

## 231101-4 1Sa 23, David Hides from Saul in the Land of Judah—CThurman

After Jonathan confirmed that his father, Saul, had truly determined to kill David, David fled to Gath. Hearing what the Philistines were saying of him David perceived a danger in king Achish. So he feigned being a mad man. From here David came to the cave of Adullam. Shortly after this David's family came to him there to flee from Saul's rage. Then David brings them to Mizpeh of Moab to be safe and evidently he holds up in some defensible position not far off. But the prophet Gad told David to flee into Judah. And so, David came to the forest of Hareth. In the meantime, someone reported to Saul that David has been seen. Then Doeg, the Edomite says that he saw David at Nob. He also saw that Ahimelech, the high priest, had rendered aid to him. For this Saul then commands Ahimelech and all his house to come up to him to Gibeah. Once there Saul kills all eighty-five of the priests and sends a force to utterly destroy the city of Nob. But a priest named Abiathar escaped and came to where David was hiding. David hearing what Saul had done said to Abiathar,

*1Sa.22.23 Abide thou with me, fear not: for he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life: but with me thou [shalt be] in safeguard.*

*safeguard, מְשֹׁמֵרָה, a fem. noun tss. a charge, to keep, an ordinance, a ward, a watch; the verb שָׁמַר, to keep, observe, to take heed, to watch, preserve, to mark, to save, to beware, to be circumspect.*

David was sure, based on the promise which the LORD had made to him, that he would be preserved and saved through all of his trials. Therefore, since the LORD would preserve him, then the LORD would also preserve those that are with him. In effect David became a surety, a pledge, a guarantee for all those which came to him. (cf. Ge.43.8, 9; 44.32) As David was to them, so is the Lord Jesus to us. He is our surety, our pledge, and guarantee to God. In effect Christ put His life *up* in our place to redeem us from our sin-debt to give us standing before God.

### Chapter 23

**1 ¶ Then they told David, saying, Behold, the Philistines fight against Keilah, and they rob the threshingfloors.**  
plunder, spoil barns

*and they rob*, Qal part. Poel of the verb **רָבַד**, also tss. *to rob*.  
(1Sa.14.48, *that spoiled them*; 23.1, *robbed* (marg. 'are plundering')

*threshingfloor*, **אֵיגָל**, a masc. noun tss. *floor, threshingfloor, corn, void place, barnfloor*.

To whom does the plural pronoun *they* refer? It could be his own men simply relating how much trouble their people suffer in so many places, not thinking at all about doing anything for them being they aren't in a much better situation themselves.

But the Philistines have plundered the barns of the inhabitants of Keilah. Particularly the Philistines have made off with their livestock and this is a real setback. Livestock provides food, clothing, powers the mill and the plow.

David is in the central area of the land of Judah, and the LORD's priest, Abiathar is with him. But he is not the king of Israel. Should he engage this fight to help his brethren?

*Pr 24:11 If thou forbear to deliver [them that are] drawn unto death, and [those that are] ready to be slain;  
12 If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider [it]? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth [not] he know [it]? and shall [not] he render to [every] man according to his works?*

**נָכַח**, Hiphil pret.

**2 Therefore David enquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go and smite these**  
punish, slay, strike

**Philistines? And the LORD said unto David, Go, and smite the Philistines, and save Keilah.**

Based on what we read in v.6 David very likely inquires of the LORD by means of Abiathar, the next high priest of Israel. He is carrying the high priest's ephod. This ephod has attached to it the breastplate of judgment,

and the breastplate of judgment has inside of it the Urim and Thummim (lights and perfections) through which is given discernment. (v.6) (cf. Ex.28.6-30)

אֹר, oor, or ur, masc.; KJV, Urim (7), fires (5), light (1).

תָּמ, masc., tohm, KJV, *integrity* (11), *simplicity* (1), *Thummim* (5), *venture* (2), *full* (1), *uprightness* (2), *uprightly* (2), *upright* (2), *perfect* (2); think *perfection*; related to this is the plural adjective תַּמִּים, tah-meem; *Ge.6.9, Noah was a just man; Ge.17.1, walk before me, and be thou perfect; Ex. 12.5, your lamb shall be without blemish; Lev.22.21, it shall be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no blemish therein; Deu.18.13, thou shall be perfect with the LORD; Ps.18.30, as for God his way is perfect; Ps.18.32, It is God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect.*

But for the most part it seems that David's questions are relatively simple so that essentially the answers are yes and no's.

