), he was best friends with the king's son, and he married the king's daughter. Now, don't you think such a person would be in pretty good standing with the monarch?

Not David. Saul was out to get the former shepherd boy. Twice Saul tried to spear David while he was playing the harp for him. And later, Saul sent his troops after the young man to try to kill him.

Yet look at what happened when the two finally crossed paths and David had the chance to kill Saul. Instead of attacking him, David sneaked up and cut off a piece of his robe. Afterward, he felt guilty even for doing that (1 Samuel 24:5). When they later met face to face, David told the king, "My hand shall not be against you" (1 Samuel 24:13). Saul saw that David had rewarded his evil with

good, and he wept (1 Samuel 24:16-17).

Sometimes we must deal with people who are eager to bring us down—or so we think; maybe an employer or a co-worker. Like David, let's do what God would have us do—use restraint, and keep on doing good. —Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

I want the love that always sweetly bears  
Whate'er my Father's hand may choose to send;  
I want the love that patiently endures  
The wrongs that come from enemy or friend.  
—Anon.

## 1 Samuel 24:2 Then Saul took three thousand chosen men from all Israel and went to seek David and his men in front of the Rocks of the Wild Goats.

BGT 1 Samuel 24:3 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) καὶ λαβὲν μεθ' αὐτοῦ τρεῖς χίλις ὄψων κλεκτοῦ καὶ πάντες Ἰσραὴλ καὶ πορεύθη ζητῆσαι τὸν Δαυὶδ καὶ τοὺς νῦν αὐτοῦ πρὸ σωπὸν Σαδδαίμ

LXE 1 Samuel 24:2 And he took with him three thousand men, chosen out of all Israel, and went to seek David and his men in front of Saddaeem.

KJV 1 Samuel 24:2 Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and went to seek David and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats.

NET 1 Samuel 24:2 So Saul took three thousand select men from all Israel and went to find David and his men in the region of the rocks of the mountain goats.

CSB 1 Samuel 24:2 So Saul took 3,000 of Israel's choice men and went to look for David and his men in front of the Rocks of the Wild Goats.

ESV 1 Samuel 24:2 Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel and went to seek David and his men in front of the Wildgoats' Rocks.

NIV 1 Samuel 24:2 So Saul took three thousand chosen men from all Israel and set out to look for David and his men near the Craggs of the Wild Goats.

NLT 1 Samuel 24:2 So Saul chose 3,000 elite troops from all Israel and went to search for David and his men near the rocks of the wild goats.

NRS 1 Samuel 24:2 Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and went to look for David and his men in the direction of the Rocks of the Wild Goats.

NJB 1 Samuel 24:3 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) Saul thereupon took three thousand men selected from all Israel and went in search of David and his men east of the Rocks of the Mountain Goats.

NAB 1 Samuel 24:3 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) So Saul took three thousand picked men from all Israel and went in search of David and his men in the direction of the wild goat crags.

YLT 1 Samuel 24:2 And Saul taketh three thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and goeth to seek David and his men, on the front of the rocks of the wild goats,

GWN 1 Samuel 24:2 Then Saul took 3,000 of the best-trained men from all Israel and went to search for David and his men on the Rocks of the Wild Goats.

- **Saul took:** 1Sa 13:2
- **and went:** Ps 37:32 38:12
- **the rocks:** Ps 104:18 141:6
- 1 Samuel 24 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## WICKED!

**Then Saul took three thousand chosen men from all Israel and went to seek David and his men in front of the Rocks of the Wild Goats** - The place was named Rocks of the Wild Goats because that's where the wild goats climbed in David's day and still climb even in our day ([video of wild goats in Israel](#)). The **3000** are select skilled soldiers which would give Saul a 5:1 advantage over David's 600! Of course Saul had forgotten David's words in 1Sa 17:45-47

"You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but **I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts**, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted. This day the LORD will deliver you up into my hands, and I will strike you down and remove your head from you. And I will give the dead bodies of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the sky and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that the LORD does not deliver by sword or by spear; for **the battle is the LORD'S and He will give you into our hands**"

Saul had forgotten that David plus one great God was a majority and so his 5:1 odds were meaningless!

One would have thought Saul, after presumably turning back the Philistine threat, would have [taken a breather](#), but so [intractably](#) fixated was his heart on seeking the death of David that he is off on the chase again!

**Matthew Henry** - By the frequent incursions of the Philistines, Saul might have seen how necessary it was to recall David from his banishment and restore him to his place in the army again; but so far is he from doing this that now more than ever he is exasperated against him,

**THOUGHT** - "Saul had been providentially blocked while pursuing David by the invading Philistines. But now, as soon as this hindrance was removed, he redoubled his evil efforts. O unsaved reader (**ED: I WOULD ADD EVEN "SAVED READER!"**), has it been thus with you? Your course of self-pleasing was suddenly checked by an illness? Your round of pleasure seeking was stopped by a sick bed? Opportunity was given you to consider the interest of your immortal soul, to humble yourself beneath the mighty hand of God. Perhaps you did so in a superficial way, but what has been the sequel? Health and strength have been mercifully restored by God, but are they being used for his glory, or are you now vainly pursuing the phantoms of this world harder than ever?"  
(A W Pink - [Life of David - chapter 14 Sparing Saul](#) )

**1 Samuel 24:3 He came to the sheepfolds on the way, where there was a cave; and Saul went in to relieve himself. Now David and his men were sitting in the inner recesses of the cave.**

BGT 1 Samuel 24:4 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) κα λθεν ες τς γλας τν ποιμνων τς π τς δο κα ν κε σπ λαιον κα Σαουλ ε σ λθεν παρασκευ σασθαι κα Δαυιδ κα ο νδρες α το σ τερον το σπηλαιου κ θηντο

LXE 1 Samuel 24:3 And he came to the flocks of sheep that were by the way, and there was a cave there; and Saul went in to make preparation, and David and his men were sitting in the inner part of the cave.

KJV 1 Samuel 24:3 And he came to the sheepcotes by the way, where was a cave; and Saul went in to cover his feet: and David and his men remained in the sides of the cave.

NET 1 Samuel 24:3 He came to the sheepfolds by the road, where there was a cave. Saul went into it to relieve himself. Now David and his men were sitting in the recesses of the cave.

CSB 1 Samuel 24:3 When Saul came to the sheep pens along the road, a cave was there, and he went in to relieve himself. David and his men were staying in the back of the cave,

ESV 1 Samuel 24:3 And he came to the sheepfolds by the way, where there was a cave, and Saul went in to relieve himself. Now David and his men were sitting in the innermost parts of the cave.

NIV 1 Samuel 24:3 He came to the sheep pens along the way; a cave was there, and Saul went in to relieve himself. David and his men were far back in the cave.

NLT 1 Samuel 24:3 At the place where the road passes some sheepfolds, Saul went into a cave to relieve himself. But as it happened, David and his men were hiding farther back in that very cave!

NRS 1 Samuel 24:3 He came to the sheepfolds beside the road, where there was a cave; and Saul went in to relieve himself. Now David and his men were sitting in the innermost parts of the cave.

NJB 1 Samuel 24:4 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) He came to the sheepfolds along the route, where there was a cave, and went in to cover his feet. Now David and his men were sitting in the recesses of the cave;

NAB 1 Samuel 24:4 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) When he came to the sheepfolds along the way, he found a cave, which he entered to ease nature. David and his men were occupying the inmost recesses of the cave.

YLT 1 Samuel 24:3 and he cometh in unto folds of the flock, on the way, and there is a cave, and Saul goeth in to cover his feet; and David and his men in the sides of the cave are abiding.

GWN 1 Samuel 24:3 He came to some sheep pens along the road where there was a cave. Saul went into it to relieve himself while David and his men were sitting further back in the cave.

- Saul: Ps 141:6
- to cover: Jdg 3:24
- David: Ps 57:1 142:1 \*titles
- 1 Samuel 24 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Judges 3:24 When he had gone out, his servants came and looked, and behold, the doors of the roof chamber were locked; and they said, "He is only **relieving himself** in the cool room."

### GOD GIVES DAVID CHANCE TO CARRY OUT A CAVE COUP

**He came to the sheepfolds on the way, where there was a cave; and Saul went in to relieve himself** KJV has to "cover his feet" a Hebrew idiomatic euphemism for relieving oneself (cf. NAB "to ease nature"). **There was a cave**, but not just ANY cave (of many caves in this area), but **THE** cave. What Saul did was a natural function, but the fact that Saul was led to **THE** cave David was hiding in is supernatural, i.e., clearly evidence of the providential hand of God. And since he was relieving himself, he was in the cave without his bodyguards, detail worked out by God to make it possible for David to approach Saul without being detected. God.

**Wiersbe** - David and his men were hiding in a large cave, of which there were many in that area, and Saul chose to use that very cave as a place where he could relieve himself. The Law of Moses was very strict when it came to matters of sanitation, especially in the army camp (Deut. 23:12–14). Each soldier was required to leave the camp to relieve himself, and he had to carry a small shovel or trowel among his weapons so he could dig a hole and cover his excrement. This meant that Saul was away from the camp and therefore quite vulnerable. He naturally wanted privacy and he felt that he was not in danger. The fact that he walked right into David's hiding place not only proved that his spies were incompetent but also that the Lord was still in control. (Borrow [Be Successful](#))

**MacArthur** on relieve - This is a euphemism for having a bowel movement, as the person would crouch with his inner garment dropped to his feet. (Borrow [The MacArthur Study Bible](#))

**Now David and his men were sitting in the inner recesses of the cave** - This seemed to be God presenting David's adversary Saul to him on a "[silver platter](#)."

---

**SHEEPFOLD (sheepcotes)** - shep'-kot, shep'-kot, shep'-fold (gedherah, mikhlah, mishpethayim, naweh; aule): Rough stone walls built at the entrances to the caves to protect the sheep from wild beasts and to serve for shelter in case of bad weather. Thomson says that there is scarcely a cave in the land but has such a cote in front of it. At night the sheep are driven into a sheepfold if they are in a district where there is danger from robbers or wild beasts. These folds are simple walled enclosures (Nu 32:16; Jdg 5:16; 2 Ch 32:28; Ps 78:70; Zeph 2:6; Jn 10:1). On the top of the wall is heaped thorny brushwood as a further safeguard. Sometimes there is a covered hut in the corner for the shepherd. Where there is no danger the sheep huddle together in the open until daylight, while the shepherd watches over them (Gen 31:39; Lk 2:8). In the winter time caves are sought after (1 Sam 24:3; Zeph 2:6). The antiquity of the use of some of the caves for this purpose is indicated by the thick deposit of potassium nitrate formed from the decomposition of the sheep dung. James A. Patch

---

**Relieve** ([05526](#)) (sakak) means to cover. **Gilbrant** - The verb sākhakh is a well-attested Semitic root, with cognates in Akkadian (sakaku) and Arabic (sakka), both conveying the idea of "choking" or "being choked/shut up." In the OT, the term denotes both a literal and a figurative sense of covering. Sometimes the covering is for a screen, in the sense of hiding or making inaccessible,

while other uses of *sākhakh* give the idea of protection or shelter. The literal sense of a covering for a screen appears in connection with the Ark of the Covenant in the Tabernacle: the wings of the cherubim "covered" the mercy seat where God symbolically manifested his presence (Exo. 25:20; 37:9; 1 Ki. 8:7; 1 Chr. 28:18). The king of Tyre is addressed as the "cherub who covers" (Ezek. 28:14, 16). Similarly, the veil or curtain screened the Ark from public access (Exo. 40:3, 21). Euphemistically, the word appears in the phrase "he covered his feet" to refer to the act of human excretion (Jdg. 3:24; 1 Sam. 24:3). *Sākhakh* also describes covering for protection or shelter. God covered the psalmist's head, shielding him in the day of battle (Ps. 140:7). Lotus plants shade Behemoth in the water, according to Job 40:22. Figurative senses also appear in the usage of *sākhakh*. God "covers" or "shields" himself so that at times his presence is not detected (Lam. 3:44). On other occasions, his presence is "wrapped" in the appearance of one of his characteristics, such as anger (Lam. 3:43). Those who trust the Lord find the covering He provides as a shelter (Pss. 5:11; 91:4). Job perceived, however, that God had "hedged" in his way, enclosing or restricting it so that he could not understand what was happening in his life. The sea is "enclosed," or restrained, with doors (Job 38:8). ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

**Sakak - 18v - cover(2), covered(4), covering(3), covers(1), incite(1), made a covering(1), relieve\*(1), relieving\*(1), screen(1), screened off(1), shelter(1), spurs(1).** Exod. 25:20; Exod. 37:9; Exod. 40:3; Exod. 40:21; Jdg. 3:24; 1 Sam. 24:3; 1 Ki. 8:7; 1 Chr. 28:18; Job 40:22; Ps. 5:11; Ps. 91:4; Ps. 140:7; Isa. 9:11; Isa. 19:2; Lam. 3:43; Lam. 3:44; Ezek. 28:14; Ezek. 28:16

**1 Samuel 24:4 The men of David said to him, "Behold, this is the day of which the LORD said to you, Behold; I am about to give your enemy into your hand, and you shall do to him as it seems good to you." Then David arose and cut off the edge of Saul's robe secretly.**

LXE 1 Samuel 24:4 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) And the men of David said to him, Behold, this is the day of which the Lord spoke to thee, that he would deliver thine enemy into thy hands; and thou shalt do to him as it is good in thy sight. So David arose and cut off the skirt of Saul's garment secretly.

KJV 1 Samuel 24:4 And the men of David said unto him, Behold the day of which the LORD said unto thee, Behold, I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand, that thou mayest do to him as it shall seem good unto thee. Then David arose, and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe privily.

NET 1 Samuel 24:4 David's men said to him, "This is the day about which the LORD said to you, 'I will give your enemy into your hand, and you can do to him whatever seems appropriate to you.'" So David got up and quietly cut off an edge of Saul's robe.

CSB 1 Samuel 24:4 so they said to him, "Look, this is the day the LORD told you about: 'I will hand your enemy over to you so you can do to him whatever you desire.'" Then David got up and secretly cut off the corner of Saul's robe.

ESV 1 Samuel 24:4 And the men of David said to him, "Here is the day of which the LORD said to you, 'Behold, I will give your enemy into your hand, and you shall do to him as it shall seem good to you.'" Then David arose and stealthily cut off a corner of Saul's robe.

NIV 1 Samuel 24:4 The men said, "This is the day the LORD spoke of when he said to you, 'I will give your enemy into your hands for you to deal with as you wish.' " Then David crept up unnoticed and cut off a corner of Saul's robe.

NLT 1 Samuel 24:4 "Now's your opportunity!" David's men whispered to him. "Today the LORD is telling you, 'I will certainly put your enemy into your power, to do with as you wish.' " So David crept forward and cut off a piece of the hem of Saul's robe.

NRS 1 Samuel 24:4 The men of David said to him, "Here is the day of which the LORD said to you, 'I will give your enemy into your hand, and you shall do to him as it seems good to you.'" Then David went and stealthily cut off a corner of Saul's cloak.

NJB 1 Samuel 24:5 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) David's men said to him, 'Today is the day of which Yahweh said to you, "I shall deliver your enemy into your power; do what you like with him." ' David got up and, unobserved, cut off the border of Saul's cloak.

NAB 1 Samuel 24:5 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) David's servants said to him, "This is the day of which the LORD said to you, 'I will deliver your enemy into your grasp; do with him as you see fit.'" So David moved up and stealthily cut off an end of Saul's mantle.

YLT 1 Samuel 24:4 And the men of David say unto him, 'Lo, the day of which Jehovah said unto thee, Lo, I am giving thine enemy into thy hand, and thou hast done to him as it is good in thine eyes;' and David riseth and cutteth off the skirt of the upper robe which is on Saul -- gently.

GWN 1 Samuel 24:4 David's men told him, "Today is the day the LORD referred to when he said, 'I'm going to hand your enemy over to you. You will do to him whatever you think is right.' " David quietly got up and cut off the border of Saul's robe.

- **the men:** 1Sa 26:8-11 2Sa 4:8 Job 31:31
- **I am about to give:** 1Sa 24:10,18 23:7 26:23
- 1 Samuel 24 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

1 Samuel 15:27 As Samuel turned to go, Saul seized the edge of his robe, and it tore.

David Cuts off Corner of Saul's Robe

### SEEING THINGS WORLD'S WAY OR GOD'S WAY

The men of David said to him, "**Behold** ([hinneh](#); Lxx = [idou](#)), this is the day of which the LORD said to you, **Behold**; I am about to give your enemy into your hand, and you shall do to him as it seems good to you - Common sense can sometimes be a poor counselor in spiritual matters! David's men used "[common sense](#)." These men voice the modern mantra "If it feels good do it!" There is no record of the LORD giving the prophecy they quote. They are reasoning like fallen men reason - why show mercy to one who heretofore has shown David anything but mercy? David's men quote what they thought God was saying for they saw this providential circumstance as from God. In a sense they were correct, for God was in control of this "chance in the cave" scenario. Notice they call Saul **your enemy**, a term David never used of Saul (possible exception 1Sa 25:22)! But they misinterpreted why the LORD had allowed this circumstance to take place. They failed to recognize it as a "pop test" from God for their leader David, a test calculated to further refine him and make him into a godly leader and a man after God's own heart.

**THOUGHT** - "Pop tests" come in all of lives almost every day, and yet it is so easy to forget that an Almighty, Omnipotent God has either allowed or sent the "pop tests" in order (1) to show us our hearts (cf Dt 8:2-3+) and (2) to refine us (1Pe 1:6-7+, 1Pe 4:12,13+, Jas 1:2-4+), gradually, progressively transforming us from glory to glory into the image of His Son, Jesus Christ, the greater David, the One Whose heart was in perfect synch with His Father's heart. Jesus never failed a "pop test," and one of the reasons He never failed is because He was continually filled! In other words, Jesus gave us the perfect example of the perfect Man Who was perfectly obedient, continually enabled to do so by the enabling power of God's Spirit (Lk 4:1, 14+, Acts 10:37,38+, 1Jn 2:6+, 1Co 11:1+, 1Pe 2:21+). Beloved, we possess that same Omnipotent Spirit, Who desires to enable us to pass every "pop test," that the continually grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2Pe 3:18+). Remember, that once the "pop test" comes, it's a bit late to check to see if you are filled with the Spirit! That's why the most effective way to pass God's "pop tests" is by obeying Paul's command to be continually filled with (controlled by) the Spirit (Eph 5:18+). For more on this critically important truth see [The Holy Spirit-Walking Like Jesus Walked!](#) and [Filled with His Spirit/Richly Indwelt with His Word](#).

**Robert Vannoy** on **this is the day of which the LORD said to you**- 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 (see 1Sa 16:13-14), or of assurances given to David that he would survive Saul's vendetta against him and ultimately become king (see 1Sa 20:14-15; 23:17). If the alternative given in the NIV text note is taken (TEXT NOTE = "*Today the Lord is saying*"), the reference would not be to a verbal communication from the Lord but to the providential nature of the incident itself, which David's men understood as a revelation from God that David should not ignore. (Borrow [NIV Study Bible](#))

**Matthew Henry** - See how apt we are to misunderstand both (1) **the promises of God**. God had assured David that he would deliver him from Saul, and his men interpret this as a warrant to destroy Saul. (2) And **the providences of God**. Because it was now in his power to kill him, they concluded he might lawfully do it.

**Wiersbe** quips that "Saul was sure that the Lord had delivered David into his hands (1Sa 23:7), and David's men were sure the Lord had delivered Saul into David's hands! It all depends on your point of view!" (Borrow [Be Successful](#))

**William Blaikie** makes an excellent point - Nothing is more critical than a sudden opportunity of indulging an ardent passion; with

scarcely a moment for deliberation, one is apt to be hurried blindly along, and at once to commit the deed." ([1 Samuel 24](#))

**Anderson** - Here David has a tremendous victory in SELF-CONTROL. The men are making wrong assumptions and giving wrong counsel. David had been learning that reason alone was not sufficient. He decided to wait on God. If David took matters into his own hands now, it would be at the expense of a thousand precious experiences of God's care, provision, guidance and tenderness. No, reasoned David, even a throne at that price is too dear. Faith will always wait upon God. He waited eight years under Saul before being crowned king of Judea, then he had to wait seven more years before he gained the allegiance of all the tribes of Israel.

#### **Faith will wait.**

We need to be exceedingly cautious  
how we interpret the events of providence....  
-- A W Pink

**Pink** - "O for grace to say at all times, it is the Lord. Let him do what seemeth him good. **What a critical moment it was in David's history.** Had he listened to the specious counselors who urged upon him to do what providence seemingly had put in his way, his life of faith would have come to an abrupt end (**ED: CERTAINLY IT WOULD HAVE BEEN LESS THAN IT COULD HAVE BEEN BECAUSE HE WOULD HAVE MISSED ALL THE TESTING TIMES THAT OCCURRED BECAUSE HE ALLOWED SAUL TO LIVE**). One stroke of his sword and he steps into a throne. Farewell poverty; farewell the life of a hunted goat. Reproaches, sneers, defeat would cease. Adulations, triumphs, riches would be his. But his at the sacrifice of faith, at the sacrifice of a humbled will, ever waiting on God's time; at the sacrifice of a thousand precious experiences to God's care, God's provision, God's guidance, God's tenderness. No, even a throne at that price is too dear. Faith will wait. We need to be exceedingly cautious how we interpret the events of providence and what conclusions we draw from them lest we mistake the opportunity of following our own inclinations, for God's approbation of our conduct." ([Life of David - chapter 14 Sparing Saul](#))

Abraham, that great father of faith, was strong in faith, giving glory to God, that what God had promised He was able also to perform. It took him 25 years but he held that little baby in his arms at a time when both he and Sarah were past the ability to bear.

**Then David arose and cut off the edge of Saul's robe secretly** - Why did David do this? One might posit that he wanted evidence to demonstrate to Saul that he could have killed him in the cave. Or perhaps he was listening to his men, but realized they were wrong. In any event, clearly David is demonstrated self-restraint, or what I prefer to call "Spirit enabled restraint." Remember that in 1Sa 16:13 "Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and **the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward.**" And as we saw in chapter 23 David was returning to his senses, inquiring on the LORD for direction. So it is reasonable to propose that here in the cave, David was controlled by the Spirit and withheld the urge to take revenge himself.

**THOUGHT** - Self-restraint (Spirit enabled restraint) is related to two important Christian truths - (1) Waiting on God (which includes ideas of prayer and supplication) and (2) waiting for God, for His will to be done, which calls for patience and a willingness to submit to His will, whatever (and whenever) it might prove to be. As David said in Ps 40:1 "I waited patiently for the LORD; and He inclined to me and heard my cry." This begs the question, do I exhibit this genre of restraint when a situation arise where I might humanly speaking be justified in saying something or taking some action, but doing so would not give a proper opinion of God, would not give glory to my God? Just asking myself (and you dear reader).

It is interesting that Saul did not see or hear David, but clearly David had to be in very close proximity. It is also notable that Saul did not sense a tug on his robe. So either David's knife was super sharp (which is surprising given the fact that there are in the wilderness) or it is possible God was in control of the details! Another consideration is that Saul took off his robe and laid it to the side, but David would still have had to approach it with great stealth!

**Robert Vannoy on cut off a corner of Saul's robe.** Perhaps David was symbolically depriving Saul of his royal authority and transferring it to himself (see 1Sa 24:11; cf. also 1Sa 15:27-28; 18:4 and note). (Borrow [NIV Study Bible](#))

**Wiersbe** - To David's men, it seemed providential that Saul was at their mercy (24:4; Ex. 21:13), and both David and Saul agreed with them (1 Sam. 24:10, 18). But that wasn't the issue. The major question was, "How does the Lord want us to use this occasion?" David's men saw it as an opportunity for revenge, while David saw it as an opportunity to show mercy and prove that his heart was right. God was giving him an opportunity to answer his own prayer for vindication (Ps. 54:1). (Borrow [Be Successful](#))

**Gordon:** "the tearing of a robe, and especially the hem of a robe, could be a highly symbolic act in the near east. We have already had an instance in 1Sa 15:27f., where the loss of a kingdom is portended (cf. 1 Ki 11:30f.). In certain circumstances the grasping or releasing of a hem could indicate submission or rebellion on the part of the person responsible." (Borrow [1 & 2 Samuel](#))

**V. H. Matthews:** "The rather elaborate hems with suspended tassels found on most garments in the ancient Near East symbolized

the ranks of kings and their advisers as well as the military” (Borrow [Manners and Customs in the Bible](#)).

Recall that in 1Sa 18:4+ "Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David" so that the robe was symbol of Saul's authority which is very likely why David soon had "[second thoughts](#)" about cutting a piece off.

[Guzik](#) - In all this, we see that David knew not only how to wait *on* the LORD, but he also knew how to wait *for* the LORD.

**F B Meyer** - We wait **on** the Lord by prayer and supplication, looking for the indication of his will. We wait**for** the Lord by patience and submission, looking for the interposition of his hand. It is very needful to learn this lesson of silence, patience, resignation. Surely it was out of such experiences as these that David wrote Ps 37. The exhortations of this exquisite psalm to trust in the Lord, to delight in the Lord, to roll the way of life on the Lord, to rest in the Lord and wait patiently for him, and especially the repeated injunction not to fret, are all bathed in new meaning when read in the light of these memorable incidents in David's life.

