

# **Bible Study March 13, 2024**

## **1 SAMUEL 23 (NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION)**

### **David Saves Keilah**

***1 When David was told, “Look, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah and are looting the threshing floors,”***

Threshing floors were open, circular areas where grain kernels were separated from their stalks and husks. (In order to separate the grain kernels, farmers began by threshing the grain, which involved either beating it with a stick or having oxen pull a sledge over it. After threshing the grain, they would winnow it, which involved tossing the grain into the air. The wind would blow the husks and other chaff away, leaving only the clean grain kernels.) By looting the threshing floors, the Philistines were robbing Keilah’s citizens of all their food supplies.

***2 he inquired of the LORD, saying, “Shall I go and attack these Philistines?”***

Through the Urim and Thummim that Abiathar the priest brought (23:6), David sought the Lord’s guidance before he took action. Contrary to Saul’s approach, David listened to God’s directions and then proceeded accordingly. Rather than trying to find God’s will after the fact or having to ask God to undo the results of our hasty decisions, we should take time to discern God’s will beforehand. We can hear him speak through the counsel of others, his Word, and the leading of his Spirit in our hearts, as well as through our circumstances.

***The LORD answered him, “Go, attack the Philistines and save Keilah.”***

***3 But David’s men said to him, “Here in Judah we are afraid. How much more, then, if we go to Keilah against the Philistine forces!”***

***4 Once again David inquired of the LORD, and the LORD answered him, “Go down to Keilah, for I am going to give the Philistines into your hand.”<sup>5</sup> So David and his men went to Keilah, fought the Philistines and carried off their livestock. He inflicted heavy losses on the Philistines and saved the people of Keilah. <sup>6</sup> (Now Abiathar son of Ahimelek had brought the ephod down with him when he fled to David at Keilah.)***

An ephod was a sleeveless linen vest worn by priests. The high priest’s ephod was brightly colored and had a chestpiece with 12 gemstones, each stone representing one of the 12 tribes. The Urim and Thummim were kept in the chestpiece of the high priest’s ephod.

### **Saul Pursues David**

***7 Saul was told that David had gone to Keilah, and he said, “God has delivered him into my hands, for David has imprisoned himself by entering a town with gates and bars.”***

When Saul heard that David was trapped in a walled town with gates and bars, he thought God was putting David at his mercy. Saul wanted to kill David so badly that he would have interpreted any sign as God's approval to move ahead with his plan. Had Saul known God better, he would have known what God wanted and would not have misread the situation as God's approval for murder.

Not every opportunity is sent from God. We may want something so much that we assume any opportunity to obtain it is of divine origin. As we see from Saul's case, however, this may not be true. An opportunity to do something against God's will can never be from God, because God does not tempt us. When opportunities come your way, double-check your motives. Make sure you are following God's desires and not just your own.

***8 And Saul called up all his forces for battle, to go down to Keilah to besiege David and his men.***

***9 When David learned that Saul was plotting against him, he said to Abiathar the priest, "Bring the ephod." 10 David said, "LORD, God of Israel, your servant has heard definitely that Saul plans to come to Keilah and destroy the town on account of me. 11 Will the citizens of Keilah surrender me to him? Will Saul come down, as your servant has heard? LORD, God of Israel, tell your servant."***

***And the LORD said, "He will."***

***12 Again David asked, "Will the citizens of Keilah surrender me and my men to Saul?"***

***And the LORD said, "They will."***

***13 So David and his men, about six hundred in number, left Keilah and kept moving from place to place. When Saul was told that David had escaped from Keilah, he did not go there.***

***14 David stayed in the wilderness strongholds and in the hills of the Desert of Ziph. Day after day Saul searched for him, but God did not give David into his hands.***

***15 While David was at Horesh in the Desert of Ziph, he learned that Saul had come out to take his life. 16 And Saul's son Jonathan went to David at Horesh and helped him find strength in God. 17 "Don't be afraid," he said. "My father Saul will not lay a hand on you. You will be king over Israel, and I will be second to you. Even my father Saul knows this." 18 The two of them made a covenant before the LORD. Then Jonathan went home, but David remained at Horesh.***

This may have been the last time David and Jonathan were together. They were true friends—more than just companions who enjoyed each other's company. They encouraged each other's faith in God and trusted each other with their deepest thoughts and closest confidences. These are the marks of true friendship.

As Jonathan prepared to leave David, he not only promised to be David's friend to the end but also encouraged David to stay strong in his faith in God. As a friend, remember that you have far more to offer others than just companionship. How you challenge and encourage your friends to faithfully walk with God could be just what they need.

***19 The Ziphites went up to Saul at Gibeah and said, “Is not David hiding among us in the strongholds at Horesh, on the hill of Hakilah, south of Jeshimon? 20 Now, Your Majesty, come down whenever it pleases you to do so, and we will be responsible for giving him into your hands.”***

***21 Saul replied, “The LORD bless you for your concern for me. 22 Go and get more information. Find out where David usually goes and who has seen him there. They tell me he is very crafty. 23 Find out about all the hiding places he uses and come back to me with definite information. Then I will go with you; if he is in the area, I will track him down among all the clans of Judah.”***

***24 So they set out and went to Ziph ahead of Saul. Now David and his men were in the Desert of Maon, in the Arabah south of Jeshimon. 25 Saul and his men began the search, and when David was told about it, he went down to the rock and stayed in the Desert of Maon. When Saul heard this, he went into the Desert of Maon in pursuit of David.***

***26 Saul was going along one side of the mountain, and David and his men were on the other side, hurrying to get away from Saul. As Saul and his forces were closing in on David and his men to capture them, 27 a messenger came to Saul, saying, “Come quickly! The Philistines are raiding the land.” 28 Then Saul broke off his pursuit of David and went to meet the Philistines. That is why they call this place Sela Hammahlekoth. 29 And David went up from there and lived in the strongholds of En Gedi.***

Saul left his murderous pursuit of David to fight the true enemies of Israel. He had become so obsessed by his paranoia over David that he didn't even realize he was trying to kill the one who had actually delivered him from the Philistines. We can be so preoccupied—even obsessed—with a lesser battle or enemy that we lose sight of our ultimate enemy, Satan. Stand firm against the one who is actually trying to destroy you (1 Peter 5:8).