

1 Samuel 23:14–18

¹⁴ And David stayed in strongholds in the wilderness, and remained in the mountains in the Wilderness of Ziph. Saul sought him every day, but God did not deliver him into his hand.

¹⁵ So David saw that Saul had come out to seek his life. And David was in the Wilderness of Ziph in a forest.

¹⁶ Then Jonathan, Saul's son, arose and went to David in the woods and strengthened his hand in God.

¹⁷ And he said to him, "Do not fear, for the hand of Saul my father shall not find you. You shall be king over Israel, and I shall be next to you. Even my father Saul knows that."

¹⁸ So the two of them made a covenant before the LORD. And David stayed in the woods, and Jonathan went to his own house.

God Protects David
1 Samuel 23

INTRO:

Does God really care about the stuff we are going through? The answer is yes. We need to remember what Isaiah teaches us in **Isaiah 40:10-11**. ***"Behold, the Lord GOD shall come with a strong hand, And His arm shall rule for Him; Behold, His reward is with Him, And His work before Him. He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs with His arm, And carry them in His bosom, And gently lead those who are with young."*** God is both the Great God who runs the universe, and the God who is right here beside us and cares for us.

We see this clearly in the account of God's care for David who is running for his life from Saul the King. There are three scenes to our study today.

- I. God's Direction and Provision at Keilah (23: 1-13)***
- II. God Encourages David at Ziph (23:14-18)***
- III. God Delivers David Supernaturally Again (23:19-29)***

I. God's Direction and Provision at Keilah (23: 1-13)

A. David, in contrast to King Saul, strongly sought and followed the Word from God. The LORD made sure we saw David's careful obedience in **verses 1-13**. The Philistines attacked Keilah to take the fruit of the harvest. David was immediately concerned and asks for God's direction. God provided it saying "yes, go." However David's men were not convinced. Running away from King Saul was one thing. Attacking the Philistines was another. So, David asked again and got the same answer again. So, David and his men defended Keilah and routed the Philistines. Then he heard, probably from his spies, that Saul was coming to

attack Keilah and capture him. When David asked direction from God, the LORD once again directed him to leave the city.

B. We no doubt wonder how all this asking for direction happened. We find out in **verse 6**. ***“Now it happened, when Abiathar the son of Ahimelech fled to David at Keilah that he went down with an ephod in his hand.”***

We have already read in the last chapter of 1 Samuel how Abiathar the only surviving priest from Nob fled to David. Now we learned he brought the ephod with him. Saul had no use for God or for His priests so Saul himself drove Abiathar into David’s open arms.

1. The ephod held the Urim and Thummim. These objects somehow gave divine answers to questions asked. We get an idea how this all worked when we read **verses 9-11**.

“When David knew that Saul plotted evil against him, he said to Abiathar the priest, ‘Bring the ephod here.’” Then David said, ‘O LORD God of Israel, Your servant has certainly heard that Saul seeks to come to Keilah to destroy the city for my sake. Will the men of Keilah deliver me into his hand? Will Saul come down, as Your servant has heard? O LORD God of Israel, I pray, tell Your servant.’ And the LORD said, ‘He will come down.’”

2. David asked two specific questions and God answered both in the affirmative. How God answered we are not told. What is important is that David immediately obeyed God.

II. God Encourages David at Ziph (23:14-18)

A. After David left Keilah, he moved into the wilderness and hid in the fortresses. There is a precious statement in **verse 14** which covers David entire flight from Saul.

“And David stayed in strongholds in the wilderness, and remained in the mountains in the Wilderness of Ziph. Saul sought him every day, but God did not deliver him into his hand.”

David was delivered because God delivered him.

B. While Saul could not find David, Jonathan found him and visited him in the midst of his incredible trial. Do you see here how the LORD really cares for His servants? God is not just interested in David’s physical deliverance. He provided spiritual and emotional refreshment. Jonathan became a spiritual oasis in David’s dessert. **(vs.16-18)**

“Then Jonathan, Saul’s son, arose and went to David in the woods and strengthened his hand in God. And he said to him, ‘Do not fear, for the hand of Saul my father shall not find you. You shall be king over Israel, and I shall be next to you. Even my father Saul knows that.’ So the two of them made a covenant

before the LORD. And David stayed in the woods, and Jonathan went to his own house.”

Jonathan reminded David of God’s promise. He reminded David what was true. David’s doubts and circumstances were not as true as God’s promise. Most of what David feared did not happen. The promises came true.

C. How often are we the Christian friend who encourages by his presence and through reminding others of the truth of God’s promises?

III. God Delivers David Supernaturally Again (23:19-29)

A. After Jonathan’s visit, some of David’s own countrymen betray him. This is significant in that in David’s day the people of Judah seemed to stay together. When David finally becomes king, he is made king of Judah for seven years before he is crowned king of all Israel (**2 Samuel 2**). Still, the Ziphites who are of Judah decide to betray David to Saul. They say something like, Isn’t David hiding in the Baptist Church on the East side of Wood Road, between Stoll and Clark Road, just south of Reeses farm? They were delighted to turn David over to Saul.

B. The chase that ensues when Saul came down involved a kind of “ring around the rosy” around a mountain. Saul and his army on one side, David and his band on the other. When it looked like Saul was about to capture David, God provided a messenger with urgent news that the Philistines were attacking the land. So, Saul had to go. Once again, God delivered David from certain capture and death.

God took care of David, and He also takes care of us. If we are saved through faith, we are His people and He does and will provide for us in the most difficult situations of life. He will provide encouragement when we need it. Finally, our Lord does lead us along the way.