**Getz** points out, "There are two stories in the life of David that demonstrate dramatically his sensitivity toward both God and man. Both incidents involved encounters with Saul and both provided David with an unusual opportunity to take Saul's life. But in each instance David did what was right, even though he faced unusual temptation. With his actions he showed love to the man who hated him." (Borrow [David: God's man in faith and failure](#) This book corresponds for the most part to his book "Men of Character: David")

"Wait for the day is breaking,  
Though the dull night be long,  
Wait, God is not forsaking,  
Thy heart be strong, be strong.

Wait, 'tis the key to pleasure  
And to the place of God.  
O tarry thou his leisure  
Thy soul shall bear no load."

**1 Samuel 24:5 It came about afterward that David's conscience bothered him because he had cut off the edge of Saul's robe.**

BGT 1 Samuel 24:6 (Number in Hebrew Bible) καὶ γενέθη μετὰ ταῦτα καὶ πταξεν καρδία Δαυὶδ ὅτι  
φελέεν τὸ πτεργίον τὸ διπλοῦς αὐτοῦ

LXE 1 Samuel 24:5 And it came to pass after this that David's heart smote him, because he had cut off the skirt of his garment.

KJV 1 Samuel 24:5 And it came to pass afterward, that David's heart smote him, because he had cut off Saul's skirt.

NET 1 Samuel 24:5 Afterward David's conscience bothered him because he had cut off an edge of Saul's robe.

CSB 1 Samuel 24:5 Afterward, David's conscience bothered him because he had cut off the corner of Saul's robe.

ESV 1 Samuel 24:5 And afterward David's heart struck him, because he had cut off a corner of Saul's robe.

NIV 1 Samuel 24:5 Afterward, David was conscience-stricken for having cut off a corner of his robe.

NLT 1 Samuel 24:5 But then David's conscience began bothering him because he had cut Saul's robe.

NRS 1 Samuel 24:5 Afterward David was stricken to the heart because he had cut off a corner of Saul's cloak.

NJB 1 Samuel 24:6 (Number in Hebrew Bible) Afterwards David reproached himself for having cut off the border of Saul's cloak.

NAB 1 Samuel 24:6 (Number in Hebrew Bible) Afterward, however, David regretted that he had cut off an end of Saul's mantle.

YLT 1 Samuel 24:5 And it cometh to pass afterwards that the heart of David smiteth him, because that he hath cut off the skirt which is on Saul,

GWN 1 Samuel 24:5 But afterward, David's conscience bothered him because he had cut off the border of Saul's robe.

- **David's conscience:** 2Sa 12:9 24:10 2Ki 22:19 1Jn 3:20,21
- 1 Samuel 24 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## DAVID'S SENSITIVE CONSCIENCE IS SMITTEN

**It came about afterward that David's conscience** ([leb](#) literally = heart) **bothered him because he had cut off the edge of Saul's robe** - The Hebrew more literally reads "the heart of David struck him." **NIV** = "conscience-stricken" **ESV** = "heart struck." A man after God's own heart has a heart sensitive to even the possibility of sin! (O, to be such a man or woman!) While it was not a sin to cut Saul's robe, it would humiliate Saul. Think about using the restroom and someone cuts off a portion of your shirt or trousers! Also the last time Saul had dealt with a torn robe was when he tore Samuel's robe which was a picture of God tearing the kingdom from him. As we see it was not David's intention to give Saul that impression.

Revenge may be sweet, but it sours the soul.

-- [Chuck Swindoll](#)

**MacArthur** - David was able to cut off a piece of Saul's robe undetected. However, touching Saul's clothing was tantamount to touching his person, and David's conscience troubled him on this account. (Borrow [The MacArthur Study Bible](#))

**Apple** - A Sensitive Conscience Always Provides an Extra Dose of Restraint. The slippery path downward must be checked at the very beginning while you can still retrace your steps.

**J. Vernon McGee** quips "Right away David regretted his act because it would be a sort of embarrassment to Saul. Imagine what would happen when Saul awakened, stood up, and found out he was wearing a mini-skirt."

**Utley** on **conscience bothered** - This is literally "David's heart smote him". This same imagery is used of David again in 2 Sam. 24:10. David had a soft heart toward God.

**F B Meyer** - "It was a trifling matter, and yet it seemed dishonouring to God's anointed king; and as such it hurt David to have done it. We sometimes in conversation and criticism cut off a piece of a man's character, or influence for good, or standing in the esteem of others. Ought not our heart to smite us for such thoughtless conduct? Ought we not to make confession and reparation?"

**Brian Bell** - A sensitive conscience is a great treasure & a valuable guide. Don't lose it!

**John Davis** - "This act brought no great joy to David, for his heart 'smote him' in that he had mistreated God's anointed (cf. v. 5). David recognized that this deed was of his own bidding and not that which was commanded by God. In addition to that fact, David was very sensitive to the sanctity of the throne. As far as David was concerned, Saul was still God's anointed. Nowhere had the Lord indicated that it was his time to assume the throne. In the light of these facts, David considered his act most inappropriate." (Borrow [The Birth of a Kingdom : Studies in I-II Samuel and I Kings 1-11](#))

**Bergen** has an interesting explanation of David's smitten conscience - Furthermore, 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); thus, Saul's most obvious symbol of kingship was made unwearable. In essence, David had symbolically invalidated Saul's claim to kingship. David immediately recognized the powerful implications of his act and was conscience stricken (v. 5; Hb. v. 6). By voiding Saul's claim to kingship, he was at some level lifting his hand against "the anointed of the Lord" (v. 6; Hb. v. 7). This was more than an act against the king; it was 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). (Borrow [NAC - 1.2 Samuel](#))

**Matthew Henry** make a great point writing "David cut off the skirt of his robe, but soon repented that he had done this: His heart smote him for it (v. 5); though it did Saul no real hurt, and served David for a proof that it was in his power to have killed him (v. 11), yet, because it was an affront to Saul's royal dignity, he wished he had not done it. Note, **It is a good thing to have a heart within us smiting us for sins that seem little**; it is a sign that conscience is awake and tender, and will be the means of preventing greater sins.

**THOUGHT** - Are you quickly convicted by "little sins," remembering that for a holy God, no sin is "little" (eating a bite of apple was such a "little" sin but led to Ro 5:12+, cf James 2:10+)? Practically speaking, "little sins" are just as effective as "big sins" in short circuiting the flow of supernatural power of the Holy Spirit! (Eph 4:30+,

1Th 5:19+). We all sin, so it behooves us to imitate David and seek to maintain a sensitive conscience which quickly convicts us so that we can quickly confess and restore the flow of power from the Spirit (1Jn 1:9+, Pr 28:13+). How quick are you to confess sin, especially if it is a "little sin?" A good "preventative prayer" to pray is Ps 139:23,24.

When God wants to drill a man,  
And thrill a man,  
And skill a man;  
When God wants to mold a man  
To play the noblest part,  
When he yearns with all his heart  
To create so great and bold a man  
That all the world shall be amazed,  
Watch his methods, watch his ways --  
How he ruthlessly perfects  
Whom he royally elects.  
How he hammers him and hurts him,  
And with mighty blows, converts him  
Into trial shapes of clay  
Which only God understands,  
While his tortured heart is crying,  
And he lifts beseeching hands.  
How he bends but never breaks  
When his good he undertakes.  
How he uses Whom he chooses,  
And with every purpose, fuses him,  
By every act, induces him  
To try his splendor out.  
God knows what he's about.  
-- Anonymous

---

#### **F B Meyer - 1 Samuel 24:5 And David's heart smote him.**

It is well to have a tender conscience, and to obey its least monitions, even when men and things militate against it. Here was an opportunity for David and his band to end their wanderings and hardships by one thrust of the spear but though it was a very small thing that he had done, David was struck with remorse for having taken advantage of Saul's retirement in the precincts of the cave, where his men and he were hiding, and cut off a piece of his robe.

It was a trifling matter, and yet it seemed dishonoring to God's anointed king; and as such it hurt David to have done it. We sometimes in conversation and criticism cut off a piece of a man's character, or influence for good, or standing in the esteem of others. Ought not our heart to smite us for such thoughtless conduct? Ought we not to make confession or reparation?

Circumstances seemed to favor it.— Of all the scores of caves in the neighborhood, the king had happened to choose the very one, in the dark recesses of which David and his men were sheltering. What more natural than to obtain some token to convince the king how absolutely he had been in his young rival's power? But favoring circumstances do not justify an act which is not perfectly healthy and right. Opportunity does not make a wrong thing right.

His men unanimously approved the act, nay, they wanted him to go further. Their standard was a very low one, not only in this case, but in others. How wonderful that David kept such a high ideal amid such comrades! We shall not be judged hereafter by the standard which obtained among our comrades.

**1 Samuel 24:6 So he said to his men, "Far be it from me because of the LORD that I should do this thing to my lord, the LORD'S anointed, to stretch out my hand against him, since he is the LORD'S anointed."**

BGT 1 Samuel 24:7 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) κα ε πεν Δαυιδ πρ ς το ς νδρας α το μηδαμ ς μοι παρ κυρ ου ε ποι σω τ μα το το τ κυρ μου τ χριστ κυρ ου πεν γκαι χερ μου π α τ ν τι χριστ ς κυρ ου σ τ ν ο το ς

LXE 1 Samuel 24:6 And David said to his men, The Lord forbid it me, that I should do this thing to my lord the anointed of the Lord, to lift my hand against him; for he is the anointed of the Lord.

KJV 1 Samuel 24:6 And he said unto his men, The LORD forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the LORD'S anointed, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the LORD.

NET 1 Samuel 24:6 He said to his men, "May the LORD keep me far away from doing such a thing to my lord, who is the LORD's chosen one, by extending my hand against him. After all, he is the LORD's chosen one."

CSB 1 Samuel 24:6 He said to his men, "I swear before the LORD: I would never do such a thing to my lord, the LORD's anointed. I will never lift my hand against him, since he is the LORD's anointed."

ESV 1 Samuel 24:6 He said to his men, "The LORD forbid that I should do this thing to my lord, the LORD's anointed, to put out my hand against him, seeing he is the LORD's anointed."

NIV 1 Samuel 24:6 He said to his men, "The LORD forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, the LORD's anointed, or lift my hand against him; for he is the anointed of the LORD."

NLT 1 Samuel 24:6 "The LORD knows I shouldn't have done that to my lord the king," he said to his men. "The LORD forbid that I should do this to my lord the king and attack the LORD's anointed one, for the LORD himself has chosen him."

NRS 1 Samuel 24:6 He said to his men, "The LORD forbid that I should do this thing to my lord, the LORD's anointed, to raise my hand against him; for he is the LORD's anointed."

NJB 1 Samuel 24:7 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) He said to his men, 'Yahweh preserve me from doing such a thing to my lord as to raise my hand against him, since he is Yahweh's anointed.'

NAB 1 Samuel 24:7 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) He said to his men, "The LORD forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, the LORD'S anointed, as to lay a hand on him, for he is the Lord's anointed."

YLT 1 Samuel 24:6 and he saith to his men, 'Far be it from me, by Jehovah; I do not do this thing to my lord -- to the anointed of Jehovah -- to put forth my hand against him, for the anointed of Jehovah he is.'

GWN 1 Samuel 24:6 He said to his men, "It would be unthinkable for me to raise my hand against His Majesty, the LORD's anointed king, since he is the LORD's anointed."

- **Far be it from me:** 1Sa 26:9-11 2Sa 1:14 1Ki 21:3 Job 31:29,30 Mt 5:44 Ro 12:14-21 Ro 13:1,2 1Th 5:15
- 1 Samuel 24 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

1 Samuel 26:9-11 But David said to Abishai, "Do not destroy him, for who can stretch out his hand against the LORD'S anointed and be without guilt?" 10 David also said, "As the LORD lives, surely the LORD will strike him, or his day will come that he dies, or he will go down into battle and perish. 11 **"The LORD forbid that I should stretch out my hand against the LORD'S anointed;** but now please take the spear that is at his head and the jug of water, and let us go."

### DAVID'S RATIONALE FOR RESTRAINT

**So** - Means for this reason which begs the question "What reason?" Clearly the reason is his smitten conscience.

**he said to his men** - Remember David is their leader and their teacher and the best leader teaches by his own example. David is training his motley crew (1Sa 22:2+), molding them into mighty men of God.

[Don Anderson](#) - I think there is a greater miracle than the fact that David did not kill Saul when he had a chance and that is the fact that he restrained 600 men that were ready and smelling blood. That is a tremendous demonstration of leadership. Those guys respected his authority.

**"Far be it from me because of the LORD that I should do this thing to my lord('adon; Lxx = kurios), the LORD'S anointed (mashiach ;Lxx = Christos), to stretch out my hand against him, since he is the LORD'S anointed(mashiach ;Lxx = Christos)** - Notice that David calls Saul his lord, showing his respect for the king even though the king was seeking to kill him! He continues to show this submissive attitude toward Saul calling him the Lord's anointed (1Sa 24:6,10); my lord two more times (1Sa 24:8,10); the

king (1Sa 24:8,14) and my father (1Sa 24:14). Since the LORD is the one Who anointed and placed Saul in this position, David would wait on the LORD to remove him from the throne. David's patience, trust and willingness to wait on the LORD is another characteristic indicating why David was called a man after God's own heart.

**THOUGHT** - Are you willing to wait on the LORD? This requires patience and trust in the LORD's perfect will and timing. But it is another aspect of the life long process of becoming a man or woman after God's own heart. It is part of God's progressive sanctification.

**Warren Wiersbe** - David was too wise in the truth of God's word to interpret this event as a signal for him to kill Saul, for the law says, "You shall not murder" (Ex. 20:13NIV). Slaying an enemy on the battlefield or an attacker in self-defense was one thing, but to assassinate an unsuspecting king was quite something else. David reminded his men that Saul was the anointed of the Lord, and that no Jew had the right to attack him. The Jews were not even to curse their rulers, let alone kill them, for cursing a ruler was in the same category as blaspheming the name of the Lord (1Sa 22:28). However, David's conscience bothered him because he had cut off the corner of Saul's robe. His action sent out three messages. First, it was an insolent act of disrespect that humiliated Saul, but it was also a symbolic gesture not unlike what Saul did to Samuel's robe after the Amalekite fiasco (1 Sam. 15:27-28). By cutting off a part of the royal robe, David was declaring that the kingdom had been transferred to him. Finally, the piece of cloth was proof that David did not intend to kill the king and that the flatterers in the court were all liars. David's men would have killed Saul in a moment, but their wise captain restrained them. Leaders must know how to interpret events and respond in the right way. (Borrow [Be Successful](#))

**Matthew Henry** - Sin is a thing which we should startled at, and resist the temptations, not only with resolution, but with a holy indignation (ED: AND THE ENABLING POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT GIVING US THE DESIRE AND THE POWER TO RESIST! see Php 2:13NLT+). David considered Saul **not as his enemy**, and the only person that stood in the way of his preferment (for then he would be induced to hearken to the temptation), but as God's anointed (that is, the person whom God had appointed to reign as long as he lived, and who, as such, was under the particular protection of the divine law), and as his master, to whom he was obliged to be faithful. Let servants and subjects learn hence to be dutiful and loyal, whatever hardships are put upon them (cf 1 Pt. 2:18+).

**Robert Vannoy on for he is the anointed of the LORD** See 1Sa 24:10; 26:9, 11, 16, 23; 2Sa 1:14, 16. Because Saul's royal office carried divine sanction by virtue of his anointing (see note on 1Sa 9:16), David is determined not to wrest the kingship from Saul but to leave its disposition to the Lord who gave it (vv. 12, 15; 26:10). (Borrow [NIV Study Bible](#)) (**Note** - Priests were also anointed (Ex 29:7; 40:12-15; Lev 4:3; 8:12), but from this point in the OT it is usually the king who is referred to as "the LORD's anointed" (see note on 1Sa 2:10; see also 1Sa 24:6; 26:9, 11, 16; 2 Sa 1:14, 16; 19:21; cf. Ps 2:2; but see also Zec 4:14). Anointing signifies being set apart to the Lord for a particular task and divine equipping for the task (1Sa 10:1, 6; 16:13; Isa 61:1).)

**ESV Study Bible** - The anointed of the Lord should not be killed or even cursed (cf. 26:9; Ex. 22:28; 2 Sam. 1:14; 19:21). (Borrow [ESV Study Bible](#))

**Guzik** draws an interesting application from not touching the **LORD'S anointed** - The phrase *touch not the Lord's anointed* is in vogue among some Christians and among many leaders. Often to them it means: "You should never speak against a pastor or a leader. He is above your criticism or rebuke, so just keep quiet." Sometimes it is used even to prevent a Biblical evaluation of teaching. But when David recognized that Saul was **the LORD's anointed** and refused to harm him, what David would not do is *kill* Saul. He did humbly confront Saul with his sin, hoping Saul would change his heart. But it is entirely wrong for people to use the idea of *touch not the Lord's anointed* to insulate a leader from all evaluation or accountability.

**Apple** - The Sanctity of the Lord's Anointed Must Take Precedence Over Personal Ambition and Even Common Sense.

---

**Anointed** (04899) [mashiach/masiyah](#) from **mashach** = to smear, anoint) is Hebrew word that in almost all OT uses is found in a compound phrase. It is a masculine noun which can function as an adjective (as in Lev 4:3,5, 16) which means "anointed." This Hebrew word is used several times to prophetically picture the Messiah, the Christ (1Sa 2:10, 35, Da 9:25-26). In the OT, priests, prophets and kings were anointed and all these offices were fulfilled in "the Mashiach," the Messiah.

**Swanson** - anointed one, i.e., a person having sacred oil poured ceremonially on one's head, and so become a person with special authority and function, with the implication of one having the choice and approval of God.

**Lxx** translates **mashiach** in this verse (and most of the 38 uses in the OT) with the adjective **Christos** which describes one who has been anointed, symbolizing appointment to a task; as a title for Jesus, designating him as the Messiah sent from God (Jn 1:41, Jn 4:25 [Greek = [messias](#)], Ro 6:4). **BDAG** - **Christos** = "fulfiller of Israelite expectation of a deliverer, the Anointed One, the Messiah, the Christ."

**Lord** (0113) **'adon** is a masculine noun meaning lord or master. he basic meaning of 'ādôn is "lord," "king," "master," "superintendent" or "owner." Examples of 'ādôn in reference to men are Gen. 45:8, 9; Ps. 105:21 ("head" of, or "superintendent" of,

a household); 1 Ki. 16:24; Gen. 40:7; Exo. 21:4, 6, 8, 32 ("proprietor," "master"); Neh. 3:5 ("governor"); Gen. 42:10, 30, 33 ("prince"); 1 Ki. 1:27 ("king"). The most frequent usage is of a human **lord**, but it is also used of divinity. **Generally, it carries the nuances of authority rather than ownership.** When used of humans, it refers to authority over slaves (Ge. 24:9; Jdg. 19:11); people (1 Ki. 22:17); a wife (Gen. 18:12; Amos 4:1); or a household (Gen. 45:8; Ps. 105:21). When used of divinity, it frequently occurs with yehōwāh, signifying His sovereignty (Ex. 34:23; Josh. 3:13; Isa. 1:24).

**Adon in First Samuel** - 1 Sam. 1:15; 1 Sam. 1:26; 1 Sam. 16:16; 1 Sam. 20:38; 1 Sam. 22:12; 1 Sam. 24:6; 1 Sam. 24:8; 1 Sam. 24:10; 1 Sam. 25:10; 1 Sam. 25:14; 1 Sam. 25:17; 1 Sam. 25:24; 1 Sam. 25:25; 1 Sam. 25:26; 1 Sam. 25:27; 1 Sam. 25:28; 1 Sam. 25:29; 1 Sam. 25:31; 1 Sam. 25:41; 1 Sam. 26:15; 1 Sam. 26:16; 1 Sam. 26:17; 1 Sam. 26:18; 1 Sam. 26:19; 1 Sam. 29:4; 1 Sam. 29:8; 1 Sam. 29:10; 1 Sam. 30:13; 1 Sam. 30:15;

---

**The Lord's Anointed - 1 Samuel 24:6-7** Many motorists have had at least one encounter with the people whom truckers call "smokies." Their official name is the highway patrol. And when the red and blue lights on top of their car begin to flash, you know you had better pull over. Whether you have any personal affection for the person behind the badge or not, you still have to respect his position. He has been given the authority to enforce the rules of the road, and your feelings have nothing to say about it.

David had the same attitude toward Saul. It must have been difficult to muster any feeling of devotion for a man who was trying to kill him. Furthermore, the king's motives and actions were often irrational. Still, Saul had not been removed from his position as the king of Israel. As a result, David had to treat Saul with honor as God's anointed leader even though he could not approve of his actions. The position deserved respect whether or not the man did.

As we interact with pastors and other Christian leaders, there will be some with whom we might disagree theologically. Others may have methods that we think are inappropriate. Yet because they are individuals called to serve the Lord in a special way, we must respect their position even when we disagree with them personally.

If you are struggling to respect your pastor or another Christian leader, remember their position. You don't have to agree with them, but you do have to treat them with the consideration due their calling. ([Back to the Bible](#))

If you can't respect the person, respect the position.

**1 Samuel 24:7 David persuaded his men with these words and did not allow them to rise up against Saul. And Saul arose, left the cave, and went on his way.**

BGT 1 Samuel 24:8 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) κα πεισεν Δαυιδ το ς νδρας α το ν λ γοις κα ο κ  
δωκεν α το ς ναστ ντας θανατσαι τ ν Σαουλ κα ν στη Σαουλ κα κατ βη ε ς τ ν δ ν

LXE 1 Samuel 24:7 So David persuaded his men by his words, and did not suffer them to arise and slay Saul:  
and Saul arose and went his way.

KJV 1 Samuel 24:7 So David stayed his servants with these words, and suffered them not to rise against  
Saul. But Saul rose up out of the cave, and went on his way.

NET 1 Samuel 24:7 David restrained his men with these words and did not allow them to rise up against Saul.  
Then Saul left the cave and started down the road.

CSB 1 Samuel 24:7 With these words David persuaded his men, and he did not let them rise up against Saul.  
Then Saul left the cave and went on his way.

ESV 1 Samuel 24:7 So David persuaded his men with these words and did not permit them to attack Saul.  
And Saul rose up and left the cave and went on his way.

NIV 1 Samuel 24:7 With these words David rebuked his men and did not allow them to attack Saul. And Saul  
left the cave and went his way.

NLT 1 Samuel 24:7 So David restrained his men and did not let them kill Saul. After Saul had left the cave and  
gone on his way,

NRS 1 Samuel 24:7 So David scolded his men severely and did not permit them to attack Saul. Then Saul got  
up and left the cave, and went on his way.

NJB 1 Samuel 24:8 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) By these words David restrained his men and would not

let them attack Saul.

NAB 1 Samuel 24:8 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) With these words David restrained his men and would not permit them to attack Saul. Saul then left the cave and went on his way.

YLT 1 Samuel 24:7 And David subdueth his men by words, and hath not permitted them to rise against Saul; and Saul hath risen from the cave, and goeth on the way;

GWN 1 Samuel 24:7 So David stopped his men by saying this to them and didn't let them attack Saul. Saul left the cave and went out onto the road.

- **persuaded**: Heb. cut off, Ps 7:4 Mt 5:44 Ro 12:17-21
- **did not allow**: 1Sa 25:33
- 1 Samuel 24 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## RESTRAINED DAVID RESTRAINS HIS MEN

**David persuaded** (KJV = stayed) **his men with these words and did not allow them to rise up against Saul. And Saul arose, left the cave, and went on his way** - Not only would David not slay Saul, but he would not allow his men to slay Saul, and they capitulated to his commands, showing the growing respect they have for David as their leader.

[Apple](#) - Godly Leadership Can Protect the Impetuous From Grave Error

David's example is a clear OT illustration of the truth Paul proclaimed in Romans 12

Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. 18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. 19 Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord. 20 "BUT IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, **FEED** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) HIM, AND IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A **DRINK** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) ; FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS ON HIS HEAD." 21 **Do not be overcome** ([present imperative with a negative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) by evil, but **overcome** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) evil with good. (Ro 12:17-21+)

**1 Samuel 24:8 Now afterward David arose and went out of the cave and called after Saul, saying, "My lord the king!" And when Saul looked behind him, David bowed with his face to the ground and prostrated himself.**

BGT 1 Samuel 24:9 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) κα ν στη Δαυιδ π σω α το κ το σπηλα ου κα β ηρσεν Δαυιδ π σω Σαουλ λ γων κ ριε βασιλε κα π βλεψεν Σαουλ ε ς τ π σω α το κα κυψεν Δαυιδ π πρ σωπον α το π τ ν γ ν κα προσεκ νησεν α τ

LXE 1 Samuel 24:8 And David rose up and went after him out of the cave: and David cried after Saul, saying, My lord, O king! and Saul looked behind him, and David bowed with his face to the ground, and did obeisance to him.

KJV 1 Samuel 24:8 David also arose afterward, and went out of the cave, and cried after Saul, saying, My lord the king. And when Saul looked behind him, David stooped with his face to the earth, and bowed himself.

