

1Samuel 26:1 ¶ And the Ziphites came unto Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth not David hide himself in the hill of Hachilah, which is before Jeshimon?

1Samuel 26:2 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.

1Samuel 26:3 And Saul pitched in the hill of Hachilah, which is before Jeshimon, by the way. But David abode in the wilderness, and he saw that Saul came after him into the wilderness.

Once again we find the Ziphites going to report to Saul that they knew where David was hiding. It certainly seems like these men have some kind of vendetta against David. They told Saul that David was hiding in the hill of Hachilah near Jeshimon. Saul again takes 3000 of his best soldiers to hunt down David in the wilderness of Ziph. Saul and his men made camp by the hill of Hachilah.

David soon became aware that Saul was after him once again.

We know that David had about 600 men with him, and this is the second time that Saul decides that he needs 3000 men to help him find and destroy David. I got to thinking that the enemy likes to frighten us by stacking what seems to be like overwhelming odds against us. Truth is, however, that God plus me equals a majority; it's an undefeatable team. That's the truth on which we need to focus when the enemy is at work trying to destroy our faith.

1Samuel 26:4 David therefore sent out spies, and understood that Saul was come in very deed.

1Samuel 26:5 And David arose, and came to the place where Saul had pitched: and David beheld the place where Saul lay, and Abner the son of Ner, the captain of his host: and Saul lay in the trench, and the people pitched round about him.

1Samuel 26:6 ¶ Then answered David and said to Ahimelech the Hittite, and to Abishai the son of Zeruiah, brother to Joab, saying, Who will go down with me to Saul to the camp? And Abishai said, I will go down with thee.

David decided to send out spies to confirm Saul's exact location. Once receiving their report, he went himself to scope out the situation. He saw that Saul was in the middle of the camp surrounded by his troops and that Abner the son of Ner, his commander, was right next to him.

JFB provides this historical note: "Among the nomad people of the East, the encampments are usually made in a circular form. The circumference is lined by the baggage and the men, while the chief's station is in the center, whether he occupy a tent or not. His spear, stuck in the ground, indicates his position."

David turned to two of his men—Ahimelech the Hittite and Abishai the son of Zeruiah and brother of Joab—and asked which one would go down to Saul's camp with him. Abishai, his nephew, immediately volunteered.

1 Chronicles 2:13–16 "And Jesse begat his firstborn Eliab, and Abinadab the second, and

Shimma the third, Nethaneel the fourth, Raddai the fifth, Ozem the sixth, David the seventh: Whose sisters were Zeruiah, and Abigail. And the sons of Zeruiah; Abishai, and Joab, and Asahel, three."

1Samuel 26:7 So David and Abishai came to the people by night: and, behold, Saul lay sleeping within the trench, and his spear stuck in the ground at his bolster: but Abner and the people lay round about him.

1Samuel 26:8 Then said Abishai to David, God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day: now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear even to the earth at once, and I will not *smite* him the second time.

1Samuel 26:9 And David said to Abishai, Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand against the LORD'S anointed, and be guiltless?

1Samuel 26:10 David said furthermore, As the LORD liveth, the LORD shall smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into battle, and perish.

1Samuel 26:11 The LORD forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the LORD'S anointed: but, I pray thee, take thou now the spear that *is* at his bolster, and the cruse of water, and let us go.

1Samuel 26:12 So David took the spear and the cruse of water from Saul's bolster; and they gat them away, and no man saw *it*, nor knew *it*, neither awaked: for they *were* all asleep; because a deep sleep from the LORD was fallen upon them.

That night, when Saul's army had lay down to sleep for the night, David and Abishai made their move. They approached the camp and saw where Saul's spear in the ground marked the spot where he lay. Abishai asked David to let him go and destroy Saul for him since it was obvious that God had delivered his enemy into his hand. He promised that it would only take him one stroke to kill Saul. It also seems that he planned to use Saul's own spear to do it.

David, however, told Abishai that he could not destroy the LORD's anointed and be guiltless before God. Because Saul was the LORD's anointed, the LORD would determine when he should die—either by disease or natural causes—or by causing him to die in battle. He once again declared that he would never lift his hand against the LORD's anointed.

David's plan was to take Saul's spear and the jug of water by his pillow and escape. He would use these items to once again testify to the fact that he could have killed Saul, but didn't.

"bolster" = a headpiece, i.e. the head-rest (or pillow)

We are told that David and Abishai carried out their plan successfully because the LORD had caused a deep sleep to fall upon the whole camp. This testified to the LORD's affirmation of David's actions.

