

## The Lord Delivers David

### 1 Samuel 26

"Now the Ziphites came to Saul at Gibeah, saying, "Is David not hiding in the hill of Hachilah, opposite Jeshimon?"<sup>2</sup> Then Saul arose and went down to the Wilderness of Ziph, having three thousand chosen men of Israel with him, to seek David in the Wilderness of Ziph.<sup>3</sup> And Saul encamped in the hill of Hachilah, which is opposite Jeshimon, by the road. But David stayed in the wilderness, and he saw that Saul came after him into the wilderness.<sup>4</sup> David therefore sent out spies, and understood that Saul had indeed come.

<sup>5</sup> So David arose and came to the place where Saul had encamped. And David saw the place where Saul lay, and Abner the son of Ner, the commander of his army. Now Saul lay within the camp, with the people encamped all around him.<sup>6</sup> Then David answered, and said to Ahimelech the Hittite and to Abishai the son of Zeruiah, brother of Joab, saying, "Who will go down with me to Saul in the camp?"

And Abishai said, "I will go down with you."

<sup>7</sup> So David and Abishai came to the people by night; and there Saul lay sleeping within the camp, with his spear stuck in the ground by his head. And Abner and the people lay all around him.<sup>8</sup> Then Abishai said to David, "God has delivered your enemy into your hand this day. Now therefore, please, let me strike him at once with the spear, right to the earth; and I will not have to strike him a second time!"

<sup>9</sup> But David said to Abishai, "Do not destroy him; for who can stretch out his hand against the LORD's anointed, and be guiltless?"<sup>10</sup> David said furthermore, "As the LORD lives, the LORD shall strike him, or his day shall come to die, or he shall go out to battle and perish.<sup>11</sup> The LORD forbid that I should stretch out my hand against the LORD's anointed. But please, take now the spear and the jug of water that are by his head, and let us go."<sup>12</sup> So David took the spear and the jug of water by Saul's head, and they got away; and no man saw or knew it or awoke. For they were all asleep, because a deep sleep from the LORD had fallen on them.

<sup>13</sup> Now David went over to the other side, and stood on the top of a hill afar off, a great distance being between them.<sup>14</sup> And David called out to the people and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, "Do you not answer, Abner?"

Then Abner answered and said, "Who are you, calling out to the king?"

<sup>15</sup> So David said to Abner, "Are you not a man? And who is like you in Israel? Why then have you not guarded your lord the king? For one of the people came in to destroy your lord the king.<sup>16</sup> This thing that you have done is not good. As the LORD lives, you deserve to die, because you have not guarded your master, the LORD's anointed. And now see where the king's spear is, and the jug of water that was by his head."

<sup>17</sup> Then Saul knew David's voice, and said, "Is that your voice, my son David?"

David said, "It is my voice, my lord, O king." <sup>18</sup> And he said, "Why does my lord thus pursue his servant? For what have I done, or what evil is in my hand? <sup>19</sup> Now therefore, please, let my lord the king hear the words of his servant: If the LORD has stirred you up against me, let Him accept an offering. But if it is the children of men, may they be cursed before the LORD, for they have driven me out this day from sharing in the inheritance of the LORD, saying, 'Go, serve other gods.' <sup>20</sup> So now, do not let my blood fall to the earth before the face of the LORD. For the king of Israel has come out to seek a flea, as when one hunts a partridge in the mountains."

<sup>21</sup> Then Saul said, "I have sinned. Return, my son David. For I will harm you no more, because my life was precious in your eyes this day. Indeed I have played the fool and erred exceedingly."

<sup>22</sup> And David answered and said, "Here is the king's spear. Let one of the young men come over and get it. <sup>23</sup> May the LORD repay every man for his righteousness and his faithfulness; for the LORD delivered you into my hand today, but I would not stretch out my hand against the LORD's anointed. <sup>24</sup> And indeed, as your life was valued much this day in my eyes, so let my life be valued much in the eyes of the LORD, and let Him deliver me out of all tribulation."

<sup>25</sup> Then Saul said to David, "May you be blessed, my son David! You shall both do great things and also still prevail."

So David went on his way, and Saul returned to his place."

## Background Notes

After David had spared Saul's life at En Gedi, the last verse of 1 Samuel 24 says, "So David swore to Saul. And Saul went home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold." We mentioned that the "stronghold" mentioned here may have been Masada. So King Saul returned to his palace, but David remained in the wilderness. 1 Samuel 25 tells us of Samuel's death and of David's dealings with Nabal. God used Abigail to keep David from precipitating a bloodbath, for which he would have been forever sorry. God took Nabal's life because of his unfair treatment of David, and we were reminded of the biblical truth of Romans 12:19 - "...do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord."