David's love for his people moved him to lay aside his present circumstance so that he might help them.

### **3 And David's men said unto him, Behold, we be afraid here in Judah: how much more then if we come to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines?**

The location of Keilah is said to be due south of the cave of Adullam about 2 ½ miles. David must have shared the matter of battling against the Philistines with those men of war that were with him. And they thought it was unreasonable for them to jeopardize themselves any further by taking up the cause of others. It is reasonable, but because of the answer which the LORD gave to David he returns to pray.

### **4 Then David enquired of the LORD yet again.**

'Not for his own sake, who firmly believed it was the will of God he should go and succeed, but for the sake of his men, and to remove the doubts and fears that hung on their minds ...' *Gill*

**And the LORD answered him and said, Arise, go down to Keilah; for I will deliver the Philistines into thine hand.**

**5 So David and his men went to Keilah,**

So the difference there was between David and his men was resolved by the word of God. To agree with the word of God is to agree with one another. The closer we are to the teachings of Scripture, the closer we will be to one another.

**and fought with the Philistines, and brought away their cattle, and smote them with a great slaughter.**

*cattle, מִקְנֵיהוּ, a masc. noun tss. cattle, possessions, herds, beasts, flocks, substance.*

**So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah.**

dwellers

And not a word about the a single loss of life for those with David.

**6 And it came to pass, when Abiathar the son of Ahimelech fled to David to Keilah, [that] he came down [with] an ephod in his hand.**

Perhaps when David and the men that were with him went to the battle, that Abiathar had remain with the families in their camp. Then after the battle Abiathar comes down to David bring the high priest's ephod with him. And as it so happens David has need to inquire of the LORD.

**7 ¶ And it was told Saul that David was come to Keilah. And Saul said, God hath delivered him into mine hand; for he is shut in, by entering into a town**

estranged

inclosed

alienated

*hath delivered him, Piel (intensive act.) pret. of the verb נָכַר, tss. to know, to dissemble, to deliver, to discern, to acknowledge, to take notice, to respect, to perceive, to discern, to feign, to make strange*

and the Interlinear Bible by J.P. Green, Sr. has *estranged*, and so the idea of alienating David; the masc. noun נִכְרַר, is tss. *strange*; the adj. נִכְרָרִי, is tss. *stranger, alien, foreigner, strange*.

*shut in*, Niphal (simple pass.) pret. of the verb סָגַר, tss. *to shut, to shut up, to shut out, to repair, to enclose, to deliver* (**1Sa.23.7**, Niphal pret., **vss.11, 12** [*to deliver up*], Hiphil fut.; **v.20**, Hiphil infin.; **1Sa.24.18; 26.8**, Piel pret.), *to give up*.

**that hath gates and bars.**

*gates*, דָּלַת, a fem. noun tss. *door, gate, lid*.

*bars*, בָּרִיחַ, a masc. noun tss. *bar, but once fugitive*.

**8 And Saul called all the people together to war, to go down to Keilah,**  
summoned to battle

*called*, Piel (intensive act.) fut. of the verb שָׁמַע, tss. *to hear (oft), to consent, to understand, to listen, to perceive, to discern, to obey, but here to call*.

**to besiege David and his men.**  
beset, assault

*to besiege*, Qal infin. of the verb צוּר, tss. *to be an adversary, to bind up, to besiege, to beset, to lay siege, to put up in a bag, to inclose, to fortify, to assault*.

**9 And David knew that Saul secretly practised mischief against him;**  
devised evil

*secretly practised*, Hiphil (causative act.) part. of the verb סָחַר, tss. *to plow, to hold the peace, to devise, to be a worker, to be a plower, to hold the tongue, to conceal*.

It is not revealed how David became apprised of Saul's schemes and locations but it was revealed to him.