NET 1 Samuel 24:8 Afterward David got up and went out of the cave. He called out after Saul, "My lord, O king!" When Saul looked behind him, David kneeled down and bowed with his face to the ground.

CSB 1 Samuel 24:8 After that, David got up, went out of the cave, and called to Saul, "My lord the king!" When Saul looked behind him, David bowed to the ground in homage.

ESV 1 Samuel 24:8 Afterward David also arose and went out of the cave, and called after Saul, "My lord the king!" And when Saul looked behind him, David bowed with his face to the earth and paid homage.

NIV 1 Samuel 24:8 Then David went out of the cave and called out to Saul, "My lord the king!" When Saul looked behind him, David bowed down and prostrated himself with his face to the ground.

NLT 1 Samuel 24:8 David came out and shouted after him, "My lord the king!" And when Saul looked around,

David bowed low before him.

NRS 1 Samuel 24:8 Afterwards David also rose up and went out of the cave and called after Saul, "My lord the king!" When Saul looked behind him, David bowed with his face to the ground, and did obeisance.

NJB 1 Samuel 24:9 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) Saul then left the cave and went on his way. After this, David too left the cave and called after Saul, 'My lord king!' Saul looked behind him and David, bowing to the ground, prostrated himself.

NAB 1 Samuel 24:9 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) David also stepped out of the cave, calling to Saul, "My lord the king!" When Saul looked back, David bowed to the ground in homage

YLT 1 Samuel 24:8 and David riseth afterwards, and goeth out from the cave, and calleth after Saul, saying, 'My lord, O king!' And Saul looketh attentively behind him, and David boweth -- face to the earth -- and doth obeisance.

GWN 1 Samuel 24:8 Later, David got up, left the cave, and called to Saul, "Your Majesty!" When Saul looked back, David knelt down with his face touching the ground.

- **My lord:** 1Sa 26:17
- **David bowed:** 1Sa 20:41 1Sa 25:23,24 Ge 17:3 Ex 20:12 Ro 13:7 1Pe 2:17
- 1 Samuel 24 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## DAVID'S RESPECT OF SAUL

**Now afterward David arose and went out of the cave**- How dangerous is David's move? It is wise or foolish? Who is outside the cave? Saul's 3000 crack troops! But clearly God is "behind the scenes" controlling the scenes He is behind (see especially 1Sa 24:10)! This was not a "cave coincidence" but a "providential pop test!" David was the student and God was seeking to refine His student, not kill him. So in that sense what David did was not foolish, because God would not have let Saul's men touch the LORD'S anointed. It was a case of "reverse anointing" so to speak for both men were anointed king!

**and called after Saul, saying, "My lord ('[adon](#); Lxx = [kurios](#)) the king!"** - David addresses Saul with an attitude of submission (**my lord**) and respect (**the king**) which would have said to both Saul (and David's men) that he was not a rebel. So here begins the longest recorded conversation between David and Saul in First Samuel (David 114 Hebrew words and Saul 67 Hebrew words). Clearly this is a significant, even pivotal event in the book of First Samuel. David begins by blessing (**my lord...king**), not cursing (Ro 12:14+), demonstrating another facet of why he is a progressively growing into a man after God's own heart.

**And when Saul looked behind him, David bowed with his face to the ground and prostrated ([shachah](#); Lxx = [proskuneo](#)) himself** - David could have fallen on Saul with an attack in the cave, but instead he falls on his face before Saul. David does not just speak submissively, but his actions support his words - **bowed** and **prostrated himself** making himself very vulnerable before Saul. In a sense he surrendered himself to Saul.

**Wiersbe** - Even if you can't respect the man or woman in office, you must show respect to the office (Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-17). David showed his respect by calling Saul "my master" (1 Sam. 24:6), "the Lord's anointed" (1Sa 24:6, 10), "my lord" (1Sa 24:8, 10), "the king" (1Sa 24:8, 14) and "my father" (1Sa 24:14). David's bold public appearance also let Saul and his army know that their official spy system was most ineffective. (Borrow [Be Successful](#))

[Apple](#) - Expression of Honor – I will show respect even to an unjust king who is out to kill me.

[Utley](#) - David showed humility and honor to Saul - (1) called him "My lord the king," v. 8 (2) bowed his face to the ground, v. 8 ; (3) prostrated himself, v. 8 (4) called him "father" (respectful imagery), 1Sa 24:11 (5) calls himself a dead dog, 1Sa 24:14 and a single flea, 1Sa 24:14

---

**Prostrated** ([07812](#)) [shachah](#) means to bow down, to prostrate oneself, to crouch, to fall down, to humbly beseech, to do reverence, to worship. The idea is to assume a prostrate position as would in paying homage to royalty (Ge 43:28) or to God (Ge 24:26, Ps 95:6). The English word **prostrate** is defined as being stretched out with one's face on the ground in adoration or submission. It is not just that the person has fallen down but pictures them lying at length or with their body extended on the ground and so lying in a posture which is reflective of genuine humility and/or adoration. 1ST: Ge18:2, Abraham "bowed himself toward the ground" before the 3 messengers who announced that Sarah would have a son. Bowing down in homage generally before a superior or a ruler thus, David "bowed" himself before Saul 1Sa 24:8.

WORSHIP IN THE MIDST OF THE REFINER'S FIRE: Ge 22:5 And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey, and I and the lad will go yonder; and we will worship (proskuneo) and return to you." Job 1:20 Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell (pipto -- Aor Act Participle) to the ground and worshiped.(Ao Act Ind = [proskuneo](#)). These men of God when tested "bowed down"--they submitted to God's will. They exercised real Faith which is not believing in spite of evidence but is obeying in spite of consequences! This is what Christ did, perfectly, on the Cross. Take up your Cross daily and follow Me was His clarion call and Abraham & Job obeyed even before the Cross!

**Shachah - uses in First & Second Samuel-** 1 Sam. 1:3; 1 Sam. 1:19; 1 Sam. 1:28; 1 Sam. 2:36; 1 Sam. 15:25; 1 Sam. 15:30; 1 Sam. 15:31; 1 Sam. 20:41; 1 Sam. 24:8; 1 Sam. 25:23; 1 Sam. 25:41; 1 Sam. 28:14; 2 Sam. 1:2; 2 Sam. 9:6; 2 Sam. 9:8; 2 Sam. 12:20; 2 Sam. 14:4; 2 Sam. 14:22; 2 Sam. 14:33; 2 Sam. 15:5; 2 Sam. 15:32; 2 Sam. 16:4; 2 Sam. 18:21; 2 Sam. 18:28; 2 Sam. 24:20;

**1 Samuel 24:9 David said to Saul, "Why do you listen to the words of men, saying, Behold, David seeks to harm you"?**

LXE 1 Samuel 24:9 And David said to Saul, Why dost thou hearken to the words of the people, saying, Behold, David seeks thy life?

KJV 1 Samuel 24:9 And David said to Saul, Wherefore hearest thou men's words, saying, Behold, David seeketh thy hurt?

NET 1 Samuel 24:9 David said to Saul, "Why do you pay attention when men say, 'David is seeking to do you harm'?"

CSB 1 Samuel 24:9 David said to Saul, "Why do you listen to the words of people who say, 'Look, David intends to harm you'?"

ESV 1 Samuel 24:9 And David said to Saul, "Why do you listen to the words of men who say, 'Behold, David seeks your harm'?"

NIV 1 Samuel 24:9 He said to Saul, "Why do you listen when men say, 'David is bent on harming you'?"

NLT 1 Samuel 24:9 Then he shouted to Saul, "Why do you listen to the people who say I am trying to harm you?"

NRS 1 Samuel 24:9 David said to Saul, "Why do you listen to the words of those who say, 'David seeks to do you harm'?"

NJB 1 Samuel 24:10 David then said to Saul, "Why do you listen to people who say, "David intends your ruin"?"

NAB 1 Samuel 24:10 and asked Saul: "Why do you listen to those who say, 'David is trying to harm you'?"

YLT 1 Samuel 24:9 And David saith to Saul, 'Why dost thou hear the words of man, saying, Lo, David is seeking thine evil?

GWN 1 Samuel 24:9 David asked Saul, "Why do you listen to rumors that I am trying to harm you?"

- 1Sa 26:19 Lev 19:16 Ps 101:5 141:6 Pr 16:28 17:4 18:8 25:23 Pr 26:20-22,28 29:12 Ec 7:21,22 Jas 3:6
- 1 Samuel 24 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## DAVID OPENS HIS DEFENSE

**Bergen** comments that "Following these verbal and actional signals of loyalty to the king, David uttered what is perhaps the most passionate and eloquent plea for reconciliation between persons recorded in all ancient literature. (Borrow [NAC - 1,2 Samuel](#))

**David said to Saul, "Why do you listen to the words of men, saying, Behold ([hinneh](#); Lxx = [idou](#)), David seeks to harm you' -** Can you see what David is doing with this question? He is not pointing his finger directly at Saul and making a point blank accusation. He deflects the sin of Saul to others, the words of men, telling Saul that David meant to harm him. There is nothing in the text to this point that suggests Saul's counselors were warning Saul about David. In fact one of his closest counselors, his own son, told him that he had nothing to fear from David. Life a good defense attorney David will use the cut robe to support his premise that he had no desire to harm Saul.

As [Matthew Poole](#) says David "prudently and modestly translates the fault from Saul to his followers and evil counsellors." Whether that was actually true or not is unclear.

[Guzik](#) has an interesting note - Some might have said, "David, lay it on the line! Tell it like it is!" and David will, to some extent. But even as he does he will show mercy and kindness to Saul. David will fulfill Proverbs 10:12: *Love covers all sins*, and 1 Peter 4:8: *Love will cover a multitude of sins*.

[Matthew Henry](#) - David followed Saul out of the cave, and, though he would not take the opportunity to slay him, yet he wisely took the opportunity, if possible, to **slay his enmity**, by convincing him that he was not such a man as he took him for.

**1 Samuel 24:10 'Behold, this day your eyes have seen that the LORD had given you today into my hand in the cave, and some said to kill you, but my eye had pity on you; and I said, 'I will not stretch out my hand against my lord, for he is the LORD'S anointed.'**

BGT 1 Samuel 24:11 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) δο ν τ μ ρ τα τ ο ρ κα σιν ο φθαλμο σου ς παρ δωκ ν σε κ ριος σ μερον ε ς χερ μου ν τ σπηλα κα ο κ βουλ θην ποκτε να σε κα φεισ μην σου κα ε πα ο κ πο σω χερ μου π κ ρι ν μου τι χριστ ς κυρ ου ο τ ς στιν

LXE 1 Samuel 24:10 Behold, thine eyes have seen this day how that the Lord has delivered thee this day into my hands in the cave; and I would not slay thee, but spared thee, and said, I will not lift up my hand against my lord, for he is the Lord's anointed.

KJV 1 Samuel 24:10 Behold, this day thine eyes have seen how that the LORD had delivered thee to day into mine hand in the cave: and some bade me kill thee: but mine eye spared thee; and I said, I will not put forth mine hand against my lord; for he is the LORD'S anointed.

NET 1 Samuel 24:10 Today your own eyes see how the LORD delivered you— this very day— into my hands in the cave. Some told me to kill you, but I had pity on you and said, 'I will not extend my hand against my lord, for he is the LORD's chosen one.'

CSB 1 Samuel 24:10 You can see with your own eyes that the LORD handed you over to me today in the cave. Someone advised me to kill you, but I took pity on you and said: I won't lift my hand against my lord, since he is the LORD's anointed.

ESV 1 Samuel 24:10 Behold, this day your eyes have seen how the LORD gave you today into my hand in the cave. And some told me to kill you, but I spared you. I said, 'I will not put out my hand against my lord, for he is the LORD's anointed.'

NIV 1 Samuel 24:10 This day you have seen with your own eyes how the LORD delivered you into my hands in the cave. Some urged me to kill you, but I spared you; I said, 'I will not lift my hand against my master, because he is the LORD's anointed.'

NLT 1 Samuel 24:10 This very day you can see with your own eyes it isn't true. For the LORD placed you at my mercy back there in the cave. Some of my men told me to kill you, but I spared you. For I said, 'I will never harm the king-- he is the LORD's anointed one.'

NRS 1 Samuel 24:10 This very day your eyes have seen how the LORD gave you into my hand in the cave; and some urged me to kill you, but I spared you. I said, 'I will not raise my hand against my lord; for he is the LORD's anointed.'

NJB 1 Samuel 24:11 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) This very day you have seen for yourself how Yahweh put you in my power in the cave and how, refusing to kill you, I spared you saying, "I will not raise my hand against my lord, since he is Yahweh's anointed."

NAB 1 Samuel 24:11 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) You see for yourself today that the LORD just now delivered you into my grasp in the cave. I had some thought of killing you, but I took pity on you instead. I decided, 'I will not raise a hand against my lord, for he is the LORD'S anointed and a father to me.'

YLT 1 Samuel 24:10 Lo, this day have thine eyes seen how that Jehovah hath given thee to-day into my hand in the cave; and one said to slay thee, and mine eye hath pity on thee, and I say, I do not put forth my hand against my lord, for the anointed of Jehovah he is.

GWN 1 Samuel 24:10 Today you saw how the LORD handed you over to me in the cave. Although I was told to kill you, I spared you, saying, 'I will not raise my hand against Your Majesty because you are the LORD's anointed.'

- **some said to kill you:** 1Sa 24:4 26:8
- **the LORD'S anointed:** 1Sa 26:9 Ps 105:15
- 1 Samuel 24 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Matthew 5:44+ "But I say to you, **love** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) your enemies and **pray** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) for those who persecute you,

## DAVID CONTINUES HIS DEFENSE

**Behold** ([hinneh](#); Lxx = [idou](#)), **this day your eyes have seen that the LORD had given you today into my hand in the cave, and some said to kill you** - David is like a defense attorney pleading his case and begins here with "eyewitness" evidence, evidence that Saul himself had witnessed! David makes it very clear that the hand of the LORD brought Saul into the cave. It was no accident that Saul came unguarded into that one specific cave. David is trying to get Saul to see that this was indeed the LORD Who caused this to happen. David is also telling Saul he resisted the pressure from his own men to kill him!

**but my eye had pity on you** - **ESV, NIV** - "but I spared you" **NLT** - "For the LORD placed you at my mercy back there in the cave." David now gives two reason he resisted the urging of his own men, the first being that he had pity on him and secondly that he was the LORD's anointed.

**and I said, 'I will not stretch out my hand against my lord** (['adon](#); Lxx = [kurios](#)), **for he is the LORD'S anointed** ([mashiach](#); Lxx = [Christos](#))- Notice David's humble submission to two "lords" his "lord" Saul and his LORD Jehovah. As stated David explains (**"for"** = term of explanation) why he would not seek to harm Saul - he was **the LORD'S anointed**. Yes David was the LORD's anointed but he was willing to wait the LORD's timing.

**Bergen** adds "David treated the king properly, not because of anything the king had done or might do, but because of what the Lord had done. David's respect for human authority was based on his respect for divine authority." (Borrow [NAC - 1,2 Samuel](#))

---

#### QUESTION - [Why was David so loyal to Saul after everything Saul had done to him?](#)

**ANSWER** - The primary reason [David](#) was loyal to [Saul](#) was the anointing King Saul had received from the Lord. In other words, the Lord was the One who chose Saul to be king, and David refused to go against God's will. On one occasion when David had the opportunity to kill Saul, he refrained, saying, "As surely as the Lord lives . . . the Lord himself will strike him, or his time will come and he will die, or he will go into battle and perish. But the Lord forbid that I should lay a hand on the Lord's anointed" (1 Samuel 26:10–11). David believed Saul was in God's hands and that he was forbidden to put Saul to death himself.

In addition, David considered Saul's life precious and of tremendous value. Though David had killed men in war, he would not kill Saul (1 Samuel 26:24). David had great faith in God's plan and timing. As long as God wanted Saul to be king, David would wait. He would not take matters into his own hands.

On another occasion, David and his men were hiding in a cave that Saul entered to relieve himself. David was near enough to Saul to cut off the edge of his robe, yet he would not kill him. Instead he said, "The Lord forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, the Lord's anointed, or lay my hand on him; for he is the anointed of the Lord" (1 Samuel 24:6).

Saul was the one God had selected to lead the nation of Israel. [Samuel](#) had physically [anointed](#) Saul with oil when God selected him as king. First Samuel 10:1 says, "Samuel took a flask of olive oil and poured it on Saul's head and kissed him, saying, 'Has not the Lord anointed you ruler over his inheritance?'" The meaning of the physical anointing was that Saul was set apart by God for leadership. David respected God's choice.

The young David had also been anointed as the future king of Israel. First Samuel 16:13 records, "Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon David." It would be many years before God would place him as the official king of the nation, but David knew from experience what it meant to be the Lord's anointed.

Eventually, Saul did fall in battle, in God's own timing. This event was bittersweet, as both Saul, who wanted to take David's life, and Jonathan, who was David's best friend, were killed on the same day. First Samuel 31 records this battle in which Saul and his sons perished in a battle against the [Philistines](#).

Following Saul's death, David was appointed king of Judah for seven years before becoming king of all Israel. In total, David would rule for 40 years as king, serving as the Lord's anointed. He had treated the previous king with great respect and later received the role himself, being called a man after God's own heart (1 Samuel 13:14). [GotQuestions.org](#)

---

## David's Restraint

I will not stretch out my hand against my lord. — 1 Samuel 24:10

Today's Scripture: 1 Samuel 24:1-22

The relationship between David and King Saul is one of the strangest and most volatile recorded in the Bible. David came to Saul's rescue on several occasions (as a harp player and as a warrior), he was best friends with the king's son, and he married the king's daughter. Now, don't you think such a person would be in pretty good standing with the monarch?

Not David. Saul was out to get the former shepherd boy. Twice Saul tried to spear David while he was playing the harp for him. And later, Saul sent his troops after the young man to try to kill him.

Yet look at what happened when the two finally crossed paths and David had the chance to kill Saul. Instead of attacking him, David sneaked up and cut off a piece of his robe. Afterward, he felt guilty even for doing that (1 Samuel 24:5). When they later met face to face, David told the king, "My hand shall not be against you" (v.13). Saul saw that David had rewarded his evil with good, and he wept (vv.16-17).

Sometimes we must deal with people who are eager to bring us down—or so we think; maybe an employer or a co-worker. Like David, let's do what God would have us do—use restraint, and keep on doing good. By: Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

I want the love that always sweetly bears  
Whate'er my Father's hand may choose to send;  
I want the love that patiently endures  
The wrongs that come from enemy or friend.  
—Anon.

Revenge restrained is a victory gained.

---

## The Eyes Of Mercy

Someone urged me to kill you. But my eye spared you. — 1 Samuel 24:10

Today's Scripture: 1 Samuel 24:1-15

When a Michigan deer hunter found a 100-pound buck struggling to get out of a mud-bog in which it was hopelessly stuck, the hunter couldn't bring himself to squeeze the trigger. Instead, he and his hunting partner snared the animal with a rope and pulled it out of the mud. The deer then bolted to freedom.

The hunter later recalled, "When you see a deer like that, eyeball to eyeball, it's a little different. I think the eyes did it, that longing look, as if to say, 'What are you going to do?'"

This account bears an interesting parallel to the incident recorded in 1 Samuel 24. Saul was in a defenseless situation when David and his armed men found him in a cave. David had good reason to kill Saul. Yet he showed mercy. He knew that the Lord had made Saul king of Israel, and he was not about to take the life of the Lord's anointed—even though it would have been easy (v.10).

Suppose someone who has hurt you in the past suddenly became vulnerable. Would your reaction be to hurt him? Or would you be compassionate and reverent like David, who recognized that judgment and vengeance belong to the Lord? (v.12). Let's look at others through the eyes of mercy. By: Mart DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Love is giving for the world's needs,  
Love is sharing as the Spirit leads,

Love is caring when the world cries,  
Love is compassion with Christlike eyes. |  
—Brandt

Love always seeks to help—never to hurt.

---

## Not My Hand

I said, "I will not stretch out my hand against my lord, for he is the Lord's anointed." — 1 Samuel 24:10

Today's Scripture: 1 Samuel 24:1-15

There are times when it's best to wait for God to act instead of trying to make things happen ourselves. It's a lesson we see clearly when David refused to take King Saul's life, even though the king was trying to kill him (1 Samuel 24). When Saul was alone and vulnerable in a cave, David's men told him this was a God-given opportunity to take the kingship that rightfully belonged to him (v.4). But David refused, saying, "The Lord forbid that I should do this thing to my master, the Lord's anointed, to stretch out my hand against him" (v.6).

After Saul left the cave, David called out to him, "Let the Lord judge between you and me, and let the Lord avenge me on you. But my hand shall not be against you" (v.12). David knew that God had chosen him to become king. But he also knew that killing Saul was not the right way to make it happen. He would wait for God to remove Saul from the throne.

Is there an obstacle between you and something that is rightfully yours? You believe it's God's will, but the method of obtaining it and the timing don't seem right. Think long and pray hard before taking a bad path toward a good goal.

Waiting for God to act is the best opportunity for the right things to happen His way. By: David C. McCasland [Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#)

O God, make me one of those rarest of souls  
Who willingly wait for Thy time;  
My impatient will must be lost in Thine own,  
And Thy will forever be mine.  
—Bowser

God's timing is always right—wait patiently for Him.

**1 Samuel 24:11 "Now, my father, see! Indeed, see the edge of your robe in my hand! For in that I cut off the edge of your robe and did not kill you, know and perceive that there is no evil or rebellion in my hands, and I have not sinned against you, though you are lying in wait for my life to take it.**

BGT 1 Samuel 24:12 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) καὶ ὁ τὸ πτερ γιον τῶς διπλοῦδος σου ἐν τῇ χειρὶ μου  
γὰρ φέρῃ καὶ τὸ πτερ γιον καὶ ὁ κτεταγκὸς καὶ γνῶθι καὶ ὁ σήμερον τί οὐκ σπινκαὶ ἐν τῇ χειρὶ μου ὁ ὀ  
σβεία καὶ θησις καὶ ὁ χυμνηκαὶ ἐς σὲ καὶ σὺ δεσμεύεις τὴν ψυχὴν μου λαβεῖν αὐτήν

LXE 1 Samuel 24:11 And behold, the skirt of thy mantle is in my hand, I cut off the skirt, and did not slay thee:  
know then and see to-day, there is no evil in my hand, nor impiety, nor rebellion; and I have not sinned against  
thee, yet thou layest snares for my soul to take it.

KJV 1 Samuel 24:11 Moreover, my father, see, yea, see the skirt of thy robe in my hand: for in that I cut off  
the skirt of thy robe, and killed thee not, know thou and see that there is neither evil nor transgression in mine  
hand, and I have not sinned against thee; yet thou huntest my soul to take it.

NET 1 Samuel 24:11 Look, my father, and see the edge of your robe in my hand! When I cut off the edge of  
your robe, I didn't kill you. So realize and understand that I am not planning evil or rebellion. Even though I  
have not sinned against you, you are waiting in ambush to take my life.

CSB 1 Samuel 24:11 See, my father! Look at the corner of your robe in my hand, for I cut it off, but I didn't kill  
you. Look and recognize that there is no evil or rebellion in me. I haven't sinned against you even though you  
are hunting me down to take my life.

ESV 1 Samuel 24:11 See, my father, see the corner of your robe in my hand. For by the fact that I cut off the

corner of your robe and did not kill you, you may know and see that there is no wrong or treason in my hands. I have not sinned against you, though you hunt my life to take it.

NIV 1 Samuel 24:11 See, my father, look at this piece of your robe in my hand! I cut off the corner of your robe but did not kill you. Now understand and recognize that I am not guilty of wrongdoing or rebellion. I have not wronged you, but you are hunting me down to take my life.

NLT 1 Samuel 24:11 Look, my father, at what I have in my hand. It is a piece of the hem of your robe! I cut it off, but I didn't kill you. This proves that I am not trying to harm you and that I have not sinned against you, even though you have been hunting for me to kill me.

NRS 1 Samuel 24:11 See, my father, see the corner of your cloak in my hand; for by the fact that I cut off the corner of your cloak, and did not kill you, you may know for certain that there is no wrong or treason in my hands. I have not sinned against you, though you are hunting me to take my life.

NJB 1 Samuel 24:12 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) Look, father, look at the border of your cloak in my hand. Since, although I cut the border off your cloak, I did not kill you, surely you realise that I intend neither mischief nor crime. I have not wronged you, and yet you hunt me down to take my life.

NAB 1 Samuel 24:12 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) Look here at this end of your mantle which I hold. Since I cut off an end of your mantle and did not kill you, see and be convinced that I plan no harm and no rebellion. I have done you no wrong, though you are hunting me down to take my life.

YLT 1 Samuel 24:11 'And, my father, see, yea see the skirt of thine upper robe in my hand; for by cutting off the skirt of thy upper robe, and I have not slain thee, know and see that there is not in my hand evil and transgression, and I have not sinned against thee, and thou art hunting my soul to take it!

GWN 1 Samuel 24:11 My master, look at this! The border of your robe is in my hand! Since I cut off the border of your robe and didn't kill you, you should know and be able to see I mean no harm or rebellion. I haven't sinned against you, but you are trying to ambush me in order to take my life.

