

David and Saul Close Encounters

Saul in Pursuit of David

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What We Will Learn

- Three close encounters
- Saul in pursuit of David
- David would not harm Saul
- God's anointed king of Israel
- David endured hardship of a fugitive
- Moved often to protect himself from Saul
- 1 Samuel 23, 24, and 26

First Close Encounter: David defeated Philistines at Keilah

- Philistines attacked Keilah
- David inquired of God
- Consulted with his men: they were afraid
- Inquired of God again
- Attacked and defeated the Philistines
- 1 Samuel 23:1–5



1 Samuel 23 (NIV)

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

2 he inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I go and attack these Philistines?" 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.

5 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.

First Close Encounter cont'd: David Escapes from Keilah

- Saul intended to pursue David to Keilah
- Excited Keilah was a gated city
- David inquired of God
- Should he leave or stay and fight
- David left Keilah with his men
- Saul cancelled plan to go to Keilah
- 1 Samuel 23:7–13




1 Samuel 23 (NIV)

7 Saul was told that David had gone to Keilah, and he said, "God has handed him over to me, for David has imprisoned himself by entering a town with gates and bars."

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, "O LORD, God of Israel, your servant has heard definitely that Saul plans to come to Keilah and destroy the town on account of me."



1 Samuel 23 (NIV)

11 Will the citizens of Keilah surrender me to him? Will Saul come down, as your servant has heard? O 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.

First Close Encounter cont'd

David Moved as Saul Pursued

- Jonathan visited David at Horesh
- Helped David find strength in God
- Prophesied to David
 - Father Saul will not be able to harm you
 - You will be king over Israel
 - I will be your second
- He and David renewed their covenant
- 1 Samuel 23:16–18



1 Samuel 23 (NIV)

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.

First Close Encounter cont'd: Philistines Interrupt Saul's Pursuit

- Saul pursued David to Desert of Maon
- He closed in on David
- Informed Philistine raid on Israel in progress
- Called off pursuit to fight the Philistines
- David and his men moved to En Gedi
- 1 Samuel 23:24–29



1 Samuel 23 (NIV)

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.

Second Close Encounter: Saul Vulnerable

- Saul pursues David to Desert of En Gedi
- With three thousand men
- They stopped to rest in a cave
- David and his men were in the same cave
- Saul's team did not notice David's team
- David's men urged him to take advantage
- 1 Samuel 24:1–4



1 Samuel 24 (NIV)

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

2 So Saul took three thousand chosen men from all Israel and set out to look for David and his men near the Crags of the Wild Goats.

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.

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.

Second Close Encounter cont'd: David Spares Saul

- David took a cut from Saul's robe
- Regretted this action later
- God forbid that I should do this to my master, the Lord's anointed
- Rebuked his men against attacking Saul
- Saul and his men left the cave unharmed
- 1 Samuel 24:4–7



1 Samuel 24 (NIV)

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.

5 Afterward, David was conscience-stricken for having cut off a corner of his robe.

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."

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.

Second Close Encounter cont'd

David Addresses Saul

- David came out and called Saul
- He prostrated to Saul
- Why do you believe I am out to harm you?
- God delivered you to me in the cave
- I spared you: you are God's anointed
- I only cut a piece off your robe
- I did not harm you

Second Close Encounter: David Addresses Saul cont'd

- I am not guilty of wrongdoing or rebellion
- But you hunt me down to take my life
- May God judge between me and you
- May He avenge your wrongs to me
- I will not harm you
- May God deliver me from you
- 1 Samuel 24:8–15



1 Samuel 24 (NIV)

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.

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

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.'

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.



1 Samuel 24 (NIV)

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.

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

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

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."

Second Close Encounter cont'd: Saul's Response to David

- Saul wept
- Referred to David as “my son”
- You are more righteous than I
- You treated me well but I treated you badly
- God delivered me to you but you spared me
- May God reward you well for the way you treated me today

Second Close Encounter: Saul's Response to David cont'd

- I know you will surely be king
- Kingdom of Israel will be established in you
- Swear you will not cut off my descendants
- Or wipe my name from my father's family
- David gave the oath to Saul
- They departed
- 1 Samuel 24:16–22



1 Samuel 24 (NIV)

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

17 "You are more righteous than I," he said. "You have treated me well, but I have treated you badly.