*Ec 10:20 Curse not the king, no not in thy thought; and curse not the rich in thy bedchamber: for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter.*

*2Ki 6:12 And one of his servants said, None, my lord, O king: but Elisha, the prophet that [is] in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber.*

***and he said to Abiathar the priest, Bring hither the ephod.***

So again (v.2), David will inquire of the LORD for judgment, discernment, wisdom.

*Jas 1:5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all [men] liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.*

***10 Then said David, O LORD God of Israel, thy servant hath certainly heard that Saul seeketh to come to Keilah, to destroy the city for my sake.***  
because of me

*to destroy, Piel infin. of the verb תִּשָּׁחַת, tss. to corrupt, to mar, to spill, to perish, to destroy.*

בַּעַל, bah-[g]al

***11 Will the men of Keilah deliver me up into his hand?***  
masters, owners inclose (to cause)  
captains, possessors shut

***will Saul come down, as thy servant hath heard? O LORD God of Israel, I beseech thee, tell thy servant. And the LORD said, He will come down.***

***12 Then said David, Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men***  
masters inclose (to cause)  
shut

**into the hand of Saul? And the LORD said, They will deliver [thee] up.**

inclose thee  
shut

What a great love that David had for the people over whom he would rule one day. Rather than he being offended, for their own welfare he withdrew from them to spare them destruction; that they might receive a blessing.

*Jn.16.5 But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou?*

*6 But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.*

*7 ¶ Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.*

**13 Then David and his men, [which were] about six hundred,**

David has increased in numbers of men (of war) from four hundred to six hundred.

**arose and departed out of Keilah, and went whithersoever they could go.**

So, by David departing this city he spared them much trouble.

**And it was told Saul that David was escaped from Keilah; and he forbare to go forth.**

left off  
ceased

*was escaped, Niphal (simple pass.) fut. of the verb טָלַח, tss. to escape, to get away, to be delivered, to be saved; 1Sa. 23.13; 27.1; 30.17, Niphal fut.; 1Sa.27.1 (marg., escaping), Niphal infin.; 1Sa.22.1, 20; 27.1 (marg., I should escape), Niphal fut..*

*and he forbare, Qal fut. of the verb לָצַח, tss. to cease, to forbear, to leave, to fail, to leave off, to want.*

**14 ¶ And David abode in the wilderness in strong holds, and remained  
dwelt**

*strong holds, מְצָדָה, a masc. noun tss. also castle, hold, munitions,  
forts. (vss. 14, 19, 29)*

***in a mountain in the wilderness of Ziph.***

Ziph is probably centrally located in the land of Judah. But David found defensible positions where he and those with him could rest for a little while.

נָתַן

***And Saul sought him every day, but God delivered him not into his hand.***

gave

**15 And David saw that Saul was come out to seek his life: and David [was] in**

***the wilderness of Ziph in a wood.  
forest***

*wood, חַרְשֵׁי, a masc. noun tss. also forest, bough, shroud.*

There is a city by the same name (Ziph) deep into the south of Judah on the border of Edom. But another is located about 5 miles south of Hebron.

**16 And Jonathan Saul's son arose, and went to David into the wood,  
forest**

***and strengthened his hand in God.***

established, confirmed, encouraged

*and strengthened, Piel (intensive act.) fut. of the verb חָזַק, tss. to be  
sore, to prevail, to strengthen, to be stout, to confirm, to establish, to  
have courage, to mend, to amend, etc.*

The LORD allowed Jonathan to find David, but Saul and all of his men of war could not.

**17 And he said unto him, Fear not: for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee; and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee;**  
second

next, מִשְׁנָה, a masc. noun tss. second, double, twice as much, next, a second order, fatlings.

Ge.41.40 (Pharaoh of Egypt speaking.) *Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou.*

41 *And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt.*

42 *And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck;*

43 *And he made him to ride in the second (next) chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he made him [ruler] over all the land of Egypt.*

**and that also Saul my father knoweth.**

**18 And they two made a covenant before the LORD: and David abode**  
cut dwelt

made, Qal fut. of the verb כָּרַת, tss. to make, to cut, to cut down, to cut off, to make a league, to hew, to destroy, to make a covenant, to chew, to perish, to free, to fail; 1Sa.24.5, Qal pret., cut off; 1Sa.22.8, Qal infin., hath made a league, 1Sa.24.11, cut off; 1Sa.23.18, Qal fut., made, 24.4; 31.9, cut off; 1Sa.28.9, Hiphil pret., hath cut off; 1Sa.24.21, Hiphil fut., wilt ... cut off.