- **my father:** 1Sa 18:27 2Ki 5:13 Pr 15:1
- **no evil:** 1Sa 26:18 Ps 7:3-5 Ps 35:7 Joh 15:25
- **you are lying in wait for my life:** 1Sa 23:14,23 26:20 Job 10:16 Ps 140:11 La 4:18 Eze 13:18 Mic 7:2
- 1 Samuel 24 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

1 Samuel 18:27 David rose up and went, he and his men, and struck down two hundred men among the Philistines. Then David brought their foreskins, and they gave them in full number to the king, **that he might become the king's son-in-law**. So Saul gave him Michal his daughter for a wife.

Psalms 7:3-5O LORD my God, if I have done this, If there is injustice in my hands, 4 If I have rewarded evil to my friend, Or have plundered him who without cause was my adversary, 5 Let the enemy pursue my soul and overtake it; And let him trample my life down to the ground And lay my glory in the dust. Selah.

### DAVID PRESENTS THE EDGE EVIDENCE

**Now, my father, see!** - Recall that Saul is actually David's father-in-law because he is married to Saul's daughter Michal.

**Robert Vannoy on my father.** See also Saul's address to David as "my son" (1Sa 24:16). David uses this form of address either because (1) Saul was David's father-in-law (1Sa 18:27) or because (2) the special relationship between father and son was at times used as a metaphor for an intimate relationship between king and subject (see [notes](#) on 2 Sa 7:14; Ps 2:7; see also chart, p. 26). (Borrow [NIV Study Bible](#))

**Henry** - From a father one may expect compassion and a favourable opinion. For a prince to seek the ruin of any of his good subjects is as unnatural as for a father to seek the ruin of his own children.

**Indeed, see the edge of your robe in my hand! For in that I cut off the edge of your robe and did not kill you** Here is the [material evidence](#). David shows Saul the indisputable proof which is clear evidence that David could have killed Saul, but had spared his life.

**know and perceive that there is no evil or rebellion in my hands and I have not sinned against you** - David asserts he is not evil, rebellious or sinful regarding Saul and the edge of the robe backs up his defense. In short David says "Not guilty!"

**Matthew Henry** - I am not chargeable with any crime, nor conscious of any guilt, and, had I a window in my breast, thou mightest through it see the sincerity of my heart in this protestation. Perhaps it was about this time that David penned the seventh psalm, concerning the affair of Cush the Benjamite (that is, Saul, as some think), wherein he thus appeals to God (Ps 7:3-5):

**though you are lying in wait for my life to take it** - While I am not trying to kill you, you are trying to kill me.

**1 Samuel 24:12 "May the LORD judge between you and me, and may the LORD avenge me on you; but my hand shall not be against you."**

BGT 1 Samuel 24:13 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) δικσαι κριος ν μσον μο κα σο κα κδικσαι με κριος κ σο κα χερ μου ο κ σται π σο

LXE 1 Samuel 24:12 The Lord judge between me and thee, and the Lord requite thee on thyself: but my hand shall not be upon thee.

KJV 1 Samuel 24:12 The LORD judge between me and thee, and the LORD avenge me of thee: but mine hand shall not be upon thee.

NET 1 Samuel 24:12 May the LORD judge between the two of us, and may the LORD vindicate me over you, but my hand will not be against you.

CSB 1 Samuel 24:12 "May the LORD judge between you and me, and may the LORD take vengeance on you for me, but my hand will never be against you.

ESV 1 Samuel 24:12 May the LORD judge between me and you, may the LORD avenge me against you, but my hand shall not be against you.

NIV 1 Samuel 24:12 May the LORD judge between you and me. And may the LORD avenge the wrongs you have done to me, but my hand will not touch you.

NLT 1 Samuel 24:12 "May the LORD judge between us. Perhaps the LORD will punish you for what you are trying to do to me, but I will never harm you.

NRS 1 Samuel 24:12 May the LORD judge between me and you! May the LORD avenge me on you; but my hand shall not be against you.

NJB 1 Samuel 24:13 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) May Yahweh be judge between me and you, and may Yahweh avenge me on you; but I shall never lay a hand on you!

NAB 1 Samuel 24:13 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) The LORD will judge between me and you, and the LORD will exact justice from you in my case. I shall not touch you.

YLT 1 Samuel 24:12 'Jehovah doth judge between me and thee, and Jehovah hath avenged me of thee, and my hand is not on thee;

GWN 1 Samuel 24:12 May the LORD decide between you and me. May the LORD take revenge on you for what you did to me. However, I will not lay a hand on you.

- **Lord judge:** 1Sa 26:10,23 Ge 16:5 Jdg 11:27 Job 5:8 Ps 7:8-9 Ps 35:1 Ps 43:1 Ps 94:1 Ro 12:19 1Pe 2:23 Rev 6:10
- **but my hand shall:** 1Sa 26:11
- 1 Samuel 24 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Psalm 7:8-9 The LORD judges the peoples; Vindicate me, O LORD, according to my righteousness and my integrity that is in me. 9O let the evil of the wicked come to an end, but establish the righteous; For the righteous God tries the hearts and minds.

Psalm 35:1 A Psalm of David. Contend, O LORD, with those who contend with me; Fight against those who fight against me.

Psalm 43:1 Vindicate me, O God, and plead my case against an ungodly nation; O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man!

Psalm 94:1 O LORD, God of vengeance, God of vengeance, shine forth!

Romans 12:19 Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord.

1 Peter 2:23 and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously;

## DAVID PRAYS LORD'S WILL

**May the LORD judge between you and me** - This is almost like a prayer and the Septuagint uses the optative mood which expresses a wish or a desire and often indicates a prayer. David expresses a two-fold wish (? prayer) from the LORD. David wishes for and is willing to accept the LORD's judgment, for he knows that Yahweh is the only fair and impartial Judge. This is another characteristic showing David is a man after God's own heart. In time God did judge for Saul would die by his own hand in battle (1Sa 31:1-6).

**THOUGHT** - Are you (am I) content to leave matters in the hands of the Lord as David was?

**Bergen** makes an interesting comment noting that "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). The Lord, who is a judge with greater authority than any earthly king, would "judge between" David and Saul and "avenge the wrongs" (v. 12; Hb. v. 13). Thus David was actually pleading for Saul to save himself, not just to spare David. (Borrow [NAC - 1.2 Samuel](#))

**and may the LORD avenge me on you** - **NIV** = "may the LORD avenge the wrongs you have done to me." **NET** = "may the LORD vindicate me over you." **CSB** = "may the LORD take vengeance on you for me" David is not calling down a curse on Saul, but is leaving the matter entirely in the hands of the LORD, the best place to leave them! David's statement recalls the instruction of Paul when we are wronged by another "Never take your own revenge, beloved, but **leave room** ([apostolic imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) for the wrath of God, for it is written, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord." (Ro 12:19+). In this passage NEVER means just that - never. And David is an OT illustration of a man who practiced this NT principle. Here again we begin to see the molding of a man's character and what made David a man after God's own heart.

**THOUGHT** - As we seek to imitate David and be a man or woman after God's own heart, are we holding back taking revenge on someone who has wronged us, even when (like David's case) to most people (human reasoning), we would be justified in taking our own revenge. David left it in the wise hands of his LORD and so should we beloved. I am not saying "grin and bear it," because I believe the only way we can imitate David's actions here is by being filled with the Holy Spirit and certainly not by being filled with personal wrath or bitterness. There is not a hint of bitterness in David's lengthy speech to Saul. This is a man or woman after God's own heart!

**but my hand shall not be against you** - **GWN** - "However, I will not lay a hand on you."

---

**G Campbell Morgan** - The Lord avenge me of thee: but mine hand shall not be upon thee.—1 Sam. 24.12.

In this chapter we have the account of how circumstances suddenly put Saul in the power of David. It would have been perfectly easy for him to take the life of his enemy, and so put an end to the bitter experiences through which that enemy was compelling him to pass. From the standpoint of worldly wisdom, he missed his opportunity, and so prolonged his own suffering. From the standpoint of the true wisdom, that which results from faith in God, he acted rightly. To have slain Saul would have been to have taken things into his own hands, and to do that is always to bring disaster. It is ever better to wait for God than to attempt to hurry His purposes by actions dictated only by the appearance of fortuitous circumstances. It is perhaps one of the hardest lessons for the human heart to learn, and yet more harm than we think is done in the enterprises of the Divine Kingdom by the zeal which is without knowledge. The hour comes when we have such a chance of getting level with our foes, of wiping out old scores, of ending our suffering by some swift act in the dark. Let us be very much afraid of such hours. They almost always conceal perils far greater than those from which they seem to afford opportunity of escape. It is ever better to wait for God. He sees all. We see but a part. We are always safer waiting for Him. (Borrow [Life applications from every chapter of the Bible](#))

---

## God's Mercy at Work

May the Lord judge between you and me. 1 Samuel 24:12

Today's Scripture & Insight: 1 Samuel 24:1–10

My anger percolated when a woman mistreated me, blamed me, and gossiped about me. I wanted everyone to know what she'd done—wanted her to suffer as I'd suffered because of her behavior. I steamed with resentment until a headache pierced my temples. But as I began praying for my pain to go away, the Holy Spirit convicted me. How could I plot revenge while begging God for relief? If I believed He would care for me, why wouldn't I trust Him to handle this situation? Knowing that people who are hurting often hurt other people, I asked God to help me forgive the woman and work toward reconciliation.

The psalmist David understood the difficulty of trusting God while enduring unfair treatment. Though David did his best to be a loving servant, King Saul succumbed to jealousy and wanted to murder him (1 Samuel 24:1–2). David suffered while God worked things out and prepared him to take the throne, but still he chose to honor God instead of seeking revenge (vv. 3–7). He did his part to reconcile with Saul and left the results in God's hands (vv. 8–22).

When it seems others are getting away with wrongdoing, we struggle with the injustice. But with God's mercy at work in our hearts and the hearts of others, we can forgive as He's forgiven us and receive the blessings He's prepared for us. By: Xochitl Dixon ([Our Daily Bread](#). Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

How can trusting that God is perfect, loving, good, and in control help you when sin seems to be prevailing? Who do you need to forgive and place in God's mighty and merciful hands?

Merciful God, please help me trust You to determine how justice prevails.

**1 Samuel 24:13 "As the proverb of the ancients says, 'Out of the wicked comes forth wickedness'; but my hand shall not be against you.**

BGT 1 Samuel 24:14 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) καθ ὅς λ γεται παραβολ ρχα α ξ ν μων ξελε σεται πλημ λεια κα χε ρ μου ο κ σται π σ

LXE 1 Samuel 24:13 As the old proverb says, Transgression will proceed from the wicked ones: but my hand shall not be upon thee.

KJV 1 Samuel 24:13 As saith the proverb of the ancients, Wickedness proceedeth from the wicked: but mine hand shall not be upon thee.

NET 1 Samuel 24:13 It's like the old proverb says: 'From evil people evil proceeds.' But my hand will not be against you.

CSB 1 Samuel 24:13 As the old proverb says, 'Wickedness comes from wicked people.' My hand will never be against you.

ESV 1 Samuel 24:13 As the proverb of the ancients says, 'Out of the wicked comes wickedness.' But my hand shall not be against you.

NIV 1 Samuel 24:13 As the old saying goes, 'From evildoers come evil deeds,' so my hand will not touch you.

NLT 1 Samuel 24:13 As that old proverb says, 'From evil people come evil deeds.' So you can be sure I will never harm you.

NRS 1 Samuel 24:13 As the ancient proverb says, 'Out of the wicked comes forth wickedness'; but my hand shall not be against you.

NJB 1 Samuel 24:14 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) (As the old proverb says: Wickedness comes out of wicked people, but I shall never lay a hand on you!)

NAB 1 Samuel 24:14 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) The old proverb says, 'From the wicked comes forth wickedness.' So I will take no action against you.

YLT 1 Samuel 24:13 as saith the simile of the ancients, From the wicked goeth out wickedness, and my hand is not on thee.

GWN 1 Samuel 24:13 It's like people used to say long ago, 'Wickedness comes from wicked people.' But I will not lay a hand on you.

- **Wickedness:** Mt 7:16-18 Mt 12:33,34 Mt 15:19
- 1 Samuel 24 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 7:16-18 "You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? 17 "So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 "A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit.

Matthew 12:33; 34 "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit. 34 "You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart.

Matthew 15:19 "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders.

### DAVID QUOTES A PROVERB ON WICKEDNESS

As the proverb ([mashal](#)) of the ancients says, 'Out of the wicked comes forth wickedness'; but my hand shall not be against you - NET = "From evil people evil proceeds." In short, conduct reveals character. David is using this proverb to emphasize that his conduct toward Saul was not evil and thus he was no threat to Saul. As the GWN says "I will not lay a hand on you."

[Guzik](#) - David used this proverb to make a point. "Saul, if I was really as wicked as your advisors say I am, if I really was out to kill you, I would have done that wicked act in the cave. Because no wickedness proceeded from me when I had the opportunity, it shows my heart is not wicked towards you."

**Robert Vannoy** on **dead dog ... flea** - Terms of self-deprecation (see notes on 1Sa 26:20 = David suggests that Saul is making a fool of himself in his fanatical pursuit of an innocent man who poses no threat to him.; 2 Sa 9:8 = **dead dog like me**. Here an expression of deep self-abasement. The author has used the "**(dead) dog**" motif effectively. First Goliath, scornfully disdaining the young warrior David, asks, "Am I a dog?" (1 Sa 17:43)—and unwittingly foreshadows his own end (**ED**: A DEAD DOG!). Then David, in a self-deprecating manner, describes himself as a "dead dog" (1 Sa 24:14) to suggest to Saul that the king of Israel should not consider him worth so much attention. For the author, "**dead dog**" fittingly characterizes those who foolishly scorn or oppose the Lord's anointed, while David's own self-deprecation (2Sa 7:18; 1 Sa 18:18) is conducive to his exaltation (cf. Pr 3:34; 1 Pe 5:6).). (Borrow [NIV Study Bible](#))

**Wiersbe** has an interesting note on **proverb** - David used a familiar proverb that is now a part of Scripture, but that doesn't mean that folksy proverbs carry the same authority as the inspired Word of God. There is practical wisdom in some proverbs, but they have a tendency to contradict one another. "Look before you leap" is balanced by "He who hesitates is lost," and "Absence makes the heart grow fonder" by "Out of sight, out of mind." (Borrow [Be Successful](#))

**Matthew Henry** - Though wickedness proceed from the wicked, yet let it not therefore proceed from us by way of retaliation. Though the dog bark at the sheep, the sheep does not bark at the dog.

---

**Proverb** ([04912](#)) [mashal](#) from the verb **chakam** - to be wise) is the ability to judge correctly and to follow the best course of action, based on knowledge and understanding. In the context of 1Sa 24:13 it refers to a traditional pithy statement that is generally assumed to be true. **Wisdom** is the ability to see something from God's viewpoint. **Wisdom** is "God's character in the many practical affairs of life." **Chokmah** is the knowledge and the ability to make the right choices at the opportune time. The consistency of making the right choice is an indication of one's spiritual maturity.

**1 Samuel 24:14 "After whom has the king of Israel come out? Whom are you pursuing? A dead dog, a single flea?"**

BGT 1 Samuel 24:15 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) καὶ νῦν πῶτος σὺ κ πορεύῃ βασιλεῖ Ἰσραὴλ πῶτος καταδι κείς σὺ πῶς κυνέ τεθνηκὸς καὶ πῶς ψαλλοῦνς

LXE 1 Samuel 24:14 And now after whom dost thou come forth, O king of Israel? After whom dost thou pursue? After a dead dog, and after a flea?

KJV 1 Samuel 24:14 After whom is the king of Israel come out? after whom dost thou pursue? after a dead dog, after a flea.

NET 1 Samuel 24:14 Who has the king of Israel come out after? Who is it that you are pursuing? A dead dog? A single flea?

CSB 1 Samuel 24:14 Who has the king of Israel come after? What are you chasing after? A dead dog? A flea?

ESV 1 Samuel 24:14 After whom has the king of Israel come out? After whom do you pursue? After a dead dog! After a flea!

NIV 1 Samuel 24:14 "Against whom has the king of Israel come out? Whom are you pursuing? A dead dog? A flea?

NLT 1 Samuel 24:14 Who is the king of Israel trying to catch anyway? Should he spend his time chasing one who is as worthless as a dead dog or a single flea?

NRS 1 Samuel 24:14 Against whom has the king of Israel come out? Whom do you pursue? A dead dog? A single flea?

NJB 1 Samuel 24:15 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) On whose trail is the king of Israel campaigning? Whom are you pursuing? On the trail of a dead dog, of a flea!

NAB 1 Samuel 24:15 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) Against whom are you on campaign, O king of Israel? Whom are you pursuing? A dead dog, or a single flea!

YLT 1 Samuel 24:14 'After whom hath the king of Israel come out? after whom art thou pursuing? -- after a dead dog! after one flea!

GWN 1 Samuel 24:14 Against whom has the king of Israel come out? Whom are you pursuing? A dead dog? One flea?

- **the king:** 2Sa 6:20 1Ki 21:7
- **a dead dog:** 1Sa 17:43 2Sa 3:8, 9:8, 16:9
- **a flea:** 1Sa 26:20 Jdg 8:1-3
- 1 Samuel 24 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

1 Samuel 26:20+ "Now then, do not let my blood fall to the ground away from the presence of the LORD; for the king of Israel has come out to search for a single flea, just as one hunts a partridge in the mountains."

### DAVID APPEALS TO SAUL'S NOBILITY AS KING

**After whom has the king of Israel come out? Whom are you pursuing? A dead dog, a single flea-** David's language emphasizes the insignificance of his threat to Saul. David was humbling himself for **dog** was a term of reproach. Recalls that Goliath "said to David, "Am I a **dog**, that you come to me with sticks?" (1Sa 17:43+, cf 2Sa 3:8; 9:8; 16:9) In a sense David is also appealing to Saul's pride for what king would pursue a **dead dog** or a **single flea**. A **dead dog** could not even bite, even as David had not intention of harming Saul. And a **flea** bite would do no damage. The flea metaphor may also have referred to the fact that fleas are difficult to catch (I was raised on a farm and know this from first hand experience!) as they quickly jump from one place to another and are experts at hiding in a dog's hair!

**Bergen on dead dog** - "With these words David tacitly accused the king of acting like a fool and squandering precious national resources. Yet the employment of rhetorical questions and unflattering comparisons of himself to a dead dog and a flea—all expressed in a poetic framework—helped to make David's criticisms more palatable and poignant. (Borrow [NAC - 1.2 Samuel](#))

**Deffinbaugh:** David reminds the king that men can be known by their fruits. In the words of the ancient proverb, David quotes, "Out of the wicked comes forth wickedness" (verse 13). David has done nothing wicked toward Saul, and he assures Saul his hand will not be against him in the future (verse 13). He also reminds the king that his fears about David are exaggerated. David likens

himself to a dead dog and to a single flea (verse 14). How can such a great man as Saul, with all his military might, can have such fears about David ? ([A Time to Kill, or Not - 1 Samuel 24:1-22](#))

**Brian Bell** observes that a single flea is "something harmless, elusive, unimportant. And like David, jumping about from one place to another!"

**Matthew Henry** - It is below so great a king to enter the lists with one that is so unequal a match for him, one of his own servants, bred a poor shepherd, now an exile, neither able nor willing to make any resistance. To conquer him would not be to his honour, to attempt it was his disparagement. If Saul would consult his own reputation, he would slight such an enemy (supposing he were really his enemy) and would think himself in no danger from him. David was so far from aspiring that he was, in his own account, as a dead dog. Mephibosheth thus calls himself, 2 Sa. 9:8. This humble language would have wrought upon Saul if he had had any spark of generosity in him. What credit would it be to Saul to trample upon a dead dog? What pleasure could it be to him to hunt a flea, a single flea, which (as some have observed), if it be sought, is not easily found, if it be found, is not easily caught, and, if it be caught, is a poor prize, especially for a prince. David thinks Saul had no more reason to fear him than to fear a flea-bite.

**1 Samuel 24:15 "The LORD therefore be judge and decide between you and me; and may He see and plead my cause and deliver me from your hand."**

BGT 1 Samuel 24:16 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) γ νοπο κ ριος ε ς κριτ ν κα δικαστ ν ν μ σον μο κα ν μ σον σο δοι κ ριος κα κρ ναι τ ν κρ σιν μου κα δικ σαι μοι κ χειρ ς σου

LXE 1 Samuel 24:15 The Lord be judge and umpire between me and thee, the Lord look upon and judge my cause, and rescue me out of thy hand.

KJV 1 Samuel 24:15 The LORD therefore be judge, and judge between me and thee, and see, and plead my cause, and deliver me out of thine hand.

NET 1 Samuel 24:15 May the LORD be our judge and arbiter. May he see and arbitrate my case and deliver me from your hands!"

CSB 1 Samuel 24:15 May the LORD be judge and decide between you and me. May He take notice and plead my case and deliver me from you."

ESV 1 Samuel 24:15 May the LORD therefore be judge and give sentence between me and you, and see to it and plead my cause and deliver me from your hand."

NIV 1 Samuel 24:15 May the LORD be our **judge** and **decide** between us. May he **consider** my cause and **uphold** it; may he **vindicate** me by delivering me from your hand."

NLT 1 Samuel 24:15 May the LORD therefore judge which of us is right and punish the guilty one. He is my advocate, and he will rescue me from your power!"

NRS 1 Samuel 24:15 May the LORD therefore be judge, and give sentence between me and you. May he see to it, and plead my cause, and vindicate me against you."

NJB 1 Samuel 24:16 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) May Yahweh be the judge and decide between me and you; may he examine and defend my cause and give judgement for me by rescuing me from your clutches!"

NAB 1 Samuel 24:16 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) The LORD will be the judge; he will decide between me and you. May he see this, and take my part, and grant me justice beyond your reach!"

YLT 1 Samuel 24:15 And Jehovah hath been for judge, and hath judged between me and thee, yea, he seeth and pleadeth my cause, and doth deliver me out of thy hand.'

GWN 1 Samuel 24:15 So the LORD must be the judge. He will decide between you and me. He will watch and take my side in this matter and set me free from you."

- **be judge:** 1Sa 24:12 2Ch 24:22 Mic 1:2
- **plead:** Ps 35:1 43:1 Ps 119:154 Mic 7:9
- **deliver:** 1Sa 26:4
- 1 Samuel 24 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Related Passages:**

Psalms 35:1 A Psalm of David. Contend, O LORD, with those who contend with me; Fight against those who fight against me.

Psalms 43:1 Vindicate me, O God, and plead my case against an ungodly nation; O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man!

Psalms 119:154 Plead my cause and redeem me; Revive me according to Your word.

## **DAVID RESTS HIS CASE WITH THE FINAL JUDGE & DEFENDER**

**The LORD therefore be judge and decide between you and me; and may He see and plead** ("defend" - NJB; "Advocate" - NLT) **my cause and deliver me from your hand** - Like 1Sa 24:12 above, this verse takes the form of a wish or a prayer and in the Septuagint is in the optative mood ("genoito kurios eis kriton" - "May the LORD be judge") Note all the verbs referring to Yahweh - judge, decide, see, plead (defend), deliver. David is trusting totally in the LORD's will and way. He rests his case with the Judge of all mankind, confident that he will be declared "not guilty." He is speaking the truth in love and clearly wants Saul to understand this and to soften his heart toward God and toward him. David is not about revenge but restoration of their former relations (recall that "Saul loved him greatly, and he became his armor bearer." 1 Sa 16:21+).

**Bergen** - David brought his address to a thundering conclusion by employing five consecutive hortatory clauses that have the Lord as the subject. This sustained appeal to the Lord is unparalleled in the Former Prophets and is rivaled only by the language of the Psalms. In these words David moved his focus away from Saul to look 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 (1Sa 24:15NIV) (Borrow [NAC - 1,2 Samuel](#))

**THOUGHT** - The "Sauls" of this world and all the forces of Satan (cf "accuser" - Rev 12:10+) and hell will continually assail us and hound us and seek our lives, but we need not fear because we have a [Covenant Defender](#), the Lord Jesus Christ, Who pleads with the Father and says, "This one is Mine, My possession (Titus 2:14+). I purchased him/her with My blood, once and for all!" (cf 1Jn 2:1NLT+) Can you see the personal application? We are in Covenant with the living God. He is our Protector. We do not have to defend ourselves. We do not take vengeance on anyone for what they say about us or do to us. We simply put on His garment of salvation (past tense - Gal 3:27+; present tense > Ro 13:14+, Eph 4:24+) and He will our Avenger. You can write it down in indelible ink! Now this does not mean we will never be harmed or never go through valleys (Ps 23:4). But God will avenge His people (now or later) because He has an eternal perspective regarding His perfect justice and vengeance. May God's Spirit grant us grace to rest in the sufficiency of the truth that we have a Covenant Defender in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen

[Help Us, O Jesus, Thou Mighty Defender](#)

Help us, O Jesus, Thou mighty **Defender**,  
Help when the forces of evil appear;  
Help us to battle and never surrender,  
Help us to conquer, and drive away fear;  
Satan is cunning, the prince of deceivers,  
Bringing disaster to many believers.