In 1 Samuel 26 David again had the chance to take matters into his own hands and get sweet revenge on King Saul, but once again David resisted the opportunity and spared Saul's life. The Ziphites gave King Saul information on the whereabouts of David's wilderness hiding place and, sure enough, Saul broke his promise and came with 3000 chosen troops to try once again to capture David.

Why was Saul so easily persuaded to see David as a threat? Why didn't he take David at his word? The answer may be seen in verse 19, where David said to Saul, "If the LORD has stirred you up against me, let Him accept an offering. But if it is the children of

*men, may they be cursed before the LORD, for they have driven me out this day from sharing in the inheritance of the LORD, saying, 'Go, serve other gods.'* David believed that there were men in Saul's court who hated him and were lying about him, and that was probably the case. David felt that those men should be cursed, because they were the cause of driving David away from the Lord's land into the lands of foreign gods. So it looks like there was a subversive group in the royal court that was against David. In verse 20 David again emphasized that he was as harmless as a flea, and had no hidden agendas. All he wanted to do was return to the land of his birth. He didn't want to die in the wilderness.

## **Doctrinal Points**

### **1. The Lord will test the righteousness of every believer.**

In 1 Samuel 24 David was tested as to whether he would do what was right or not, and he passed the test. David had a golden opportunity to eliminate King Saul, and was told by his own men that this opportunity was from the Lord! But David didn't take matters into his own hands and kill the king. He knew that God had made Saul the king, and it was not his place to remove God's anointed king. He knew that it was only a matter of time before the Lord Himself would remove King Saul, and David wanted to wait on the Lord.

In 1 Samuel 26 David had another golden opportunity to remove King Saul. David and his men were able to sneak up on Saul's camp at night. While Saul was sleeping, David and his nephew, Abishai, were able to get so close to Saul that he could have killed Saul with his own spear. Once again, David was told that this was an opportunity from the Lord. Abishai pleaded with David to at least let him do the job: "All I need is one shot," said Abishai!

What would you have done? Would you have done what David did? I don't think that I would have been able to resist the opportunity! I might even have thanked the Lord for this second chance! But if I had acted on my impulse, I would have been wrong! Once again, David passed the test of righteousness, and he didn't lift his hand against the Lord's anointed. David only took Saul's spear and water jug, to prove to Saul and General Abner that he could have killed the king, and that Abner was not protecting the king. David was tested to see if he would do what was right, and he passed the test.

What about us? The Lord will test the righteousness of every believer. This is one of the tests of faith that every believer faces, according to James 1:1 and 1 Peter 1. Sometimes we think that a "test of faith" only has to do with whether or not we will stand up under persecution, but the test of our faith is much larger than that. Our righteousness will be tested. As believers, will we do what is right when it comes to honesty and integrity? Will we do what is right when it comes to handling money? Will we do what is right when it comes to giving back what is borrowed? Will we do what is

right when it comes to submitting to authority structures? The Lord will test the righteousness of every believer.

## **2. The Lord will reward the righteousness of every believer.**

Verses 22-24: *"And David answered and said, "Here is the king's spear. Let one of the young men come over and get it. May the LORD repay every man for his righteousness and his faithfulness; for the LORD delivered you into my hand today, but I would not stretch out my hand against the LORD's anointed. And indeed, as your life was valued much this day in my eyes, so let my life be valued much in the eyes of the LORD, and let Him deliver me out of all tribulation."*

Notice that our doctrinal point, "The Lord will reward the righteousness of every believer" comes right from what David said to King Saul in verse 23. The Lord will reward the righteousness of every believer - it was true in David's case, and it will also be true for us. Remember what the Lord said in the Sermon on the Mount - Matthew 5:6 *"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled."* The Lord will reward the righteousness of every believer.

Our reward for righteous living may not come overnight, and maybe not even in our lifetime, but we will be rewarded for doing the right thing. Do what is right in your marriage, and God will reward you. Do what is right in your family, and God will reward you. Do what is right in your business, and God will reward you. Do what is right in your church and fellowship groups, and God will reward you. The Lord will reward the righteousness of every believer.

### **Practical Application**

#### **Expect to be tested again!**

The fact that David's faith and patience and righteousness were tested more than once is a lesson in itself. We should expect to be tested again, even when we have passed the test! Remember the temptations or tests in the life of our Lord? Matthew 4:1 - *"Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil."* Now listen to what Luke 4:13 says, after the Lord had passed all the tests: *"Now when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time."* This means that the testing continued!

In the same way, God will allow our faith and righteousness to be tested throughout our lifetime. Graduation doesn't come until we get to Heaven. So thank and praise the Lord when you do the right thing and pass the test of faith and righteousness -- but expect to be tested again!