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.

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.

20 I know that you will surely be king and that the kingdom of Israel will be established in your hands.

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."

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

Third Close Encounter

David Spares Saul Again

- Saul pursues David to Desert of Ziph
- With three thousand men
- Setup camp near the desert
- David with Abishai visited Saul as he slept
- Met Saul in vulnerable position
- Abishai sought permission to kill Saul
- David declined

Third Close Encounter

David Spares Saul Again cont'd

- Will not lay hand on the Lord's anointed
- The Lord will strike him naturally or in battle
- Just get his spear and water jug
- David and Abishai left the camp
- Were not noticed by any one
- 1 Samuel 26:1–12

1 Samuel 26 (NIV)

- 1 The Ziphites went to Saul at Gibeah and said, "Is not David hiding on the hill of Hakilah, which faces Jeshimon?"
- 2 So Saul went down to the Desert of Ziph, with his three thousand chosen men of Israel, to search there for David.
- 3 Saul made his camp beside the road on the hill of Hakilah facing Jeshimon, but David stayed in the desert. When he saw that Saul had followed him there,
- 4 he sent out scouts and learned that Saul had definitely arrived.
- 5 Then David set out and went to the place where Saul had camped. He saw where Saul and Abner son of Ner, the commander of the army, had lain down. Saul was lying inside the camp, with the army encamped around him.



1 Samuel 26 (NIV)

6 David then asked Ahimelech the Hittite and Abishai son of Zeruah, Joab's brother, "Who will go down into the camp with me to Saul?" "I'll go with you," said Abishai.

7 So David and Abishai went to the army by night, and there was Saul, lying asleep inside the camp with his spear stuck in the ground near his head. Abner and the soldiers were lying around him.

8 Abishai said to David, "Today God has delivered your enemy into your hands. Now let me pin him to the ground with one thrust of my spear; I won't strike him twice."

9 But David said to Abishai, "Don't destroy him! Who can lay a hand on the LORD's anointed and be guiltless?"



1 Samuel 26 (NIV)

10 As surely as the LORD lives," he said, "the LORD himself will strike him; either his time will come and he will die, or he will go into battle and perish.

11 But the LORD forbid that I should lay a hand on the LORD's anointed. Now get the spear and water jug that are near his head, and let's go."

12 So David took the spear and water jug near Saul's head, and they left. No one saw or knew about it, nor did anyone wake up. They were all sleeping, because the LORD had put them into a deep sleep.

Third Close Encounter cont'd

Dialogue with Saul

- David rebuked Abner, Saul's commander
- Then he spoke to Saul
- Why do you pursue me, what have I done
- If God has incited you against me, may he accept an offering
- If men have done it, may they be cursed before the Lord

Third Close Encounter cont'd

Saul Confesses

- Saul responded to David
- I have sinned, come back, David my son
- Because you considered my life precious today, I will not try to harm you again
- I have acted like a fool and erred greatly

Third Close Encounter cont'd

Prayer and Final Departure

- David invited Saul to send someone to get his spear and water jug
- The Lord delivered you to me today, but I would not harm the Lord's anointed
- May the Lord value my life as I valued yours and deliver me from all trouble
- Saul prayed for David and they departed

Concluding Remarks

- In the encounters with Saul, David illustrate several principles of human interaction
- Behavior to others should be motivated by forgiveness, not vengeance
- Break the cycle of retaliation
- Talk to your oppressor, to explain what he/she has done wrong
- Provide him/her opportunity to repent

Concluding Remarks cont'd

- Explain why you will not seek vengeance
 - God created us to love and care for each other, even those that try to hurt us
 - Matthew 5:43–47
 - Romans 12:19–21
- Respect those in authority over you
- Romans 13:1–2
- Protect yourself from the oppressor