Help us, O Jesus, in hours of temptation,  
When both our faith and our courage are weak;  
Teach us to look to the sign of salvation,  
**And near Thy cross a new armor to seek;**  
Then we shall conquer, if Thou wilt befriend us,  
Thou wilt prevail and our faith will defend us.

Help us, O Jesus, when death shall spread terror,  
And our poor eyes are too feeble to see;  
Cleanse us and purge us from sin and from error;  
That we may blindly in faith cling to Thee;  
Help us, O Jesus, we conquer in dying,  
Unto the last on Thy mercy relying.

With these words David confidently affirms that **Yahweh is his Defender** now and forever! While we do not know exactly when David wrote Psalm 62, but experiences such as 1 Samuel 24 undergirded his words such as in verse 6

He only is **my** Rock and **my** Salvation:

He is **my** Defence; I shall not be moved.

-- Psalm 62:6KJV

[Play David's song "HE IS MY DEFENSE"](#)

Sung by Yeshua follower Marty Goetz

**1 Samuel 24:16 When David had finished speaking these words to Saul, Saul said, "Is this your voice, my son David?" Then Saul lifted up his voice and wept.**

BGT 1 Samuel 24:17 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) καὶ γένητο ὅς συνετλέσεν Δαυὶδ τὰ ματατὰ τὰ λαλῆναι πρὸς Σαουλ καὶ ἐπεὶ Σαουλ ἤφων σου ἀπὸ τῆς κωνοῦς Δαυὶδ καὶ ῥέν τιν φωνῆν αὐτοῦ Σαουλ καὶ κλαυσεν

LXE 1 Samuel 24:16 And it came to pass when David had finished speaking these words to Saul, that Saul said, Is this thy voice, Son David? And Saul lifted up his voice, and wept.

KJV 1 Samuel 24:16 And it came to pass, when David had made an end of speaking these words unto Saul, that Saul said, Is this thy voice, my son David? And Saul lifted up his voice, and wept.

NET 1 Samuel 24:16 When David finished speaking these words to Saul, Saul said, "Is that your voice, my son David?" Then Saul wept loudly.

CSB 1 Samuel 24:16 When David finished saying these things to him, Saul replied, "Is that your voice, David my son?" Then Saul wept aloud

ESV 1 Samuel 24:16 As soon as David had finished speaking these words to Saul, Saul said, "Is this your voice, my son David?" And Saul lifted up his voice and wept.

NIV 1 Samuel 24:16 When David finished saying this, Saul asked, "Is that your voice, David my son?" And he wept aloud.

NLT 1 Samuel 24:16 When David had finished speaking, Saul called back, "Is that really you, my son David?" Then he began to cry.

NRS 1 Samuel 24:16 When David had finished speaking these words to Saul, Saul said, "Is this your voice, my son David?" Saul lifted up his voice and wept.

NJB 1 Samuel 24:17 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) When David had finished saying this to Saul, Saul said, 'Is that your voice, my son David?' And Saul began to weep aloud.

NAB 1 Samuel 24:17 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) When David finished saying these things to Saul, Saul answered, "Is that your voice, my son David?" And he wept aloud.

YLT 1 Samuel 24:16 And it cometh to pass, when David completeth to speak these words unto Saul, that Saul saith, 'Is this thy voice, my son David?' and Saul lifteth up his voice, and weepeth.

GWN 1 Samuel 24:16 When David finished saying this, Saul asked, "Is that you speaking, my servant David?" and Saul cried loudly.

- **Is this:** 1Sa 26:17 Job 6:25 Pr 15:1 Pr 25:11 Lu 21:15 Ac 6:10
- **Saul lifted:** Ge 33:4
- 1 Samuel 24 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Luke 21:15 for I will give you utterance and wisdom which none of your opponents will be able to resist or refute.

Acts 6:10 But they were unable to cope with the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking.

**SAUL REMORSEFUL**

## RESPONSE

**When David had finished speaking these words to Saul** - Saul allowed David to finish his relatively long discourse from 1Sa 24:9-15. 1 Samuel 24:16-21 records Saul's reply to David and reveal his confused mental state and his tears of remorse without repentance.

**Saul said, "Is this your voice, my son David?"- Is this your voice** could be because Saul is somewhat removed from the cave. It also expresses Saul's shock that David would have shown him pity. He is so crazed with jealousy and fearful of David that he can hardly believe that this is the same man speaking who he had fabricated in his own warped thinking! Proverbs 16:7 says "When a man's ways are pleasing to the LORD, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him." **My son David** suggests one effect of David's discourse and defense was to soften Saul at least temporarily. In fact David was Saul's son-in-law through marriage to his daughter Michal (1Sa 18:27,28+). It strikes me that David's sincere, heartfelt discourse was a gift from the LORD to Saul, God's attempt to bring Saul to the point of true repentance.

**Then Saul lifted up his voice and wept** - This description indicates Saul was weeping audibly. David had practiced the NT principle of not being overcome by evil, but overcoming evil with good (Ro 12:21+) and it seemed to melt Saul's heart for the moment. As stated Saul weeping does not seem to be a reflection of a genuinely broken heart as his subsequent actions against David would attest. Saul's continued seeking to kill David in fact would prove that these were not the tears of a man with a broken and contrite heart but are still most likely "[crocodile tears](#)," a false display of grief as evidenced by his subsequent behavior.

**Robert Vannoy** - Saul experiences temporary remorse (1Sa 26:21 "I have sinned.") for his actions against David but quickly reverts to his former determination to kill him (1Sa 26:2).(Borrow [NIV Study Bible](#))

**Bergen** - Formerly he had refused even to mention the name of his enemy (cf. 1Sa 20:27, 30–31; 22:7–9, 13); now he called him "David" (1Sa 24:16; Hb. v. 17). Formerly David was Saul's son-in-law (cf. 1Sa 18:21); now he is "my son." Saul was now emotionally broken and "wept aloud." (Borrow [NAC - 1.2 Samuel](#))

Temporary remorse can look very impressive!

-- Paul Apple

**Brian Bell** agrees that "Saul's tears were superficial and his conviction temporary. His tears never brought about repentance or a change of heart!"

Saul is one man who never learned to really repent.

**Alan Redpath** - "What a miserable picture Saul is! What is the use of saying, 'I have played the fool,' if he goes on playing the fool? What use are his tears and confession before David if he doesn't act upon his remorse?....If a man is emotionally upset, as Saul was, and awakens to his condition, but only weeps about it and still doesn't obey God, his second state is a thousand times worse than the first. Emotion that does not lead to action only leads deeper into sin and rebellion."" ([The Making of a Man of God - Life of David - PDF](#))

**Wikipedia on remorse** - **Remorse** is a distressing [emotion](#) experienced by an individual who [regrets](#) actions which they have done in the past<sup>[1]</sup> that they deem to be [shameful](#), hurtful, or [wrong](#). Remorse is closely allied to [guilt](#) and self-directed [resentment](#). When a person regrets an earlier action or failure to act, it may be because of remorse or in response to various other consequences, including being punished for the act or omission. People may express remorse through [apologies](#), trying to repair the damage they've caused, or self-imposed punishments.

**1 Samuel 24:17 He said to David, "You are more righteous than I; for you have dealt well with me, while I have dealt wickedly with you.**

BGT 1 Samuel 24:18 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) κα ε πεν Σαουλ πρ ς Δαυιδ δ καιος σ π ρ μ τι σ νταπ δωκ ς μοι γαθ γ δ νταπ δωκ σοι κακ

LXE 1 Samuel 24:17 And Saul said to David, Thou art more righteous than I, for thou hast recompensed me good, but I have recompensed thee evil.

KJV 1 Samuel 24:17 And he said to David, Thou art more righteous than I: for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil.

NET 1 Samuel 24:17 He said to David, "You are more innocent than I, for you have treated me well, even though I have tried to harm you!"

CSB 1 Samuel 24:17 and said to David, "You are more righteous than I, for you have done what is good to me though I have done what is evil to you."

ESV 1 Samuel 24:17 He said to David, "You are more righteous than I, for you have repaid me good, whereas I have repaid you evil."

NIV 1 Samuel 24:17 "You are more righteous than I," he said. "You have treated me well, but I have treated you badly."

NLT 1 Samuel 24:17 And he said to David, "You are a better man than I am, for you have repaid me good for evil."

NRS 1 Samuel 24:17 He said to David, "You are more righteous than I; for you have repaid me good, whereas I have repaid you evil."

NJB 1 Samuel 24:18 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) 'You are upright and I am not,' he said to David, 'since you have behaved well to me, whereas I have behaved badly to you.'

NAB 1 Samuel 24:18 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) Saul then said to David: "You are in the right rather than I; you have treated me generously, while I have done you harm."

YLT 1 Samuel 24:17 And he saith unto David, 'More righteous thou art than I; for thou hast done me good, and I have done thee evil;'

GWN 1 Samuel 24:17 He told David, "You are more righteous than I. You treated me well while I treated you badly."

- **You are:** 1Sa 26:21 Ge 38:26 Ex 9:27 Ps 37:6 Mt 27:4
- **you have:** Mt 5:44 Ro 12:20-21
- 1 Samuel 24 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 5:44 "But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,"

Romans 12:20-21 "BUT IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM, AND IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK; FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS ON HIS HEAD." 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

### SAUL PASSES VERDICT ON HIMSELF AND DAVID

**He said to David, "You are more righteous than I; for you have dealt well with me-** NET - "You are more innocent than I." This is Saul's longest unbroken quote in Scripture. Saul accurately assesses and rightly recognizes his unrighteous behavior on one hand and the righteous character of David on the other hand. Saul explains that the evidence of David's righteousness was the fact that he repaid Saul's evil with good (Ro 12:21+, 1Pe 3:9+, cf Pr 16:32)! David has passed God's "pop test" and in so doing is showing us how a man after God's own heart behaves in real life situations.

**while I have dealt wickedly with you** - This sounds like Saul is confessing which is potentially a good sign. It is certainly a good step on the road to real repentance, but sadly it seems to stop here. Saul is seeing himself for who he has really been, but this is the first time he admits it. But his subsequent wicked actions toward David demonstrate his recognition of his personal sin is only temporary.

**Bob Utley** on **while I** - This is an intensified structure that emphasizes the contrast between Saul's actions and David's actions. This relates back to 1Sa 24:12+. YHWH will judge between these two anointed leaders!

---

#### Giving Good for Evil 1 Samuel 24:17-18

Then [Saul] said to David: "You are more righteous than I; for you have rewarded me with good, whereas I have rewarded you with evil. And you have shown this day how you have dealt well with me; for when the Lord delivered me into your hand, you did not kill

me."

A gentleman who had held many important positions in public life went to a friend in great anger over a real injury he had received from a prominent politician. He was considering how to react resentfully in the most effective manner. After relating the particulars to his friend, he asked if it would be manly to resent it. "Yes," replied his friend, "it would doubtless be manly to resent it, but it would be godlike to forget it."

David chose to let God be his example. When Saul entered a cave to attend to his needs, he didn't know that David and his 400 men were hiding in the recesses of that cavern. David had him at a severe disadvantage and his men urged him to seize the opportunity to take revenge on his enemy. But David refused. Rather than seeking to repay Saul for the evil he had done him, he secretly cut off a piece of Saul's robe (as proof of what he could have done) and allowed the king to leave without knowing how close he had been to death. Only later did Saul realize the mercy David had shown.

God's way is to show mercy rather than extract vengeance. Romans 5:8 says, "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Even while we were God's enemies, He had compassion for us and provided a way of salvation.

Are you thinking about getting even with someone? Don't do it. Try God's way instead. Return good for evil. Someday you'll be glad you did. ([Back to the Bible](#))

Evil for evil is man's way; good for evil is God's way.

**1 Samuel 24:18 "You have declared today that you have done good to me, that the LORD delivered me into your hand and yet you did not kill me."**

BGT 1 Samuel 24:19 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) καὶ σὺ πᾶν ἔγνων ὅτι καλὸν ἔργον ἔποιες μοι, ὅτι ὁ κύριος παρέδωκεν ἐν τῇ χειρὶ σου καὶ ὁ κύριος οὐκ ἐπέτρεψε μοι

LXE 1 Samuel 24:18 And thou hast told me to-day what good thou hast done me, how the Lord shut me up into thy hands to-day, and thou didst not slay me.

KJV 1 Samuel 24:18 And thou hast shewed this day how that thou hast dealt well with me: forasmuch as when the LORD had delivered me into thine hand, thou killedst me not.

NET 1 Samuel 24:18 You have explained today how you have treated me well. The LORD delivered me into your hand, but you did not kill me.

CSB 1 Samuel 24:18 You yourself have told me today what good you did for me: when the LORD handed me over to you, you didn't kill me.

ESV 1 Samuel 24:18 And you have declared this day how you have dealt well with me, in that you did not kill me when the LORD put me into your hands.

NIV 1 Samuel 24:18 You have just now told me of the good you did to me; the LORD delivered me into your hands, but you did not kill me.

NLT 1 Samuel 24:18 Yes, you have been amazingly kind to me today, for when the LORD put me in a place where you could have killed me, you didn't do it.

NRS 1 Samuel 24:18 Today you have explained how you have dealt well with me, in that you did not kill me when the LORD put me into your hands.

NJB 1 Samuel 24:19 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) And today you have shown how well you have behaved to me, since Yahweh had put me in your power but you did not kill me.

NAB 1 Samuel 24:19 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) Great is the generosity you showed me today, when the LORD delivered me into your grasp and you did not kill me.

YLT 1 Samuel 24:18 and thou hast declared to-day how that thou hast done good with me, how that Jehovah shut me up into thy hand, and thou didst not slay me,

GWN 1 Samuel 24:18 Today you have proved how good you've been to me. When the LORD handed me over to you, you didn't kill me.

- **Lord:** 1Sa 24:10 23:7 26:23
- **delivered:** Heb. shut me up, 1Sa 23:12 26:8 \*margins Ps 31:8
- 1 Samuel 24 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## DAVID'S MERCY AND GOODNESS TO KING SAUL

**You have declared today that you have done good to me, that the LORD delivered me into your hand and yet you did not kill me** - How did David do good? By defying the logic of any military analyst which calls for killing the commander of the forces if possible. He seems to grasp that the LORD had delivered him into the hands of David. He acknowledges that David spared his life.

### Not Seeking Revenge

[Saul said], "The Lord delivered me into your hands, but you did not kill me." 1 Samuel 24:18

Today's Scripture & Insight: 1 Samuel 24:1–4, 14–18

The farmer climbed into his truck and began his morning inspection of the crops. On reaching the farthest edge of the property, his blood began to boil. Someone had used the farm's seclusion to illegally dump their trash—again.

As he filled the truck with the bags of food scraps, the farmer found an envelope. On it was printed the offender's address. Here was an opportunity too good to ignore. That night he drove to the offender's house and filled his garden with not just the dumped trash but his own!

Revenge is sweet, some say, but is it right? In 1 Samuel 24, David and his men were hiding in a cave to escape a murderous King Saul. When Saul wandered into the same cave to relieve himself, David's men saw a too-good-to-ignore opportunity for David to get revenge (vv. 3–4). But David went against this desire to get even. "The Lord forbid that I should do such a thing to my master," he said (v. 6). When Saul discovered that David chose to spare his life, he was incredulous. "You are more righteous than I," he exclaimed (vv. 17–18).

As we or our loved ones face injustice, opportunities to take revenge on offenders may well come. Will we give in to these desires, as the farmer did, or go against them, like David? Will we choose righteousness over revenge? By: Sheridan Voysey ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

When have you most felt like getting even with someone? How can David's response guide you as you seek justice for yourself and others?

Jesus, lover of our enemies, may I seek justice Your way.

**1 Samuel 24:19 "For if a man finds his enemy, will he let him go away safely? May the LORD therefore reward you with good in return for what you have done to me this day."**

BGT 1 Samuel 24:20 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) κα τι ε ερωιτ τις τ ν χθρ ν α το ν θλ ψει κα κπ μψαι α τ ν ν δ γαθ κα κ ριος νταποτε σει α τ γαθ καθ ς πεπο ηκας σ μερον

LXE 1 Samuel 24:19 And if any one should find his enemy in distress, and should send him forth in a good way, then the Lord will reward him good, as thou has done this day.

KJV 1 Samuel 24:19 For if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away? wherefore the LORD reward thee good for that thou hast done unto me this day.

NET 1 Samuel 24:19 Now if a man finds his enemy, does he send him on his way in good shape? May the LORD repay you with good this day for what you have done to me.

CSB 1 Samuel 24:19 When a man finds his enemy, does he let him go unharmed? May the LORD repay you with good for what you've done for me today.

ESV 1 Samuel 24:19 For if a man finds his enemy, will he let him go away safe? So may the LORD reward you with good for what you have done to me this day.

NIV 1 Samuel 24:19 When a man finds his enemy, does he let him get away unharmed? May the LORD

reward you well for the way you treated me today.

NLT 1 Samuel 24:19 Who else would let his enemy get away when he had him in his power? May the LORD reward you well for the kindness you have shown me today.

NRS 1 Samuel 24:19 For who has ever found an enemy, and sent the enemy safely away? So may the LORD reward you with good for what you have done to me this day.

NJB 1 Samuel 24:20 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) When a man comes on his enemy, does he let him go unmolested? May Yahweh reward you for the good you have done me today!

NAB 1 Samuel 24:20 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) For if a man meets his enemy, does he send him away unharmed? May the LORD reward you generously for what you have done this day.

YLT 1 Samuel 24:19 and that a man doth find his enemy, and hath sent him away in a good manner; and Jehovah doth repay thee good for that which thou didst to me this day.

GWN 1 Samuel 24:19 When a person finds an enemy, does he send him away unharmed? The LORD will repay you completely for what you did for me today.

- **the Lord:** 1Sa 23:21 26:25 Jdg 17:2 Ps 18:20 Pr 25:21,22
- 1 Samuel 24 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Psalms 18:20 **The LORD has rewarded me according to my righteousness;** According to the cleanness of my hands He has recompensed me.

Proverbs 25:21; 22 If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; And if he is thirsty, give him water to drink; 22 For you will heap burning coals on his head, **And the LORD will reward you.**

### A "BENEDICTION" FROM SAUL

**For if a man finds his enemy, will he let him go away safely?**- This is rhetorical, for no one would let his enemy away safely. Saul saw David as his enemy, but David never referred to Saul as his enemy, showing the dramatic contrast in the hearts of these two men. As a result of this realization, Saul then pronounces a blessing on David!

**May the LORD therefore reward you with good in return for what you have done to me this day**- Saul's benediction or blessing on David is to some degree hypocritical, as his subsequent behavior would clearly demonstrate. Saul will still seek to return David's good with evil. In his heart, Saul wanted to kill David (1Sa 20:1, 22:23, 1Sa 23:15), not bless him. David declares as much in 1Sa 24:11 saying that "you are lying (Lxx has "laying snares [present tense] for my soul to take it") in wait for my life to take it."

**1 Samuel 24:20 "Now, behold, I know that you will surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel will be established in your hand."**

BGT 1 Samuel 24:21 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) καὶ νῦν ὁ κύριος γινώσκω τί βασιλείων βασιλεὺς σεις καὶ στήσεται ἐν χειρὶ σου βασιλεὺς Ἰσραὴλ

LXE 1 Samuel 24:20 And now, behold, I know that thou shalt surely reign, and the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thy hand.

KJV 1 Samuel 24:20 And now, behold, I know well that thou shalt surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hand.

NET 1 Samuel 24:20 Now look, I realize that you will in fact be king and that the kingdom of Israel will be established in your hand.

CSB 1 Samuel 24:20 "Now I know for certain you will be king, and the kingdom of Israel will be established in your hand.

ESV 1 Samuel 24:20 And now, behold, I know that you shall surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in your hand.

NIV 1 Samuel 24:20 I know that you will surely be king and that the kingdom of Israel will be established in your hands.

NLT 1 Samuel 24:20 And now I realize that you are surely going to be king, and that the kingdom of Israel will flourish under your rule.

NRS 1 Samuel 24:20 Now I know that you shall surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in your hand.

NJB 1 Samuel 24:21 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) Now I know that you will indeed reign and that the sovereignty in Israel will pass into your hands.

NAB 1 Samuel 24:21 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) And now, since I know that you shall surely be king and that sovereignty over Israel shall come into your possession,

YLT 1 Samuel 24:20 'And, now, lo, I have known that thou dost certainly reign, and the kingdom of Israel hath stood in thy hand;

GWN 1 Samuel 24:20 Now I know that you certainly will rule as king, and under your guidance the kingdom of Israel will prosper.

- I know well: 1Sa 20:30,31 23:17 2Sa 3:17,18 Job 15:25 Mt 2:3-6,13,16
- 1 Samuel 24 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

1 Sa 13:14 **"But now your kingdom shall not endure. The LORD has sought out for Himself a man after His own heart, and the LORD has appointed him as ruler over His people,** because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you."

1 Sa 15:28 So Samuel said to him, "The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to your neighbor, who is better than you.

### SAUL ACKNOWLEDGES DAVID'S ANOINTING AS KING

**Now, behold, I know that you will surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel will be established in your hand** From the passages above, clearly Saul knew that [his days as king were numbered](#) but this is the first time Saul openly confessed that he knew David would be the next king. One wonders if Saul and his son Jonathan had discussed this matter, for earlier we heard Jonathan encourage David with similar words "Do not be afraid, because the hand of Saul my father will not find you, and **you will be king over Israel** and I will be next to you; and Saul my father knows that also." (1Sa 23:17) Notice that while Saul acknowledges David will be king, he does not offer to step down! Note that Saul is saying that "the kingdom of Israel will flourish under your rule." (NLT)

[Bob Utley](#) adds a technical note on **you shall surely be king** - This is the intensified construction of an INFINITIVE ABSOLUTE and an IMPERFECT VERB of the same root

1 Samuel 24:21 "So now swear to me by the LORD that you will not cut off my descendants after me and that you will not destroy my name from my father's household."

BGT 1 Samuel 24:22 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) κα ν ν μοσ ν μοι ν κυρ τι ο κ ξολεθρε σεις τ σπ ρμα μου π σω μου κα ο κ φανιε ς τ νομ μου κ το ο κου το πατρ ς μου

LXE 1 Samuel 24:21 Now then swear to me by the Lord, that thou wilt not destroy my seed after me, that thou wilt not blot out my name from the house of my father.

KJV 1 Samuel 24:21 Swear now therefore unto me by the LORD, that thou wilt not cut off my seed after me, and that thou wilt not destroy my name out of my father's house.

NET 1 Samuel 24:21 So now swear to me in the LORD's name that you will not kill my descendants after me or destroy my name from the house of my father."

CSB 1 Samuel 24:21 Therefore swear to me by the LORD that you will not cut off my descendants or wipe out my name from my father's family."

ESV 1 Samuel 24:21 Swear to me therefore by the LORD that you will not cut off my offspring after me, and that you will not destroy my name out of my father's house."

NIV 1 Samuel 24:21 Now swear to me by the LORD that you will not cut off my descendants or wipe out my name from my father's family."

NLT 1 Samuel 24:21 Now swear to me by the LORD that when that happens you will not kill my family and destroy my line of descendants!"

NRS 1 Samuel 24:21 Swear to me therefore by the LORD that you will not cut off my descendants after me, and that you will not wipe out my name from my father's house."

NJB 1 Samuel 24:22 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) Now swear to me by Yahweh that you will not suppress my descendants once I am gone, or blot my name out of my family.'

NAB 1 Samuel 24:22 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) swear to me by the LORD that you will not destroy my descendants and that you will not blot out my name and family."

YLT 1 Samuel 24:21 and, now, swear to me by Jehovah -- thou dost not cut off my seed after me, nor dost thou destroy my name from the house of my father.'

GWN 1 Samuel 24:21 Swear an oath to the LORD for me that you will not wipe out my descendants or destroy my name in my father's family."

- **Swear:** 1Sa 20:14-17 Ge 21:23 31:48,53 Heb 6:16
- **that:** 2Sa 21:6-8
- 1 Samuel 24 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## SAUL TWO REQUESTS FROM DAVID

**So** - Means "for this reason," in this case for the reason that David was destined to be the next king of Israel.

**now swear to me by the LORD that**(REQUEST #1) **you will not cut off my descendants after me and that**(REQUEST #2) **you will not destroy my name from my father's household** - In cutting covenant with David, Jonathan had made a similar request of David "You shall not cut off your lovingkindness from my house forever, not even when the LORD cuts off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth. So Jonathan made ([karath](#) - cut) a *covenant* with the house of David, saying, "May the LORD require it at the hands of David's enemies." (1Sa 20:15, 16+). Note that David does ask Saul to reciprocate because he knows God will fulfill His Word to make David king.

**Robert Vannoy** - It was quite common in the ancient world for the first ruler of a new dynasty to secure his position by murdering all potential claimants to the throne from the preceding dynasty (1Ki 15:29; 16:11; 2Ki 10:7; 11:1).(Borrow [NIV Study Bible](#))

[Bob Utley](#) notes that Saul's request was quite reasonable for "death to all relatives was common in the ancient near east when kingship changed (cf. Jdg 9:5; 1Ki 15:29; 16:11; 2Ki 10:1-17; 11:1).