**in the wood, and Jonathan went to his house.**  
forest

**19 ¶ Then came up the Ziphites to Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth not David**  
**hide himself with us in strong holds in the wood, in the hill of Hachilah,**  
conceal forest

*hide himself*, Hithpael (reflexive act.) part. of the verb סָתַר, tss. *to keep close, to hide, to be absent, to be secret.*,, *strong holds*, מִצָּד, a masc. noun tss. *also castle, hold, munitions, forts.* (vss. 14, 19, 29)

***which [is] on the south of Jeshimon?***

*Jeshimon*, יְשִׁמוֹן, a masc. noun tss. as a proper noun, *Jeshimon*, and nouns such as *wilderness, desert, and solitary.*

A couple of things that will help us have some idea where David, his men, the Ziphites and Jeshimon are. These are in the lot which belongs to the tribe of Judah. (v.23, *I will search him out throughout all the thousands of Judah*) The city to which David resorts is likely the one centrally located in Judah and nearby to Maon.

*Jos.15.21 And the uttermost cities of the tribe of the children of Judah toward the coast of Edom southward were ...*

*24 Ziph ... (this perhaps being deep into the south).*

...

*55 Maon (1Sa.23.24), Carmel, and Ziph, and Juttah,*

(Note that Simeon's lot is *within*, inside of the boundaries set for the tribe of Judah. [cf. Jos.19.1])

So, Jeshimon must also be in the south of Judah. There is another Jeshimon that is located in the Plains of Moab. It is described as a place that can be viewed from Mt. Pisgah. (Nu.21.20; 23.28)

***20 Now therefore, O king, come down according to all the desire of thy soul  
pleasure***

*the desire of*, תַּאֲוָה, a fem. noun tss. *desire, lust after, pleasure.*

***to come down; and our part [shall be] to deliver him into the king's hand.***  
cause inclose to

Now, the Ziphites will betray David again in 1Sa.26.1. Then David decides to return to the land of the Philistines.

**21 And Saul said, Blessed [be] ye of the LORD; for ye have compassion on me.**

pity

*ye have compassion*, Qal pret. of the verb **חָמַל**, tss. *to spare, to pity, to have compassion*.

**22 Go, I pray you, prepare yet, and know and see his place where his haunt is,**

Be fixed still

foot

i.e. lingers, frequents

*prepare*, Hiphil (causative act.) imper. of the verb **כָּוַן**, tss. *to establish, to prepare, to fashion, to be stable, to direct, to fit, to meet, to ready, to stand, firm, frame, provide, etc.*; **1Sa.23.23, certainly**.

**[and] who hath seen him there: for it is told me [that] he dealeth very subtilly.**

prudently

*dealeth very subtilly*; *very* is Qal infin. and *dealeth ... subtilly* Hiphil (causative act.) fut. of the verb **עָרַם**, tss. also *to be crafty, to be prudent, to beware*.

Saul calls David's behavior subtil, as if he is a crafty, deceitful man, but David is being very wise in his dealings with others.

*behaved himself wisely*, Hiphil fut. of the verb **שָׂכַל**, tss. *to be wise, to be prudent, to be skillful, to guide wittingly, to understand, to consider, to prosper, to instruct, to wisely consider*; **1Sa.18.5, Hiphil fut., behaved himself wisely (marg. prospered)**; **1Sa.18.14, 15, Hiphil part., behaved himself wisely (marg. prospered)**; **1Sa.18.30, Qal pret., behaved himself ... wisely**.

On one hand God the reason that David survived at all was because *God delivered him not into the hand of Saul* (v.14). And on the other David was

to apply the wisdom of the word of God to his steps. He was to be *wise as a serpent, and harmless as a dove*. And it's how we should walk also.