1Samuel 26:13 ¶ Then David went over to the other side, and stood on the top of an hill afar off; a great space *being* between them:

1Samuel 26:14 And David cried to the people, and to Abner the son of Ner,

saying, Answerest thou not, Abner? Then Abner answered and said, Who *art* thou *that* criest to the king?

1Samuel 26:15 And David said to Abner, *Art* not thou a *valiant* man? and who *is* like to thee in Israel? wherefore then hast thou not kept thy lord the king? for there came one of the people in to destroy the king thy lord.

1Samuel 26:16 This thing *is* not good that thou hast done. As the LORD liveth, ye *are* worthy to die, because ye have not kept your master, the LORD'S anointed. And now see where the king's spear *is*, and the cruse of water that *was* at his bolster.

Still under the cover of night, David takes position on the top of a distant hill and cries out to Abner, Saul's captain.

Helpful note from JFB: "The extraordinary purity and elasticity of the air in Palestine enable words to be distinctly heard that are addressed by a speaker from the top of one hill to people on that of another, from which it is separated by a deep intervening ravine. Hostile parties can thus speak to each other, while completely beyond the reach of each other's attack. It results from the peculiar features of the country in many of the mountain districts."

Abner asks for the one speaking to identify himself. David answers in a mocking voice sarcastically describing Abner as a valiant man with no comparison throughout Israel. He then accuses Abner of not protecting King Saul and points out that the king's life had been in danger that very night due to Abner's dereliction of duty. His neglect called for a death sentence; he had failed to protect the LORD's anointed. He taunted him, asking where the king's spear and cruse of water were.

1Samuel 26:17 And Saul knew David's voice, and said, *Is* this thy voice, my son David? And David said, *It is* my voice, my lord, O king.

1Samuel 26:18 And he said, Wherefore doth my lord thus pursue after his servant? for what have I done? or what evil *is* in mine hand?

1Samuel 26:19 Now therefore, I pray thee, let my lord the king hear the words of his servant. If the LORD have stirred thee up against me, let him accept an offering; but if *they be* the children of men, cursed *be* they before the LORD; for they have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of the LORD, saying, Go, serve other gods.

1Samuel 26:20 Now therefore, let not my blood fall to the earth before the face of the LORD: for the king of Israel is come out to seek a flea, as when one doth hunt a partridge in the mountains.

Saul recognized David's voice and asked for confirmation of that fact. David admitted that it was he and once again asked Saul why he was seeking to kill him. He asked Saul to identify what he had done wrong, what evil he had done.

Verse 19 is a bit difficult for me. David is basically asking the king why he was determined to kill David. Was it because the LORD had directed him to do so? Or was it because other men had urged him? I think he is saying that if it were at the LORD's direction, he would offer his life to atone for his sin. If it were other

men, however, he called for the LORD to curse them because they had driven him from his home and prevented him from serving the LORD with his people. In effect, they had driven him to serve other gods.

David knew that it was not at the LORD's direction and once again humbled himself before Saul. He declared that he did not deserve to die; he was as much threat to Saul as a flea or a partridge.

1Samuel 26:21 ¶ Then said Saul, I have sinned: return, my son David: for I will no more do thee harm, because my soul was precious in thine eyes this day: behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly.

Once again Saul admits his sin before David. Once again he promises not to harm David since he had spared his life that day. He even declares that he has acted foolishly and was completely accountable for his wrong intent toward David. He even asks David to return to his service.

1Samuel 26:22 And David answered and said, Behold the king's spear! and let one of the young men come over and fetch it.

1Samuel 26:23 The LORD render to every man his righteousness and his faithfulness: for the LORD delivered thee into *my* hand to day, but I would not stretch forth mine hand against the LORD'S anointed.

1Samuel 26:24 And, behold, as thy life was much set by this day in mine eyes, so let my life be much set by in the eyes of the LORD, and let him deliver me out of all tribulation.

David answered by telling Saul to send over one of his young men to retrieve his spear. He ignored Saul's appeal for him to return to him; he well knew Saul's Jeckel and Hyde character.

David declared that he knew that the LORD rewards a man for his righteousness and faithfulness. He knew the principle of sowing and reaping.

Galatians 6:7-9 "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

He declared that although the LORD had made it possible for David to kill Saul that day, he did not; and he would never harm the LORD's anointed. David asked the LORD to treasure his life and deliver and protect him just as surely as he had treasured, delivered and protected Saul's life that day.

1Samuel 26:25 Then Saul said to David, Blessed be thou, my son David: thou shalt both do great *things*, and also shalt still prevail. So David went on his way, and Saul returned to his place.

Saul answered by pronouncing a blessing on "my son David." He acknowledged that David would go on to do great things.

So David and Saul went their separate ways. This was to be the last interaction between Saul and David.