**John MacArthur** notes that "By solemn oath, David agreed to preserve Saul's family and family name. While most of Saul's family was later slain (2Sa 21:8, 9), this pledge was fulfilled in the life of Mephibosheth (see 2Sa 21:7) (Borrow [The MacArthur Study Bible](#))

[Matthew Poole](#) has an interesting note asking "How then could David destroy so many of Saul's sons, 2 Samuel 21:8-9? David could bind himself by his oaths, but he could not bind God, to whose good pleasure all promises, vows, and oaths must in all reason be submitted; and that was done by God's command, and God was well pleased with it, 2 Samuel 21:14."

---

**QUESTION** - [Was the killing of Saul's descendants a just response to Saul's killing of the Gibeonites?](#)

**ANSWER** - Second Samuel 21:9 says that David gave seven of Saul's descendants (two sons and five grandsons) "over to the Gibeonites, who killed them and exposed their bodies on a hill before the LORD. All seven of them fell together; they were put to death during the first days of the harvest, just as the barley harvest was beginning." The grisly proceedings were obviously sanctioned by David. Did God also approve of the slaughter?

The background for the slaying of Saul's descendants was this: years before, King Saul had tried to eradicate the [Gibeonites](#) from

Israel; however, his action violated the covenant Joshua had made with Gibeon in Joshua 9. As a direct result of Israel's breaking their covenant, God sent a famine upon Israel for three years. After Saul's time, David had the responsibility to provide justice for the Gibeonites. When he asked them what they would require to make things right, the Gibeonites requested the lives of seven of Saul's sons, and David handed them over.

It seems that Saul's seven descendants who were killed were no better men than Saul had been: the fruit had not fallen far from the tree. Reading 2 Samuel 21:1, we see that "during the reign of David there was a famine for three successive years, and David sought the face of the LORD. And the LORD said, 'It is because of the blood shed by Saul **and his family**, because he killed the Gibeonites'" (emphasis added).

Notice that the famine was not simply because of Saul's sin but because of "his bloody house" (NASB). Seven of Saul's descendants were killed because of their own bloodguilt. Perhaps they had aided Saul in some manner in the slaughter of the Gibeonites. As the NLT says, "The famine has come because Saul and his family are guilty of murdering the Gibeonites."

In short, David (and God) saw the killings as justice against the "bloody house" of Saul. Yes, God did approve of the killing of the guilty in this case, because it was a just punishment for their involvement in the prior murder of innocent men. [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

#### 1 Samuel 24:22 David swore to Saul. And Saul went to his home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold.

BGT 1 Samuel 24:23 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) κα μωσεν Δαυιδ τ Σαουλ κα π λθεν Σαουλ ε ς τ ν τ πον α το κα Δαυιδ κα ο νδρες α το ν βησαν ε ς τ ν Μεσσαρα στεν ν

LXE 1 Samuel 24:22 So David swore to Saul: and Saul departed to his place, and David and his men went up to the strong-hold of Messera.

KJV 1 Samuel 24:22 And David sware unto Saul. And Saul went home; but David and his men gat them up unto the hold.

NET 1 Samuel 24:22 David promised Saul this on oath. Then Saul went to his house, and David and his men went up to the stronghold.

CSB 1 Samuel 24:22 So David swore to Saul. Then Saul went back home, and David and his men went up to the stronghold.

ESV 1 Samuel 24:22 And David swore this to Saul. Then Saul went home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold.

NIV 1 Samuel 24:22 So David gave his oath to Saul. Then Saul returned home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold.

NLT 1 Samuel 24:22 So David promised this to Saul with an oath. Then Saul went home, but David and his men went back to their stronghold.

NRS 1 Samuel 24:22 So David swore this to Saul. Then Saul went home; but David and his men went up to the stronghold.

NJB 1 Samuel 24:23 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) This David swore to Saul, and Saul went home while David and his men went back to the stronghold.

NAB 1 Samuel 24:23 (Numbering in the Hebrew Bible) David gave Saul his oath and Saul returned home, while David and his men went up to the refuge.

YLT 1 Samuel 24:22 And David sweareth to Saul, and Saul goeth unto his house, and David and his men have gone up unto the fortress.

GWN 1 Samuel 24:22 So David swore to Saul. Then Saul went home, and David and his men went to their fortified camp.

- David and: Pr 26:24,25 Mt 10:16,17 Joh 2:24
- the hold: 1Sa 23:29
- 1 Samuel 24 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**DAVID SWEARS TO PROTECT**

## SAUL'S DESCENDANTS

**David swore** ([shaba](#) from sheba = seven, so David in a sense "sevened") **to Saul** - David of course had already made a covenant with Saul's son Jonathan and now is willing to make essentially the same promise to Saul (although they did not cut a covenant). Saul knew that David's word was as good as gold after his righteous behavior on this fateful day.

**Brian Bell** rightly observes that "it was Saul's sins, not David's revenge, that destroyed his family. Saul's concern was for his own name and descendants, not the spiritual welfare of the people."

**Bergen** - David would later fulfill this commitment by giving sanctuary—indeed a position of honor and a generous inheritance—to Mephibosheth (cf. 2 Sam 9:1–13; 19:29; 21:7). (Borrow [NAC - 1,2 Samuel](#))

**And Saul went to his home** - As you consider this scene, it is amazing that Saul did not turn on David. After all, he had David with his [back against the wall](#), still in front of a cave with presumably no outlet for escape. The fact that Saul left instead of attacking must be a reflection of the supernatural intervention of the LORD in protecting His anointed!

**but** - Term of contrasts mark a change of direction, in this case a literal change of direction.

**David and his men went up to the stronghold** ([mesudah](#); Lxx = Messera) - David was not fooled by Saul's "softened" response and knew that in his heart, Saul had only thoughts of murder which is why he goes back to the **stronghold**.

**Robert Vannoy** on **stronghold** - An inaccessible place (note on 1Sa 22:4 = "Perhaps a specific fortress, but more likely a reference to a geographic area in which it was easy to hide 1Sa 23:14; 2Sa 5:17; 23:14"). From previous experience David did not place any confidence in Saul's words of repentance..(Borrow [NIV Study Bible](#))

**Brian Bell** - David had won many battles, but one of his greatest victories occurred in that cave when he restrained himself & his men from killing Saul. Pr16:32 He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, And he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city. What a good example for all of us to follow! W. Revenge is as old as human nature (think Cain & Abel). If you're plotting revenge, however small and insignificant you may think it to be, surrender it now! - Release your grip on your get even scheme, and place the control in God's hands.

---

**Stronghold** (fortress)([04686](#)) [mesudah](#) from **tsud** = to hunt) means a fastness, stronghold. Mesudah (mesuda) refers to a wilderness or mountainous places for hiding, defense, and gathering supplies for battle (1Sa 22:4, 5; 24:22) especially David's city when he captured the "stronghold of Zion" (2Sa 5:7, 9). Job 39:28 gives us a good word picture of the meaning of this word describing the home of the eagle "On the cliff he dwells and lodges, Upon the rocky crag, an **inaccessible place** ([mesudah](#))."

**John Hartley** adds "Apparently related to mešād which means "mountain-height" or "summit"; then "fortress, castle" (Arabic mašādun) so [Masada](#), the fortress-palace plateau of Herod near the Dead Sea. In the rocky crag the eagle makes his stronghold (Job 39:28). But man erects his fortress out of stone or brick to protect himself from external dangers. Nevertheless with great strategy a stronghold may be taken; e.g. David captured the stronghold of Zion (2 Samuel 5:7). For the believer, especially David, God himself was the stronghold in whom he trusted throughout his trials (Psalm 18:2; Psalm 91:2)." (online [TWOT](#))

**Mesudah - 17v** - 1 Sam. 22:4; 1 Sam. 22:5; 1 Sam. 24:22; 2 Sam. 5:7; 2 Sam. 5:9; 2 Sam. 5:17; 2 Sam. 22:2; 2 Sam. 23:14; 1 Chr. 11:5; 1 Chr. 11:16; Job 39:28; Ps. 18:2; Ps. 31:2; Ps. 31:3; Ps. 71:3; Ps. 91:2; Ps. 144:2

---

**Charles Swindoll** in [David - A Man of Passion and Destiny](#) - TOUGH PRINCIPLES TO PRACTICE - revenge is as old as human nature. And, while not all vengeance creates a tragedy as bitter as Cain and Abel's, it all makes a travesty of God's plan for our lives. If you're plotting revenge, however small and insignificant you may think it to be, surrender it now! Release your grip on your "get-even" scheme, and place the control in God's hands. Let's reflect on some principles that will help us relinquish our desire for revenge.

**SINCE HUMANITY IS DEPRAVED, EXPECT TO BE MISTREATED!** The same human nature that beat in Saul's heart beats in all our hearts. Trouble comes when we expect, and then demand, too much from others. People are fallible; hurt feelings are par for the course.

**SINCE MISTREATMENT BY OTHERS IS INEVITABLE, WE CAN ANTICIPATE OUR DESIRES FOR REVENGE** Acknowledging the urge to get even is not the same as retaliating. Rather, when we're aware of what's going on inside, we have time to feel and pray and think and then choose a course of action that reflects our trust in God.

**SINCE THE TEMPTATION TOWARD REVENGE IS PREDICTABLE, REFUSE TO FIGHT IN THE FLESH**(ED: Only one was to

make this refusal = Be continually filled with the Spirit and walk by the Spirit for then you will not fulfill the desires of the fallen flesh - Eph 5:18+, Gal 5:16+). We can make up our minds ahead of time (**ED**: See where this desire and power to "make up our minds" comes from - Php 2:13NLT+ Don't try to "make up your mind" by depending on your fallen flesh to accomplish this goal! Flesh will never cast out flesh, so to speak!) to leave things in God's hands, which will make us less likely to impulsively lasso back when we're wronged. We're not responsible for how others behave, but we are responsible for making sure we're not mistreating others in return (cf Ro 12:17-21+).

#### A PSALM OF DAVID

Behold, God is my helper;  
The Lord is the sustainer of my soul.  
He will recompense the evil to my foes;  
Destroy them in Your faithfulness.  
Willingly I will sacrifice to Thee;  
I will give thanks to Thy name, O LORD, for it is good.  
For He has delivered me from all trouble,  
And my eye has looked with satisfaction upon my enemies.  
-- Ps 54:4-7

### PSALM 57

- 1 For the choir director; set to >Al-tashheth. A [Mikhtam](#) of David, when he fled from Saul in the cave.  
Be gracious to me, O God, be gracious to me,  
For my soul takes **refuge** in You;  
And in the shadow of Your wings I will take **refuge**  
Until destruction passes by.
- 2 I will cry to God Most High,  
To God who accomplishes all things for me.
- 3 He will send from heaven and save me;  
He reproaches him who tramples upon me. Selah.  
God will send forth His lovingkindness and His truth.
- 4 My soul is among lions;  
I must lie among those who breathe forth fire,  
Even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows  
And their tongue a sharp sword.
- 5 Be exalted above the heavens, O God;  
Let Your glory be above all the earth.
- 6 They have prepared a net for my steps;  
My soul is bowed down;  
They dug a pit before me;  
They themselves have fallen into the midst of it. Selah.
- 7 My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast;  
I will sing, yes, I will sing praises!
- 8 Awake, my glory!  
Awake, harp and lyre!  
I will awaken the dawn.
- 9 I will give thanks to You, O Lord, among the peoples;  
I will sing praises to You among the nations.
- 10 For Your lovingkindness is great to the heavens  
And Your truth to the clouds.
- 11 Be exalted above the heavens,  
O God; Let Your glory be above all the earth.

**Bowed down** (03721) **kapap** means literally to bow down but is used figuratively of humbling oneself (Isa 58:5, bowing in worship - Mic 6:6). In the psalms it is used metaphorically of one's as "bowed down" under some form of oppression. As oppressed by one's enemies in Ps 57:6. It speaks of distress in Ps 145:14, Ps 146:8. It is used primarily in the passive voice with the underlying sense of "being cast down," or overwhelmed with grief (cf. Ps 57:6; 145:14; 146:8). In the two latter references, the psalmist is raised up and consoled by God. In Ps 57:6 **kapap** is translated in the Lxx with the verb *katakampto* (not in NT) which means to bend down and is used only one other place to translate "greatly bowed down" in **Ps 38:6**.

**Gilbrant** - This verb is a byform of *kāphāh* (HED #3836). It may be an Aramaic loanword. It is attested in all branches of Semitic, with the primary nuance of "to bend." Three of the five biblical appearances of the verb *kāphaph* are found in the book of Psalms. Not surprisingly, then, each use has a figurative or metaphorical use of the literal definition "to bend" or "to bow down." The term's figurative uses connote being "bent low" or "bowed down" in distress, humiliation, or in worship. In Mic. 6:6, a Niphal form is used to explain how one seeking after God and his righteousness might speak to himself when approaching the Lord. Psalms 145:14 and 146:8 are identical in word construction and in meaning: the Lord raises those who "are bowed down." The context does not indicate that these individuals have bowed themselves before God, but rather, oppression, hunger and difficult circumstances have forced them to be bent over. When circumstances of life cause us to be bowed down and crushed, the psalmist offers the exhortation to praise and glorify God because He will lift us up. Likewise, when enemies "spread a net" for our feet and cause us to be bowed down (Ps. 57:6), God sees to it that they themselves will fall into it. In the title of this Psalm there is a statement that David wrote this poem "when he had fled from Saul into the cave." Even in times of great affliction, we can say with the psalmist: "Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let your glory be over all the earth" (v. 5, NIV). ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

**Kapap** - 6v - Ps. 57:6; Ps. 145:14; Ps. 146:8; Isa. 58:5; Mic. 6:6

## Psalm 57:1

**TITLE.** *To the Chief Musician.* So glad a song as this becomes ere it closes, should be in the keeping of the most skilled of all the temple minstrels. *Altaschith, i.e., DESTROY NOT.* This petition is a very sententious prayer, as full as it is brief, and well worthy to be the motto for a sacred song. David had said, "destroy not," in reference to Saul, when he had him in his power, and now he takes pleasure in employing the same words in supplication to God. We may infer from the spirit of the Lord's prayer, that the Lord will spare us as we spare our foes. There are four of these "*Destroy not*" Psalms, namely, the 57th, 58th, 59th, and 75th. In all of them there is a distinct declaration of the destruction of the wicked and the preservation of the righteous, and they all have probably a reference to the overthrow of the Jews, on account of their persecution of the great Son of David: they will endure heavy chastisement, but concerning them it is written in the divine decree, "Destroy them not." *Michtam of David.* For quality this Psalm is called golden, or a secret, and it well deserves the name. We may read the words and yet not know the secret joy of David, which he has locked up in his golden casket. *When he fled from Saul in the cave.* This is a song from the bowels of the earth, and, like Jonah's prayer from the bottom of the sea, it has a taste of the place. The poet is in the shadow of the cave at first, but he comes to the cavern's mouth at last, and sings in the sweet fresh air, with his eye on the heavens, watching joyously the clouds floating therein.

**DIVISIONS.** We have here prayer, Psalms 57:1-6, and praise, Psalms 57:7-11. The hunted one takes a long breath of prayer, and when he is fully inspired, he breathes out his soul in jubilant song.

### EXPOSITION

**Ver. 1. Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me.** Urgent need suggests the repetition of the cry, for thus intense urgency of desire is expressed. If he gives twice who gives quickly, 'so he who would receive quickly must ask twice. For mercy the psalmist pleads at first, and he feels he cannot improve upon his plea, and therefore returns to it. God is the God of mercy, and the Father of mercies, it is most fit therefore that in distress he should seek mercy from him in whom it dwells.

**For my soul trusteth in thee.** Faith urges her suit right well. How can the Lord be unmerciful to a trustful soul? Our faith does not deserve mercy, but it always wins it from the sovereign grace of God when it is sincere, as in this case where *the soul* of the man believed. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness."

**Yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge.** Not in the cave alone would he hide, but in the cleft of the Rock of ages. As the little birds find ample shelter beneath the parental wing, even so would the fugitive place himself beneath the secure

protection of the divine power. The emblem is delightfully familiar and suggestive. May we all experimentally know its meaning. When we cannot see the sunshine of God's face, it is blessed to cower down beneath the shadow of his wings.

**Until these calamities be overpast.** Evil will pass away, and the eternal wings will abide over us till then. Blessed be God, **our calamities are matters of time, but our safety is a matter of eternity.** When we are under the divine shadow, the passing over of trouble cannot harm us; the hawk flies across the sky, but this is no evil to the chicks when they are safely nestling beneath the hen.

#### EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUIANT SAYINGS

*Title.* This Psalm was composed, as the title notes, by David prayer wise, when he hid himself from Saul in the cave, and is inscribed with a double title, *Altaschith, Michtam of David*. *Altaschith* refers to the scope, and *Michtam* to the dignity of the subject matter. The former signifies *destroy not*, or, let there be no slaughter; and may either refer to Saul, concerning whom he gave charge to his servants not to destroy him; or rather it hath reference to God, to whom in this great exigence he poured out his soul in this pathetic ejaculation; *Altaschith*, destroy not. The latter title, *Michtam*, signifies a golden ornament, and so is suited to the choice and excellent matter of the Psalm, which much more deserves such a title than Pythagoras' golden verses did. *John Flavel (1627-1692), in "Divine Conduct, or the Mystery of Providence."*

*Title.* A Psalm composed *when David fled from Saul in the cave*, which is referred to in Psalms 143:0, and which, because it is without any other distinction called "the cave," is probably that celebrated cave where David with his six hundred followers lay concealed when Saul entered and David cut off the skirt of his robe. The king, accompanied by three thousand followers, chased him to the loftiest alpine heights--"to the sheepecotes," where the cattle were driven in the hottest summer months only--to hunt him in every hiding place. There was a cave, in the darkened cool of which David and his men were hid. Such caves in Palestine and the East are frequently enlarged by human hands, and so capacious that they accommodate thousands of people. This song of complaint was written during the hours of suspense which David spent there, to wait until the calamity was overpast (Psalms 57:2); in which he only gradually gains a stout heart (Psalms 57:8). His life was really suspended by a hair, if Saul or any of his attendants had espied him! *Agustus F. Tholuck.*

*Title. The cave.* There appear good grounds for the local tradition which fixes the cave on the borders of the Dead Sea, although there is no certainty with regard to the particular cave pointed out. The cave so designated is at a point to which David was far more likely to summon his parents, whom he intended to take from Bethlehem in to Moab, than to any place in the western plains... It is an immense natural cavern, the mouth of which can be approached only on foot along the side of the cliff. Irby and Mangles, who visited it without being aware that it was the reputed Cave of Adullam, state that it "runs in by a long, winding, narrow passage, with small chambers or cavities on either side. We soon came to a large chamber with natural arches of great height; from this last there were numerous passages, leading in all directions, occasionally joined by others at right angles, and forming a perfect labyrinth, which our guides assured us had never been perfectly explored--the people being afraid of losing themselves. The passages are generally four feet high by three feet wide, and were all on a level with each other." ...It seems probable that David as a native of Bethlehem, must have been well acquainted with this remarkable spot, and had probably often availed himself of its shelter, when out with his father's flocks. It would, therefore, naturally occur to him as a place of refuge when he fled from Gath. *John Kitto (1804-1854), in "A Cyclopaedia of Biblical Literature."*

*Whole Psalm.* Mystically this hymn may be construed of Christ, who was in the days of his flesh assaulted by the tyranny both of spiritual and temporal enemies. His temporal enemies, Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and people of Israel, furiously raged and took counsel together against him. The chief priests and princes were, saith Hierome, like *lions*, and the people like the *whelps of lions*, all of them in a readiness to devour his soul. The rulers *laid a net for his feet* in their captious interrogatories, asking (Matthew 22:17), "Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?" and (John 8:5) whether the woman taken in the very act of adultery should be stoned to death or no. The people were "*set on fire*," when as they raged against him, and *their teeth and tongues were spears and swords* in crying, "Crucify him, crucify him." His spiritual enemies also sought *to swallow him up*; his *soul was among lions* all the days of his life, at the hour of his death especially. The devil in tempting and troubling him, had *laid a snare for his feet*; and death, in *digging a pit* for him, had thought *to devour* him. As David was in death, so Christ the Son of David was in the *grave*. *John Boys, 1571-1625.*

**Ver. 1. Be merciful unto me, O God,** etc. This excellent Psalm was composed by David when there was enough to discompose the best man in the world. The repetition notes both the extremity of the danger, and the ardency of the supplicant. *Mercy! Mercy! Nothing but mercy*, and that exerting itself in any extraordinary way, can now save him from ruin. The arguments he pleads for obtaining mercy in this distress are very considerable.

1. He pleads his reliance upon God as an argument to move mercy. **My soul trusteth in thee**, etc. This his trust and dependence upon God, though it be not argumentative in respect of the dignity of the *act*; yet it is so in respect both of the nature of the *object*, a compassionate God who will not expose any that take shelter under his wings, and in respect of the *promise*, whereby protection is assured to them that fly to him for sanctuary. Isaiah 26:3.

2. He pleads former experiences of his help in past distresses, as an argument encouraging hope under the present strait (Psalms 57:2). *John Flavel*.

**Ver. 1. Be merciful unto me.** According to the weight of the burden that grieveth us, is the cry that comes from us. How do poor condemned prisoners cry to their judges, "Have pity upon us, have pity upon us!" David, in the day of his calamities doubles his prayer for mercy: **Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in thee**, etc., **Until these calamities be overpast**. It was not a single calamity, but a multitude of calamities which compassed David, and therefore he compasseth the Lord about with petitions. His spirit being up in prayer, like a bell that rings out, he strikes on both sides, **Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me**. *Joseph Caryl*.

**Ver. 1. Be merciful unto me.** The first clause contains the prayer itself in a very forcible word *ygnx*, properly, "Show thy most tender affection to me, "such as animals, with a humming sound, show to their young. *Hermann Venema*.

**Ver. 1. For my soul trusteth in thee.** The best reason with God, who "taketh pleasure in those that hope in his mercy." Psalms 147:11. *Poole's Synopsis*.

**Ver. 1. Soul.** His *soul* trusted in God; and this is a form of expression the force of which is not to be overlooked; for it implies that the trust which he exercised proceeded from his very innermost affection--that it was of no volatile character, but deeply and strongly rooted. He declares the same truth in figurative terms, when he adds his persuasion that God would cover him with the shadow of his wings. *John Calvin*.

**Ver. 1. In the shadow of thy wings I will trust;** properly, I will seek for protection. The very delightful figure here employed, is taken from the chicken lying safely hid under the mother's wings; at the same time it seems to have reference to the wings of the cherubim, by which the mercyseat was covered. *Simon de Muis*, 1587-1644.

**Ver. 1. The shadow of thy wings.** Compare Psalms 17:8 Psalms 17:61:4; and Matthew 23:37; and the Apocalyptic imagery, describing the church fleeing from the dragon in the wilderness; and "to her are given the two wings of the great eagle, "and she is delivered from the dragon, who desires to *swallow her up*. See Revelation 12:6, Revelation 12:15-16. *Christopher Wordsworth*, 1868.

**Ver. 1. Until these calamities be overpast.** He compares his afflictions and calamity to a storm that cometh and goeth; as it is not always fair weather with us in this life, so not always foul. Athanasius said of Julian furiously raging against the Lord's Anointed, "*Nubecula est, cito transibit*, 'he is a little cloud; he will soon pass away. Man is born to labour and dolour, to travail and trouble; to labour in his actions, to dolour in his passions; and so, "Great are the troubles of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of all." If we put our trust in him and cast all our care upon him, he will in his good time bring it to pass, that all our afflictions shall overpass. He will either take them from us or us from them, and then we shall assuredly know that the troubles of this life present are not worthy of the glory which in the life to come shall be showed unto us. For as the globe of the earth, which improperly for his show of bigness we term the world, and is, after the mathematician's account, many thousand miles in compass; yet, being compared unto the greatness of the starry sky's circumference, is but a centre or little prick: so the travail and affliction of this life temporal, in respect of the joys eternal in the world to come, bear not any proportion, but are to be reputed in comparison a very nothing, as a dark cloud that cometh and goeth in a moment. *John Boys*.

**Ver. 1-3. In the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast**, etc. As if he had said, Lord, I am already in the cave and in the holds, and in the shadow of it, but yet for all that I think not myself safe indeed, till I have made my refuge in the shadow of thy wings: that is therefore the course I resolve and build upon. It was wisely done of him: and mark what course he takes to do it, Psalms 57:2, **I will cry unto God most high**, I will by prayer put myself under the shadow of God's wings: and mark what success should follow, Psalms 57:3, **He shall send from heaven, and save me from the reproach of him that would swallow me up. God shall send forth his mercy and his truth**. When we send prayers up to heaven, God will send help down from heaven. But yet David *prays* to God, as well as *trusts* in God. And unless we pray as well as trust, our trust will fail us, for we must trust to God for that we pray for. *Jeremiah Dyke*, 1620.

## HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

**Ver. 1. (first clause).** *Repetition in prayer*.

1. Its dangers. May degenerate into "vain repetitions." Carried to excess painfully suggests the idea, God is unwilling.
2. Its uses. Eases the soul like tears. Manifests intense emotion. Enables those of less mental activity to join in the general supplication. *R. A. Griffin*.