*Mt 10:16 Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.*

**23 See therefore, and take knowledge of all the lurking places where he hideth himself,**

*lurking places, מְקוֹמֵי אֲבִיָּאִים, a masc. pl. noun only this once in the OT.*

*hideth himself, Hithpael fut. of the verb אָבִיָּא, tss. to hide, to hold, to be secret.*

**and come ye again to me with the certainty, and I will go with you: and it shall come to pass, if he be in the land, that I will search him**  
make diligent search of

*that I will search ... out, Piel (intensive act.) pret. of the verb שָׁחַט, tss. to search out (1Sa.23.23), to search for, to search, to make diligent search, and also to disguise (1Sa.28.8), to hide.*

**out throughout all the thousands of Judah.**

Saul was obsessed with finding David to kill him.

**24 And they arose, and went to Ziph before Saul: but David and his men [were] in the wilderness of Maon, in the plain on the south of Jeshimon.**

*wilderness, מְדִינָה, a masc. noun tss. also desert, the south.  
(1Sa.23.14, 15, 24, 25; 24.1; 25.1, 4, 14, 21; 26.2, 3)*

So David and those with him moved from the hills of Hachilah (v.19) which were on the south of Jeshimon to the wilderness of Maon, in the plain, south of Jeshimon.

**25 Saul also and his men went to seek [him]. And they told David:**

*They*, either refers to the people of that area or some of David's men that perhaps were set up to keep watch for their safety.

***wherefore he came down into a rock, and abode in the wilderness of Maon.***

dwelt

*rock, סֶלַע, a masc. noun tss. Sela, stony (places), ragged rocks, strong hold.*

David is travelling on this side and that side of the hills just south of the city of Hebron.

***And when Saul heard [that], he pursued after David in the wilderness of Maon.***

***26 And Saul went on this side of the mountain, and David and his men on that side of the mountain: and David made haste to get away for fear of Saul;***

from the face

*made haste, Niphal part. of the verb הָפִיז, tss. to haste, to haste away, to tremble.*

***for Saul and his men compassed David and his men round about to take them.***

apprehend

*compassed ... round about, Qal part. Poel of the verb עָטַר, tss. to compass round about, to crown.*

*to take them, Qal infin. of the verb הִכָּפֵשׁ, tss. to lay hold, to lay hold on, to take, to apprehend, to catch, to handle, to lay over.*

***27 But there came a messenger unto Saul, saying, Haste thee, and come; for the Philistines have invaded the land.***

spoiled, stripped

*haste thee, Piel (intensive act.) imper. of the verb מָהַר, tss. to carry headlong, to be rash, to be fearful, to be quick, to haste, to be soon, to be swift, to fetch quickly, straightway, suddenly, to make speed, to be ready.*

*invaded*, Qal pret. of the verb פִּשַׁע, tss. *to put off, to rush, to make a road* (1Sa.27.10, Qal pret.), *to invade* (1Sa.23.27, Qal pret.; 30.1, 14, Qal pret.), *to strip* (1Sa.31.8, Piel infin.), *to strip off* (1Sa.31.9, Hiphil fut.), *to spread, to spoil*.

**28 Wherefore Saul returned from pursuing after David, and went against the**

**Philistines: therefore they called that place** סֶלַע הַמַּחְלָקוֹת  
**Selahammahlekoth.**  
the rock of division.  
The Rock of Mehlekoth

*Selahammahlekoth, Sela-* (rock), *-ha-* (definite art. 'the'), *mahlekoth* (division, course, company), the 'oth' being a fem. pl. ending.

**29 And David went up from thence, and dwelt in strong holds at Engedi.**

*strong holds, מְצָד*, a masc. noun tss. *also castle, hold, munitions, forts.* (vss. 14, 19, 29)

*Engedi, עֵינַיִת*, or the *eye, well, or fountain well of a kid of the goats.*

So, David leaves the area just south of Hebron to come to the western shores of the Dead Sea and the city named Engedi, and will go back and forth, to and from the area south of Hebron.

It is thought that David penned the 63<sup>rd</sup> Psalm at this time in Engedi.