**Ver. 1.** Here are--

I. Calamities.

1. War.

2. Pestilence.

3. Privations.

4. Sin, greatest of all.

5. Death.

6. Curse of a broken law. II. Here is a refuge from these calamities.

1. In God.

2. Specially in the mercy of God. III. There is flying to that refuge.

1. By faith; **My soul trusteth in thee; Under the shadow**, etc.

2. By prayer; "Be, "etc. IV. Here is continuance both in faith and prayer; **until, etc.** G. R.

**Ver. 1,4,6-7.** Note the varying condition of the same heart, at the same time. **My soul trusteth in thee... My soul is among lions... My soul is bowed down... My heart is fixed.**

#### WORKS UPON THE FIFTY-SEVENTH PSALM

*The Works of JOHN BOYS, D.D., "Deane of Canterburie, '1629, folio, pp. 834-40, contains an Exposition of Psalms 57:0.*

In CHANDLER'S *"Life of David, 'Vol. 1., pp. 176-9, there is an Exposition of this Psalm.*

### Psalm 57:2

#### EXPOSITION

**Ver. 2. I will cry.** He is quite safe, but yet he prays, for faith is never dumb. We pray because we believe. We exercise by faith the spirit of adoption whereby we cry. He says not I do cry, or I have cried, but I will cry, and indeed, this resolution may stand with all of us until we pass through the gates of pearl; for while we are here below we shall still have need to cry.

**Unto God most high.** --Prayers are for God only; the greatness and sublimity of his person and character suggest and encourage prayer; however high our enemies, our heavenly Friend is higher, for he is **Most high**, and he can readily send from the height of his power the succour which we need.

**Unto God that performeth all things for me.** He has cogent reason for praying, for he sees God performing. The believer waits and God works. The Lord has undertaken for us, and he will not draw back, he will go through with his covenant engagements. Our translators have very properly inserted the words, "all things, "for there is a blank in the Hebrew, as if it were a *carte blanche*, and you might write therein that the Lord would finish anything and everything which he has begun. Whatsoever the Lord takes in hand he will accomplish; hence past mercies are guarantees for the future, and admirable reasons for continuing to cry unto him.

#### EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

**Ver. 1-3. In the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast**, etc. As if he had said, Lord, I am already in the cave and in the holds, and in the shadow of it, but yet for all that I think not myself safe indeed, till I have made my refuge in the shadow of thy wings: that is therefore the course I resolve and build upon. It was wisely done of him: and mark what course he takes to do it, Psalms 57:2, **I will cry unto God most high**, I will by prayer put myself under the shadow of God's wings: and mark what success should follow, Psalms 57:3, **He shall send from heaven, and save me from the reproach of him that would swallow me up. God shall send forth his mercy and his truth.** When we send prayers up to heaven, God will send help down from heaven. But yet David *prays* to God, as well as *trusts* in God. And unless we pray as well as trust, our trust will fail us, for we must trust to God for that we pray for. *Jeremiah Dyke, 1620.*

**Ver. 2. Unto God that performeth all things for me.** God's favours already received are a pledge that he will complete his work of love "upon *le me.*" The beginning is the earnest of the completion. His *word* is a guarantee for the *performance* of "all things" that I need. (Compare Psalms 57:3 Psalms 57:56:4 1 Samuel 2:9 1 Samuel 2:3:12 1 Samuel 23:17 1 Samuel 23:24:21 Psalms 128:8 Job 10:3, Job 8:14:15 Philipians 1:6 Isaiah 26:12). *A. R. Fausset.*

**Ver. 2. God that performeth all things for me.** Hebrew, *that performeth* (or *perfecteth*, or *finisheth*, as this word is rendered, Psalms 138:8; *i.e.*, will certainly perform or finish), *for*, or *towards*, or *concerning me*. He doth not express what he performeth, or perfecteth, or fulfilleth, but leaveth it to be understood, as being easy to be understood. **He performeth** or *perfecteth*, to wit, all that he hath promised; engages himself to perform what he hath begun to do, or what is yet to be performed; it being usual in the Hebrew language to understand a verbal noun after the verb. He implies that God is not like men, who make large promises, but either through inability, or carelessness, or unfaithfulness, do not perform them, but will certainly be as good as his word. *Matthew Poole*, 1624-1679.

**Ver. 2. (last clause).** The word which we translate **performeth** comes from a root that signifies both to *perfect* and to *desist* or *cease*. For when a business is performed or perfected, the agent then ceases and desists from working: he puts to the last hand when he finishes the work. To such a happy issue the Lord hath brought all his doubtful and difficult matters before; and this gives him encouragement that he will still be gracious, and perfect that which concerneth him now, as he speaks, Psalms 138:8, "The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me." The Septuagint renders it by *ton euergetm sonta me*, who *profits* or *benefits* me. And it is a certain truth, that all the results and issues of providence are profitable and beneficial to the saints. But the supplement in our translation well conveys the importance of the place; "who performeth **all things**; and it involves the most strict and proper notion of providence, which is nothing else but the performance of God's gracious purposes and promises to his people." And therefore Vatablus and Muis supply and fill up the room with the conciseness of the original leaves, with *quae promisit: I will cry unto God most high*; unto God that performeth *the things which he hath promised*. Payment is the performance of promises. Grace makes the promise, and providence the payment. Piscator fills it with *benignitatem et misericordiam suam*; "unto God that performeth *his kindness and mercy*." But still it supposes the mercy performed to be contained in the promise, and much more so in the providential performance of it to us. *John Flavel*.

**Ver. 2. (last clause).** David even then when he fled from Saul in the cave he looks upon God as having *performed all things for him*. The word is, he hath *perfected all things*; and it is observable that David uses the same expression of praising God here when he was in the cave, hiding himself to save his life, as he did when he triumphed over his enemies--Psalms 6:0 and Psalms 108:0. *Jeremiah Burroughs*, 1599-1646.

**Ver. 2. (last clause).** The Targum curiously paraphrases this clause: "Who ordered the spider that wrought the web, on my account, at the mouth of the cave; "applying a later historical fact, which, however, may have had its prototype in David's history. *Andrew A. Bonar*, in "*Christ and his Church in the Book of Psalms*," 1859.

## HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

**Ver. 2.** Prayer to the performing God. He performs all his promises, all my salvation, all my preservation, all needed between here and heaven. Here he reveals his omnipotence, his grace, his faithfulness, his immutability; and we are bound to show our faith, patience, joy, and gratitude.

**Ver. 2.** Strange reasons.

I. The psalmist in the depth of distress, cries to God, because he is most high in glory. Surely this thought might well paralyse him with the fear of divine inaccessibility, but the soul quickened with suffering, sees through and beyond the metaphor, rejoices in the truth, "Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly."

II. He cries to God for help, because God *is* performing all things for him. Why urge him then? Prayer is the music to which "the mighty man of war" goes forth to battle. *R. A. G.*

## Psalm 57:3

### EXPOSITION

**Ver. 3. He shall send from heaven.** If there be no fit instruments on earth, heaven shall yield up its legions of angels for the succour of the saints. We may in times of great straits expect mercies of a remarkable kind; like the Israelites in the wilderness, we shall have our bread hot from heaven, new every morning; and for the overthrow of our enemies God shall open his celestial batteries, and put them to utter confusion. Wherever the battle is more fierce than ordinary, there shall come succours from headquarters, for the Commander in chief sees all.

**And save me from the reproach of him that would swallow me up.** He will be in time, not only to rescue his servants from being

swallowed up, but even from being reproached. Not only shall they escape the flames, but not even the smell of fire shall pass upon them. O dog of hell, I am not only delivered from thy bite, but even from thy bark. Our foes shall not have the power to sneer at us, their cruel jests and taunting gibes shall be ended by the message from heaven, which shall for ever save us.

**Selah.** Such mercy may well make us pause to meditate and give thanks. Rest, singer, for God has given thee rest!

**God shall send forth his mercy and his truth.** He asked for mercy, and truth came with it. Thus evermore doth God give us more than we ask or think. His attributes, like angels on the wing, are ever ready to come to the rescue of his chosen.

#### EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAINT SAYINGS

**Ver. 1-3. In the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast,** etc. As if he had said, Lord, I am already in the cave and in the holds, and in the shadow of it, but yet for all that I think not myself safe indeed, till I have made my refuge in the shadow of thy wings: that is therefore the course I resolve and build upon. It was wisely done of him: and mark what course he takes to do it, Psalms 57:2, **I will cry unto God most high**, I will by prayer put myself under the shadow of God's wings: and mark what success should follow, Psalms 57:3, **He shall send from heaven, and save me from the reproach of him that would swallow me up. God shall send forth his mercy and his truth.** When we send prayers up to heaven, God will send help down from heaven. But yet David *prays* to God, as well as *trusts* in God. And unless we pray as well as trust, our trust will fail us, for we must trust to God for that we pray for. *Jeremiah Dyke*, 1620.

**Ver. 3. Him that would swallow me up.** If I were to take you to my house, and say that I had an exquisite fat man, and wished you to join me in eating him, your indignation could be restrained by nothing. You would pronounce me to be crazy. There is not in New York a man so mean that he would not put down a man who should propose to have a banquet off from a fellow man, cutting steaks out of him, and eating them. And that is nothing but feasting on the human body, while they will all sit down, and take a man's soul, and look for the tender loins, and invite their neighbours in to partake of the little titbits. They will take a man's honour and name, and broil them over the coals of their indignation, and fill the whole room with the aroma thereof, and give their neighbour a piece, and watch him, and wink as he tastes it. You all eat men up... You eat the souls, the finest elements of men. You are more than glad if you can whisper a word that is derogatory to a neighbour, or his wife, or his daughter... The morsel is too exquisite to be lost. Here is the soul of a person, here is a person's hope for this world and the world to come, and you have it on your fork, and you cannot refrain from tasting it, and give it to some one else to taste. You are cannibals, eating men's honour and name and rejoicing in it-- and that, too, when you do not always know that the things charged against them are true; when in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the probabilities are that they are not true. *Henry Ward Beecher*, 1870.

**Ver. 3. God shall send forth his mercy and his truth,** viz., to save me. That is to say, God, to manifest his mercy, and vindicate the truth of his promises, will save me. The reader will observe, that mercy and truth are here poetically represented as ministers of God, standing in his presence, ready to execute his pleasure, and employed by him in the salvation of his people. *Samuel Chandler*.

**Ver. 3. His mercy and his truth.** He need not send down angels, he need send but **mercy and truth** down, which elsewhere it is said he prepares in the heavens. Psalms 61:7. He prepares commissions for them, and sends them down with them for execution. *Thomas Goodwin*.

#### HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

**Ver. 3.** The saints comfort in adversity.

- I. All contingencies are provided for: **He shall** (or will) **send**.
- II. The highest resources are available: **from heaven**.
- III. The worst foes will be overcome in the end: **him that would swallow me up**.
- IV. By the holiest means: **mercy and truth**. *R. A. G.*

**Ver. 3.** The celestial messengers. What they are. The certainty of their being sent. Their efficient operation. The grateful receiver.

**Ver. 3. (last clause).** The harmony of the divine attributes in salvation. Mercy founded on truth, truth vindicating mercy. Mercy without injustice, justice honoured in mercy.

### Psalms 57:4

#### EXPOSITION

**Ver. 4. My soul is among lions.** He was a very Daniel. Howled at, hunted, wounded, but not slain. His place was in itself one of extreme peril, and yet faith made him feel himself secure, so that he could lie down. The cave may have reminded him of a lion's den, and Saul and his band shouting and yelling in their disappointment at missing him, were the lions; yet beneath the divine shelter he finds himself safe.

**And I lie even among them that are set on fire.** Perhaps Saul and his band kindled a fire in the cavern while they halted in it, and David was thus reminded of the fiercer fire of their hate which burned within their hearts. Like the bush in Horeb, the believer is often in the midst of flames, but never consumed. It is a mighty triumph of faith when we can lie down even among firebrands and find rest, because God is our defence.

**Even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword.** Malicious men carry a whole armoury in their mouths; they have not harmless mouths, whose teeth grind their own food as in a mill, but their jaws are as mischievous as if every tooth were a javelin or an arrow. They have no molars, all their teeth are canines, and their nature is canine, leonine, wolfish, devilish. As for that busy member the tongue, in the case of the malicious, it is a two edged, keen, cutting, killing sword. The tongue, which is here compared to a sword, has the adjective *sharp* added to it, which is not used in reference to the teeth, which are compared to spears, as if to show that if men were actually to tear us with their teeth, like wild beasts, they could not thereby wound us so severely as they can do with their tongues. No weapon is so terrible as a tongue sharpened on the devil's grindstone; yet even this we need not fear, for "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that riseth against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn."

#### EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUIANT SAYINGS

**Ver. 4. My soul is among lions.** This may also be construed of the church, and that both in respect of her spiritual enemies and temporal. As for her ghostly foes, the devil is a *roaring lion* (1 Peter 5:8), and our sins are the *whelps of lions*, ready to devour us. And concerning outward enemies, the church in this world is like Daniel in the lion's den, or as "the sucking child playing upon the hole of the asp." Isaiah 11:8. She hath here no visible power or outward help to fly to for succour, all her trust is in the Lord, and "under the shadow of his wings is her refuge, till this evil is overpast."... And surely, beloved, if the church had not any other enemies, but only these monstrous Antichrists of Rome, yet she might truly complain with our prophet here, **My soul is among lions**. Eleven popes had that name, whereof all, excepting two or three, were roaring lions in their Bulls, and ravening lions in seeking after their prey. *Leo* the tenth so pilled (Pill--peel, to pillage, plunder, strip) and polled (Poll, used synonymously with peel) the goodly nations of Germany with his unpardonable pardons and merciless indulgences, as that his insupportable cruelty gave the first occasion of the Reformation of religion in that country. *John Boys*.

**Ver. 4. (first clause).** Mudge translates literally, **I lie with my soul amidst lionesses**. This agrees with the opinion of Bochart, who thinks that the animals here intended are lionesses, properly, when giving suck to their young, a time when they are peculiarly fierce and dangerous, "nor need we wonder," he observes, "that the lioness is reckoned among the fiercest lions; for the lioness equals, or even exceeds, the lion in strength and fierceness; "and this he proves from the testimonies of ancient writers. *James Anderson's Note to Calvin in loc*, 1846.

**Ver. 4. And I lie even among them that are set on fire.** The whole pith lies in the word *hbkva*, *I will recline*, which denotes a tranquil and secure condition of body and mind, like a man *reclining* and sleeping, as Psalms 3:5; **I laid me down and slept, I awaked**; and lived composedly; Psalms 4:9; **I will both lay me down in peace**, etc. *Hermann Venema*.

**Ver. 4.** The horrors of a lion's den, the burning of a fiery furnace, and the cruel onset of war, are the striking images by which David here describes the peril and wretchedness of his present condition. *John Morison*.

#### HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

**Ver. 1,4,6-7.** Note the varying condition of the same heart, at the same time. **My soul trusteth in thee... My soul is among lions... My soul is bowed down... My heart is fixed.**

**Ver. 4. My soul is among lions.** How came I there? If for God's sake, then I may remember--

1. So was my Lord in the wilderness.
2. The lions are chained.
3. Their howling is all they can do.
4. I shall come out of their den alive, unhurt, honoured.
5. The Lion of Judah is with me.
6. I shall soon be among the angels.

## Psalm 57:5

### EXPOSITION

**Ver. 5. Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens.** This is the chorus of the Psalm. Before he has quite concluded his prayer the good man interjects a verse of praise; and glorious praise too, seeing it comes from the lion's den and from amid the coals of fire. Higher than the heavens is the Most High, and so high ought our praises to rise. Above even the power of cherubim and seraphim to express it, the glory of God is revealed and is to be acknowledged by us.

**Let thy glory be above all the earth.** As above, so below, let thy praises, O thou great Jehovah, be universally proclaimed. As the air surrounds all nature, so let thy praises gird the earth with a zone of song.

### EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

None.

### HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

**Ver. 5.**

- I. The end which God has in view, both in heaven and earth, in a sinful and in sinless worlds--his own glory.
- II. Our duty to acquiesce in that end: **Be thou**, etc. --Not self, not men, not angels--**Be thou exalted**, etc. In this we should acquiesce--
  1. Actively, by seeking that end.
  2. Passively, by submission to his will. *G. R.*

## Psalms 57:6

### EXPOSITION

**Ver. 6. They have prepared a net for my steps.** The enemies of the godly spare no pains, but go about their wicked work with the coolest deliberation. As for each sort of fish, or bird, or beast, a fitting net is needed, so do the ungodly suit their net to their victim's circumstances and character with a careful craftiness of malice. Whatever David might do, and whichever way he might turn, his enemies were ready to entrap him in some way or other.

**My soul is bowed down.** He was held down like a bird in a trap; his enemies took care to leave him no chance of comfort.

**They have digged a pit before me, into the midst whereof they are fallen themselves.** He likens the design of his persecutors to pits, which were commonly dug by hunters to entrap their prey; these were made in the usual path of the victim, and in this case David says, **before me**, *i.e.*, in my ordinary way. He rejoices because these devices had recoiled upon themselves. Saul hunted David, but David caught him more than once and might have slain him on the spot. Evil is a stream which one day flows back to its source.

**Selah.** We may sit down at the pit's mouth and view with wonder the just retaliations of providence.

### EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

**Ver. 6. Net.** Not having fire arms, the ancients were much more skilful than the moderns in the use of snares, nets, and pits for capturing wild animals. A large class of Biblical figures and allusions necessarily presuppose this state of things. *W. M. Thomson.*

### HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

**Ver. 1,4,6-7.** Note the varying condition of the same heart, at the same time. **My soul trusteth in thee... My soul is among lions... My soul is bowed down... My heart is fixed.**

**Ver. 6. (first clause).**

- I. Who are they?

1. Those who lead us into sin.
2. Who argue from worldly philosophy.
3. Who proclaim priestly and sacramental superstition.
4. Who decoy us from the church of God.
5. Who teach Antinomian doctrine. II. How shall we escape them?
1. Keep out of their way.
2. Keep to God's way.
3. Trust daily in the Lord.

**Ver. 6. My soul is bowed down.**

- I. *The prostration.*
  1. Caused by enemies, weakness, fear, pain.
  2. Deep, agonizing, self revealing.
  3. Common to the Head and the members. II. *The consolation.*
    1. Bowed down, but not condemned.
    2. Hoping in the promise.
    3. Trusting in God.
    4. Expecting a blessing from the trial.

## Psalm 57:7

### EXPOSITION

**Ver. 7. My heart is fixed.** One would have thought he would have said, "My heart is fluttered;" but no, he is calm, firm, happy, resolute, established. When the central axle is secure, the whole wheel is right. If our great bower anchor holds, the ship cannot drive.

**O God, my heart is fixed.** I am resolved to trust thee, to serve thee, and to praise thee. Twice does he declare this to the glory of God who thus comforts the souls of his servants. Reader, it is surely well with thee, if thy once roving heart is now firmly fixed upon God and the proclamation of his glory.

**I will sing and give praise.** Vocally and instrumentally will I celebrate thy worship. With lip and with heart will I ascribe honour to thee. Satan shall not stop me, nor Saul, nor the Philistines, I will make Adullam ring with music, and all the caverns thereof echo with joyous song. Believer, make a firm decree that your soul in all seasons shall magnify the Lord.

"Sing, though sense and carnal reason  
Fain would stop the joyful song:  
Sing, and count it highest treason  
For a saint to hold his tongue."

### EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

**Ver. 7. My heart is fixed, O God,** etc. The psalmist knowing that it is the order and work of God, first to prepare the heart for communion, and then to incline his own ear to hear his people, and to entertain communion with them in ordinances, he doth observe this order, and follow it with a practice suitable to it in his daily address to God, that is thus, wheresoever he doth find his heart put into a fitted and prepared frame for communion with God, he doth not let it die again, and go out of frame by a slothful neglect of such a disposition of heart. No, but he immediately sets himself to duty, to worship God, and to the acts of his worship, in his ordinances, as he expresses himself in Psalms 57:7; viz., thus--ybl nwkg myhla ybl nwkg, *Nachon libbi Elohim, nachon libbi* (there is the first; he finds his heart fitted and prepared for communion with God): "My heart, "saith he, "is fitted or prepared" (for the word nwkg *nachon* is the passive conjugation *niphal*, signifying, he is fitted or prepared, from the root nzb, *chun*, he fitted or prepared, in the active; and so it is rather to be rendered prepared or fitted, then "fixed, "thus ykl, *libbi*, my heart; nwkg, *nachon*, is

fitted or prepared), "O God, my heart is fitted or prepared" for communion with thee. Well, what follows? He presently sets himself upon that great duty and ordinance of communion with God, in the praising of his name and singing forth those praises, as in the words immediately following in the same verse, thus: **My heart is prepared, O God, my heart is prepared**; therefore, hrnzaw, *ashidah va-azamerah*, "I will sing and give praise." William Strong, in "Communion with God," 1656.

**Ver. 7. My heart is fixed, O God,** etc. Fitness for duty lies in the orderly temper of body and mind, making a man willing to undertake, and able to finish his work with comfortable satisfaction. If either the body or mind be distempered, a man is unfit for such an undertaking; both must be in a suitable frame, like a well tuned instrument, else there will be no melody: hence when David prepared himself for praises and worship, he tells us *his heart was ready and fixed*, and then, his *tongue* was ready also (Psalms 45:1), so was his hand with psaltery and harp; all these were awakened into a suitable posture. That a man is or hath been in a fit order for service may be concluded from

(1.) His alacrity to undertake a duty.

(2.) His activity in the prosecution.

(3.) His satisfaction afterward. Right grounds and principles in these things being still presupposed. *Richard Gilpin* (1625-1699, 1700), in "*Daemonologia Sacra*."

**Ver. 7. I will sing.** It should alarm the wicked that they are contending with a people who sing and shout on the battle field. Yea, they never sing louder than when most distressed and afflicted. Whether saints conquer or are conquered they still sing on. Blessed be God for that. Let sinners tremble at contending with men of a spirit so heavenly. *William S. Plumer*.

**Ver. 7.** Sincerity makes the Christian sing, when he hath nothing to his supper. David was in none of the best case when in the cave, yet we never find him merrier: his heart makes sweeter music than ever his harp did. *William Gurnall*.

**Ver. 7-8.** That worship that is performed with a sleepy, drowsy body, is a weak worship, but the psalmist here makes the awakening of the body to be the fruit and effect of the preparation of the heart; **Awake up, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early.** Why so? My heart is prepared. The heart prepared and thereby awaked, will awake the body. To worship God therefore without a prepared heart, is to worship him with a drowsy body, because with a drowsy heart, and therefore weakly. *John Angier*, in "*An Help to Better Hearts, for Better Times*," 1647.

#### HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

**Ver. 1,4,6-7.** Note the varying condition of the same heart, at the same time. **My soul trusteth in thee... My soul is among lions. My soul is bowed down... My heart is fixed.**

**Ver. 7. (first clause).** It is implied that the **heart** is the main thing required in all acts of devotion; nothing is done to purpose in religion further than it is done with the heart. The heart must be **fixed**; fixed *for* the duty, fitted and put in frame for it; fixed *in* the duty by a close application; *attending on the Lord* without distraction. *Matthew Henry*.

**Ver. 7.**

I. What is fixed? the heart, not the mind merely, but the will, the conscience, the affections, which draw the mind after them: **My heart is fixed** -- found an anchorage, a resting place, not therefore at the mercy of every gale, etc.

II. The objects upon which it is fixed.

1. Upon God.

2. Upon his word.

3. Upon his salvation.

4. Upon heaven. III. The fixedness of the heart upon these objects, denotes--

1. Singleness of aim.

2. Uniformity of action.

3. Perseverance to the end. *G. R.*

**Ver 7-9.**

1. He that will be thankful must treasure up in his heart and memory the courtesy that is done him; so had David done, and therefore he mentions *his heart*; and to make it more emphatic, he names it again, **My heart**.

2. After he remembers it, he must be affected with it, and resolve upon it; so doth David: **My heart is ready**, or else, **My heart is fixed**; confirmed I am in it to be thankful, and I cannot be altered.
3. It is not enough that a man carry about with him a thankful heart he must *annunciare*, tell it abroad, and make it known publicly what God hath done for him; yea, and do it joyfully too: **I will**, saith David, **sing and give praise**.
4. He must use all means he can to make it known-- "*tongue*, "*psaltery*, "and "*harp*, "all are little enough. Whence, by an apostrophe, David turns to these. **Awake, my glory**: *i.e.*, *Tongue, awake; lute and harp, awake; I myself will awake*.
5. He must not do it in a sleepy manner, but with intention and earnestness of spirit: "*Awake, awake, I will awake*."
6. He must take the first opportunity to do it, and not hang off and delay it. **I will awake early**.
7. He must do it in such a place, and such an assembly as may most redound to God's honour: **I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people: I will sing unto thee among the nations**. *William Nicholson*.

## Psalm 57:8

### EXPOSITION

**Ver. 8. Awake up, my glory.** Let the noblest powers of my nature bestir themselves: the intellect which conceives thought, the tongue which expresses it, and the inspired imagination which beautifies it --let all be on the alert now that the hour for praise has come.

**Awake, psaltery and harp.** Let all the music with which I am familiar be well attuned for the hallowed service of praise.

**I myself will awake early.** I will awake the dawn with my joyous notes. No sleepy verses and weary notes shall be heard from me; I will thoroughly arouse myself for this high employ. When we are at our best we fall short of the Lord's deserts, let us, therefore, make sure that what we bring him is our best, and, if marred with infirmity, at least let it not be deteriorated by indolence. Three times the psalmist calls upon himself to awake. Do we need so much arousing, and for such work? Then let us not spare it, for the engagement is too honourable, too needful to be left undone or ill done for want of arousing ourselves.

### EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

**Ver. 7-8.** See **Psalms on "Psalms 50:7"** for further information.

**Ver. 8. Awake up, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early.** We must prevent God by early praise as well as prayer: "The God of my mercy shall prevent me," sings David; and every child of David must prevent God again with his songs. Jehoshaphat delighted God with instruments of music before his deliverance. Faith must tune an *epinikion*, a psalm of victory, before the triumph. Praise is the ingenious mother of future mercies; as the Virgin Mary sang at Hebron before the birth of her son at Bethlehem. Oh, heavenly contention between mercy and duty! *Samuel Lee*, 1625-1691.

**Ver. 8. Awake up, my glory**, etc. We must sing *with excited grace*. Not only with grace habitual, but with excited and actual: the musical instrument delights not but when it is played upon. In this duty we must follow Paul's advice to Timothy (2 Timothy 1:6), *anazwpurein*, stir up the grace that is in us, and cry out as David, **Awake love, awake delight**. **Psalm 57:8**. The clock must be wound up before it can guide our time; the bird pleaseth not in her nest, but in her notes; the chimes only make music when they are going. Let us therefore beg the Spirit to blow upon our garden, that the spices thereof may flow out, when we set upon this joyous service. God loves active grace in duty, that the soul should be ready trimmed when it presents itself to Christ in any worship. *John Wells*, in "*Morning Exercises*," 1674.

**Ver. 8. I will awake early.** Literally, 'I will awake the dawn.' a bold figure of poetry, as if the writer had said, --The morning shall not awake me to praise; but in my songs I will anticipate the dawn. *R. T. Society's Notes*.

**Ver. 8.** It will answer our purpose to take notice, first, of the *terms* David uses, and then, secondly, press the *exhortation*. Of the terms he uses:

1. My *glory*. That is my *soul* (say some) because the spirit of a man is the glory of a man, whereby he is dignified and raised so much above the *brutes*, as to be but a "little lower than the angels," nay, to be akin to God himself, "the Father of spirits." My *musical skill*, say others, the glory of the artist above the unskilful; and that wherein David had the glory of excelling, as Jubal had of the first invention. My *tongue*, say others; for this is also the glory of a man above the dumb creatures, and the glory of a wise man above a

fool. And as the tongue is the glory of a man, so the glory of the tongue is to glorify God. Praise is the glory of all other uses to which the tongue is employed; and the tongue is, in the body, that "temple of the Holy Ghost, "what the silver trumpet was in the temple of Solomon; to sound the high praises of God, and express the raised affections of our souls.

**2. Awake, psaltery and harp.** The one for a psalm, the other for a spiritual song or hymn; that is to say, all my musical instruments and skill I will employ in and consecrate to the glory of him who "puts new songs into my mouth." He first teaches my fingers to fight, and then to play the *epinikion*, or song of triumph. Sound, then, my psaltery and harp, emulous of those that are around the throne above; your melody can soften my cares, lay my fears, and turn my *cave* into a *choir*. As to these instruments in the worship of God, they were doubtless allowed to David, and to the church in his time. They were agreeable to the state of that church and people, who were led very much by their senses; and whose infant and less discerning condition made it needful for the natural man to have something to fasten upon and be entertained with in the worship of God and to sweeten and take off from the labour and burden of that service. But as the gospel worship and appointments are a more spiritual, pleasant, and reasonable service, and need them less, so in the gospel institution we find no footsteps of them; and we know who first brought them into the church, as well as who first brought them into the world. It is not my business here to dispute this matter; and he must at any time do it but indifferently, whose inclination is against him all the while, and whose genius tempts him to wish himself solidly confuted in all he can advance. But since I find these instruments in my text, and since the sound of such texts as these is made use of to turn the public worship so frequently into concerts of music, I shall leave them with this remark: that to let them alone, especially in public worship, though one thought them tolerable, has a much better grace with it than to declare them "sorely displeasing to God, and that they filthily defile his holy house and place of prayer."

**3. I myself will awake early.** And without this, all the rest have been an empty sound; there would have been no melody to the Lord, whatsoever good music he might have made to himself. He would not put God off with a sacrifice of mere air. He summons the attendance of all his powers. Himself is the offering; and his music plays to the sacrifice, as it goes up in holy affections and spiritual joys; and unless these accompany the song, the mere breath of an organ, or the trembling of the strings of an harp is as good devotion and less offensive to God. Consider the *nature and excellency of the duty*. Singing psalms is a compound of several other duties. It contains prayer to a very great advantage: the stretch of the voice does humour and lead on the earnest reaching of the mind after the desired blessing. It is the very element and breath of praise; and the apostle tells us that "teaching and admonishing one another" is performed in singing "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs." For when we sing of *judgment*, it is awakening to sinners; and when we sing of *mercy*, it is comforting to all. Meditation cannot have a better help. The solemn movement of the time gives room for the mind to compass the full sense of the matter, and to impress it deep; and while the tongue is making the *pause*, the heart may make the *elevation*. In short, it gives an accent to all duty; it is the music of all other ordinances; it is adapted and suited to all circumstances; as appears from the psalms composed upon all occasions and subjects, doctrinal, prophetic, oratory, and historical; of praise and prayer, of grief and joy, in the penitential and complaining, in the triumphal and rejoicing; as if singing of psalms could stand for everything, and, like the manna in the wilderness, gives a taste of all the other food we enjoy in the house of God.

*Benjamin Grosvenor, D.D. (1675-1758), in "An Exhortation to the Duty of Singing, " Eastcheap Lectures, 1810.*

**Ver. 8.** The *psaltery* was a stringed instrument, usually with twelve strings, and played with the fingers. The *harp* or lyre was a stringed instrument, usually consisting of ten strings. Josephus says that it was struck or played with a key. It appears, however, that it was sometimes played with the fingers. *Albert Barnes*.

## HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

**Ver. 7-9. See Psalms on "Psalms 57:7"** for further information.

**Ver. 8. I myself will awake early.** I will sleep lightly, for I am in an enemy's country; I will ask God to arouse me; I will set the alarm of watchfulness; I will hear the cock of providential warning; the light of the Sun shall arouse me; the activities of the church, the trumpet of my foes, and the bell of duty shall combine to awaken me.

## Psalms 57:9

### EXPOSITION

**Ver. 9. I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people.** Gentiles shall hear my praise. Here is an instance of the way in which the truly devout evangelic spirit overleaps the boundaries which bigotry sets up. The ordinary Jew would never wish the Gentile dogs to hear Jehovah's name, except to tremble at it; but this grace taught psalmist has a missionary spirit, and would spread the praise and fame of his God.

**I will sing unto thee among the nations.** However far off they may be, I would make them hear of thee through my glad psalmody.

#### EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS

**Ver. 9. I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people.** The Spirit of God who indited this scripture, made his penman know that the Gentiles should have the use of his Psalms. *David Dickson*.

**Ver. 9. The people--the nations.** The Hebrew church was neither called nor qualified to be a missionary society, but it never ceased to desire and hope for the conversion of the nations. This is seen in those passages in which the psalmists betray a consciousness that they shall one day have all the world for auditors. How boldly does David exclaim, **I will sing unto thee among the nations.** In the same spirit, a later psalmist summons the church to lift up her voice, so that all the nations may hear her recital of the Lord's mighty acts: **O give thanks unto the Lord; call upon his name: make known his deeds among the people.** Psalms 105:1. The full import of this class of texts is often hidden from the English reader by the circumstance that our translators have hardly ever used the word *people* in its plural form. Twice in the Revelation they venture to write *peoples*; everywhere else the singular form has to do duty for both numbers; so that in not a few passages the sense is greatly obscured to those who have no access either to the original or to other versions. In the Psalms, in particular, the mention of the Gentiles is more frequent than the English reader is made aware of. It is to be observed, moreover, that in addition to this strain of indirect prediction, the conversion of the world is articulately celebrated in many glorious Psalms. Indeed, so numerous are these, and so generally distributed over the centuries between David and Ezra, that it would seem that at no time during the long history of inspired Psalmody, did the Spirit cease to indite new songs in which the children of Zion might give utterance to their world embracing hopes. *William Binnie, D.D., in "The Psalms: their History, Teachings, and Use," 1870.*

#### HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

**Ver. 7-9. See Psalms on "Psalms 57:7"** for further information.

**Ver. 9. Who? I. What? Will praise. Whom? Thee, O Lord. Where? Among the people. Why?**

**Ver. 9.** Public profession.

I. A necessity.

II. A privilege.

III. A duty. *R. A. G.*

### Psalm 57:10

#### EXPOSITION

**Ver. 10. For thy mercy is great unto the heavens.** Right up from man's lowliness to heaven's loftiness mercy reaches. Imagination fails to guess the height of heaven, and even thus the riches of mercy exceed our highest thoughts. The psalmist, as he sits at the cave's mouth and looks up to the firmament, rejoices that God's goodness is more vast and more sublime than even the vaulted skies.

**And thy truth unto the clouds.** Upon the cloud he sets the seal of his truth, the rainbow, which ratifies his covenant; in the cloud he hides his rain and snow, which prove his truth by bringing to us seedtime and harvest, cold and heat. Creation is great, but the Creator greater far. Heaven cannot contain him; above clouds and stars his goodness far exceeds.

#### EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN SAYINGS

**Ver. 10-11.** A hard and ungrateful heart beholds even in prosperity only isolated drops of divine grace; but a grateful one like David's, though chased by persecutors, and striking the harp in the gloom of a cave, looks upon the mercy and faithfulness of God as a mighty ocean, waving and heaving from the earth to the clouds, and from the clouds to the earth again. *Agustus F. Tholuck.*

#### HINTS TO THE VILLAGE PREACHER

**Ver. 10.** The mercy of God reaches to the heavens.

I. As a throne. God is exalted in our eyes by his mercy.

II. As a ladder. By mercy we ascend from earth to heaven.

III. As a rainbow. Present and past mercies argue exemption for the saints from the wrath of heaven.

IV. As a mountain. Its base is on the earth though its summit is lost in clouds. The influence of the cross towers to the heaven of heavens. Who can tell the glory of the summit of this mountain, whose *base* is refulgent with glory! *R. A. G.*

**Ver. 10.** The amazing greatness of mercy.

I. It is not said merely that it is high as heaven, but great unto the heavens. It is *high* as the heavens, overtopping the greatest sin, and highest thought of man.

II. It is *wide* as the far reaching sky, compassing men of all ages, countries, classes, etc.

III. It is *deep*. Everything of God is proportionate; this, therefore, is deep in abiding foundation, and infinite wisdom.

## Psalm 57:11

### EXPOSITION

**Ver. 11. Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens.** A grand chorus. Take it up, ye angels and ye spirits made perfect, and join in it, ye sons of men below, as ye say,

**Let thy glory be above all the earth.** The prophet in the previous verse spoke of mercy "unto the heavens," but here his song flies "above the heavens;" praise rises higher, and knows no bound

### EXPLANATORY NOTES AND QUAIN T SAYINGS

**Ver. 10-11.** See Psalms on "Psalms 57:10" for further information.

**Ver. 11. Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens,** etc. Greater words of prayer than these never came from human lips. Heaven and earth have as they imply, a mutually interwoven history, and the blessed, glorious end of this is in the sunrise of the Divine glory over both. *Franz Delitzsch*, 1869.

## THE MAKING OF A MAN OF GOD ALAN REDPATH

### I Samuel 24:1-22 Chapter 10 LOVING YOUR ENEMIES

God has a great purpose of blessing, a great destiny for David, but at this point he was being put through the crucible of testing to determine his fitness for what God had planned for him. **Therefore, in a very real sense we are studying the life story of each of us as Christians.**

It is not the will of our Father in heaven that anyone should perish. It is His concern that each of us should come to know Him who to know is life eternal, and that we should become heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. This is the great destiny that God has for us, and only in the realization of it can we find real peace and happiness. But in order that it might be fulfilled, God often uses the flame, as Peter said, "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:7).

David was now at a point of greater danger than any he had hitherto experienced. **It is always God's way to use each victory that we have won by grace as the background for the next phase of testing at a deeper level.** That is part of the making of a man of God. Here then, in 1 Samuel 24 and 26, we find David presented with two golden opportunities to rid himself of his enemy, Saul, to shorten the day of suffering, and to make a grab for the throne which God had promised him.

David, with his six hundred men, had taken refuge at a place called Engedi, which means "the haunt of a wild goat." This was a very mountainous area southwest of the Dead Sea in which were many caves and great rocks, and there David was sheltered. One day Saul, with his three thousand picked men, hunted for David through this rocky country where it would be very difficult to find anyone.

David and his men were hiding in a cave, pressed around the sides of it as they watched Saul's men march by, then Saul himself

turned suddenly and came inside to get a little shelter from the heat. As he entered the darkness from the brilliance of the sunshine, he could see nothing inside; he was completely unaware of the presence of David and his men. Then he decided to take a nap in the coolness.

What a chance for David! Breathlessly his men waited; perhaps they whispered some advice to him, saying in effect, "Here is your opportunity! God has brought your enemy right within your reach and you can destroy him easily. You can end all our hardship and suffering and sit on the throne today!" (1 Samuel 24:4).

You can imagine with what intensity they watched their leader slip stealthily through the dimness with a dagger in his hand—they expected to see it driven into Saul's back. Imagine their amazement when David just cut a bit off the end of Saul's robe and quietly returned to his hiding place in the darkness. They had thought David brave, but he must have seemed to them a coward at that moment. What a fool he was to miss such a chance to get rid of his powerful enemy!

Notice David's words; he was ashamed that he had done even the little he had to Saul:

"The Lord forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the Lord's anointed, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the Lord" (1 Samuel 24:6). David controlled himself, and what is even more remarkable, he also controlled the six hundred men who were with him; he "stayed his servants with these words, and suffered them not to rise against Saul."

When Saul eventually left the cave, David ran after him into the open and confronted him with the evidence of his mercy, proving to him that he had no intention of harming him. David asked Saul whom he thought he was chasing: saying in effect "After whom is the king of Israel come out? I am as helpless as a dead dog and as hard to catch as a flea. Why don't you leave me alone?" (1 Samuel 24:14).

On another occasion, recorded in chapter 26, Saul was again on the chase with his three thousand men, and David found him at night, in his camp asleep. Apparently without putting a sentry on duty, Saul, with Abner his captain and the whole army, made camp and went to sleep while David and his men watched them.

David took with him a trusted friend, Abishai, and together they went down into the valley, stealthily creeping into the midst of the camp until they came to where Saul was asleep, and Abner; and once again there was made to David the same whispered suggestion. Abishai used words like these, "God has delivered your enemy into your hand again. If you are squeamish about killing him yourself, let me do it for you. I will smite him with a spear right through the heart into the earth beneath him—one stroke and that will be the finish, I won't need to repeat it" (1 Samuel 26:8).

Once again from David came the same reply: "Destroy him not, for who can stretch forth his hand against the anointed, and be guiltless?" Then they withdrew, taking Saul's spear and his water bottle. Safely away from Saul's camp, to relieve the tension of that tremendous moment, they shouted back across the valley at the sleeping army, waking them all up and taunting Abner with being asleep on duty.

David had missed another opportunity of getting rid of his enemy, of ending his suffering. Surely, when a chance to get even with someone who has done you wrong presents itself, you should take it. When the opportunity comes to escape from a tight corner, you ought to take the initiative. Or should you?

What do we learn from the narrative in these chapters to bless our own hearts? First of all, see the principle which David has learned. Though Saul was rejected by the Lord, yet the man was still the Lord's anointed. Others insisted you have to love your friends and hate your enemies, but somehow David learned what the Lord Jesus came to teach us, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you" (Matthew 5:44).

If David had slain Saul he would have been taking things out of God's hands, and to seize the initiative himself could have been disastrous. It was far better for David to await God's time than to attempt to help Him to do something merely because circumstances were uncongenial.

When a moment like this comes in life, we need to be aware of it. How easy it is to take the initiative, how hard to wait for God! How painful perhaps are the circumstances, but how much more painful are the consequences of action outside God's will!

How hard it is to learn the lesson which our Lord practiced, "Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again...but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously" (1 Peter 2:23). How difficult it is to wait for the slowly unfolding purpose of God; how much easier to take things into our own hands and make a dash for it! Always it is hard to "stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord" (Exodus 14:13).

To Saul, David said, "The Lord judge between me and thee, and the Lord avenge me of thee: but mine hand shall not be upon thee" (1 Samuel 24:12). In other words, David knew that God had put him into that situation for a purpose that He knew best, because He had a great destiny for David's life. Because God had put him there, David trusted Him to get him out without his having to lift one

little finger to help, neither would he allow anyone with whom he was connected to do anything about it.

No matter what the situation may be, God's child needs to learn to wait and watch for the Lord, who has put him there to prove the kind of stuff he is made of. "My soul, wait thou only upon God." Because David learned that principle, he refused to take the initiative and account of God's will.

When a man learns that lesson he is getting somewhere spiritually, and he is about to see liberated through his life a new measure of power. See what happened because David took this line. Think of the effect, for instance, upon himself. Just suppose he had given way and had killed his enemy. That would have ended the song in his heart; it would have silenced his music and put an end to the Psalms that he wrote. He would have gone through life with a bad conscience and a shadow from the past.

Much later, David had a very sad experience and had to live again for a while in exile. His son Absalom had rebelled against him, and as David was about to return to Jerusalem, a man named Shimei came to curse him. He tried to tell David that this rejection by his people had happened because the Lord was rewarding him for his shameful treatment of Saul (II Samuel 16:8). David knew the accusation was not true, but if he had acted out of God's will here it would have been true. He knew that he had not done anything to bring about Saul's death, and therefore God delivered him from the curse of Shimei.

What would have been the effect on his six hundred men? There are many evidences that the gentleness of David and his love for Saul influenced his men and showed up as part of their character in the days that lay ahead. If David had acted wrongly it would have affected his whole army, and much of his godly influence would have been lost.

Most of all, what about Saul himself? "And it came to pass, when David had made an end of speaking these words unto Saul, that Saul said, Is this thy voice, my son David? And Saul lifted up his voice, and wept" (I Samuel 24:16). "Then said Saul, I have sinned: return, my son David: for I will no more do thee harm, because my soul was precious in thine eyes this day: behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly...Then Saul said to David, Blessed by thou, my son David: thou shalt both do great things, and also shalt still prevail. So David went on his way and Saul returned to his place" (I Samuel 26:21,25).

This poor wretched man, who spent his days battling against God, had suddenly come face to face with the love and patience of God shining out through another man's life, and for a moment it melted Saul. There is a pathetic remembrance of days when things were different between them: "My son David," he reminded himself of the sweet family relationship.

There was a confession of sin, "I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly." It would seem that just for a moment, like a flash of lightning, this man was melted by the power of love and saw his stupidity and folly. But alas, he had been so held in the grip of passion that he no longer had power to shake off his madness.

It is only the love of God shed abroad by the Holy Spirit that can cause effective repentance and cleansing

– not simply Christian work or service, but the shining sweetness and fragrance of the love of Jesus Christ. It is this which touches a life that is out of adjustment to the will of God. It is this which makes a man realize he has been a fool and that he has sinned. It is love that melts coldness of heart and brings conviction. That is why Calvary has such magnificence; that is why at Jesus' cry, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," thousands of hearts have been melted by the love of God revealed to them there.

That is why the practice of love in your life liberates spiritual power as nothing else can. It is not simply the distributing of a tract; it is not the preaching of a sermon or the teaching of a Sunday school class. It is something far deeper: a life saturated with love, a life that has learned the principle that David learned, to love not merely your friends, but also your enemies; and a life that has learned, also, to wait upon God.

But what a miserable picture Saul is! This man let passion and sin drive him right over the precipice until he seems almost beyond hope. What is the use of saying, "I have played the fool," if he goes on playing the fool? What use are his tears and confession before David if he doesn't act upon his remorse?

We sometimes see people streaming down the aisle in an evangelistic meeting with tear-stained faces, but what difference does emotion make if it does not lead to obedience? What profit is it that a heart has been stirred, unless from that moment the man lives in submission to the will of God? Indeed, it does make a difference, for if a man is emotionally upset, as Saul was, and awakens to his condition, but only weeps about it and still doesn't obey God, his second state is a thousand times worse than the first.

Emotion that does not lead to action only leads deeper into sin and rebellion.

I am fearful for the man who is not far from the kingdom of God, who has often wept under the sound of the preaching of the gospel, who has often seen the reality of the love of God in Jesus Christ at the cross, who has often recognized his own sinful ways and

said, "I have played the fool," but five minutes after the message is over he is outside the church, all conviction forgotten. He has silenced the holy emotion and has gone out to live in disobedience again, in spite of the stirring of the Holy Spirit in his heart.

Remember that Saul was anointed of God; he had been given the same privileges and opportunities that David had. The one accepted His anointing with godly fear, submission, and yieldedness. The other refused the principle of obedience and faith, and became an outcast.

Eternity is decided by a series of choices which each of us makes in the course of life. How near repentance did Saul come when he felt the impact of David's love? It was the love of God in David's life that awakened him, even though he went back into his stubborn ways. What made David behave like that? How did he learn this principle of love? Why didn't he take advantage of Saul? We have often wanted to behave like that, but we have failed to do it. How did David succeed?

As a matter of fact, the answer is very simple. In these studies we have not only narrative, but we have heart experience. The narrative is in the books of Samuel; the experience is in the book of the Psalm. David opened his heart to show what was going on in it. At this time he wrote Psalm 57, where we find out how he learned love and graciousness. Here is how David learned not to hurry God, but to stand still and see the salvation of the Lord.

In Psalm 57:4, he spoke about his enemies: "My soul is among lions: and I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword." Have you ever been in a position like that? David recognized his enemies, who were there all along.

But he prayed and talked with God alone in the secret place with the door shut. The greatest fact of all was not his enemies, but God; and the fear of the enemy was overcome by faith in his God. Listen to the opening verses: "Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in thee; yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast." Like a mother bird under whose warm and protecting wing a little chick is secure, so David's Lord is his place of refuge.

With the enemy all around him, and with the hatred of Saul getting more intense day by day, this is what David said: "I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth all things for me. [He does the performing; I do the waiting.] He shall send from heaven, and save me from the reproach of him that would swallow me up. Selah [just think of that!]. God shall send forth his mercy and his truth" (Psalm 57:2-3). So David lies down to rest on the promises of God, and puts himself under the protection of His wings, although the enemy is still around him.

It is a wonderful Old Testament picture, and there is a New Testament story to match it. In Acts 12 we read that Simon Peter was put in prison and was to be beheaded the next morning. Prayer was held for him that night in the city – every believer in Jerusalem was wide awake praying for Peter. But he was fast asleep, probably the only Christian asleep there that night. How could he sleep?

Only a few weeks previously in a personal interview the Lord Jesus had said to him, "Simon, when thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old...another shall gird thee" (John 21:18). That night in jail, with his head due to come off the next morning, Simon reflected upon the promise of the Lord and said to himself, "Well, my Lord said that I would be old, and that was only a few weeks ago, so no matter what Herod may try, he can't touch me. I am going to sleep." So he lay down on the promises of God.

Charles Wesley reflects this faith in his beautiful hymn:

Jesus, Lover of my soul,  
Let me to Thy bosom fly,  
While the nearer waters roll,  
While the tempest still is high:  
Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,  
Till the storm of life is past;  
Safe into the haven guide;  
Oh receive my soul at last!

The soul of David, among deadly enemies, overcame all its fears by faith in the promises of God. He left all the issues of the day in the Almighty Hands, and out of his life of intimate fellowship with God there arose the power that could keep six hundred ruffians in subjection to his rule and bring conviction to the heart of an ungodly man like Saul.

For David had learned his lesson in this desperate moment of his experience: he must refuse to take the initiative and he must lean upon the living God. David, who was under the authority of the Lord, became the one in authority over all the others. But Saul, proud and arrogant, rebelled against the sovereignty of God and became a pathetic, tragic figure: a slave to himself, his passion and his sin, only a puppet king of a decaying kingdom.

See those two pictures plainly before you: into which could you step and say it is true of you? Basically, you are in one or the other of these situations. You may be walking with God in the light of His Word, having come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ and having submitted gladly to His rule in all things, though you may be often tested until it is almost beyond your endurance. Many times you may have been tempted to get your own back or to take a step out of God's will, but you have refused and have instead waited upon God. You are hiding under the shadow of His wings in absolute peace, and you are watching God work through your life in power.

Or you have said "No" at some point in your life to the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. Though anointed by the same Spirit and given the same privileges and opportunities, you are moving out of God's will, out of the stream of blessing, out of the place of power and victory, out of the place of authority – one day (as Paul feared concerning himself), having proclaimed the rules to others, to be yourself cast away.

Which is it with you? It is never too late to begin again, to come to Calvary and submit to the authority of our crucified, risen Saviour: you may do that right now.