

David

## David, Waiting for the Kingdom

### *Waiting for the Lord*

In the rest of 1 Samuel we see David, the anointed king, waiting for the promised kingdom. This was a time of preparation. It was a time of humiliation and danger as He faced opposition and threats on his life from the hand of Saul, the outgoing king. A favorite theme of David in the psalms was “wait for the Lord,” 5 times specifically, “wait” alone, of the Lord, 23 times.<sup>1</sup> Our own struggles need to be informed by this same dynamic as we wait for the Lord in our own lives and apply New Testament truth about growth, that God uses testing in our journey to become like Jesus Christ. Few things test our faith like waiting for God to act in His own timing and for His own purposes. It should be of some comfort and encouragement for us to persevere in faith as we see God’s faithfulness to David. We, also, must fight the “little battles” as we grow and serve and wait, trusting in His faithfulness, even as our own unfaithfulness is exposed. The New Testament reveals this kind of testing as part of the process of character growth we must all go through (James 1:2-4).

### Betrayals at Keilah and Ziph

The future king now learns some hard lessons about loyalty and betrayal, betrayal even from the hands of those you help and protect. This is a hard lesson. Perhaps you have had to go to this school and learn what to do when you are turned on by those you love and care for. This future king is further prepared for the work of shepherding God’s people by the hard lessons he would learn from his Jewish brethren in the towns of Keilah and Ziph.

“Behold, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah and are plundering the threshing floors” (1 Sam 23:1), David is told. Having heard of these attacks by the Philistines on the town of Keilah and its agriculture, David goes to the Lord for instruction and guidance. “Shall I go and attack these Philistines?” And the LORD said to David, “Go and attack the Philistines and deliver Keilah” (23:2). However, David asked the Lord once more because his men were afraid to go there. The Lord reassured David and his men, “Arise, go down to Keilah, for I will give the Philistines into your hand” (v 4). Indeed David “struck them with a great slaughter. Thus David delivered the inhabitants of Keilah” (v 5).

One would expect Keilah to join David’s ranks and be loyal supporters after the victory, however, not so. As Saul gathered “all the people for war, to go down to Keilah to besiege David and his men” (v 8), David turned to the Lord and sought guidance again. Upon being told Saul was going to come and that Keilah would turn him over to Saul, David and his men, “about six hundred” (v 13) now, left Keilah and stayed in the wilderness of Ziph where there were defensible positions and places to hide. The Lord was faithful to David during this difficult time. “Saul sought him every day, but God did not deliver him into his hand” (v 14).

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<sup>1</sup> 5 times total in Psalms (English) 2 times in Psa 27:17; “wait” alone, of the Lord, 23 times. [New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update](#) (La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995). All scripture quotes are from this version unless otherwise noted.

In the course of David's trials at the hand of Saul, his good friend, Jonathan, came to encourage him. God was allowing these trials for David's growth and maturity. The resulting character would prepare him for the mission as king that the Lord had appointed as David's destiny. As in our own divinely appointed trials, encouragement from the Lord is certainly a welcome and necessary asset.

*"Jonathan, Saul's son, arose and went to David at Horesh, and encouraged him in God"<sup>17</sup> Thus he said to him, 'Do not be afraid, because the hand of Saul my father will not find you, and you will be king over Israel and I will be next to you; and Saul my father knows that also.'<sup>18</sup> So the two of them made a covenant before the LORD . . ." (23:16-18a).*

The two friends met at Horesh in the wilderness of Ziph, probably in the eastern Forest of Hereth, since the name Horesh means "wood" or "wooded" (see Appendix). The maps would locate this approximately south east of Hebron, west of En-gedi and near Ziph (v 19). This was definitely a dangerous place with no modern amenities like showers or a place to park your RV. In this visit Jonathan again proves his loyalty and friendship to the Lord's anointed, his father's successor to the throne.

To encourage his friend, Jonathan spoke to David's fear and to the promise of the Lord. All real encouragement includes reliance on God and His promises and His faithfulness to fulfill them. This was not merely positive thinking it was hopeful encouragement "both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil" (Hebrews 6:19). Though Christ, who would enter within the veil of the holy of holies, had not yet been sent by the Father, these two men hoped in the God, as He had been revealed to them. They manifested the same character and fruit of the Spirit as would later become available to all those who hoped in the same God and His revealed Son.

Again, they sealed their relationship with each other and with the Lord by making another covenant, as has proved to be their practice and habit (see 18:3; 20:16-17). These kinds of commitments or promises are a good habit for friends to have, in dependence upon the Lord.

According to the text we have, the two friends would not see each other again in this life.

However, the Ziphites were not so friendly to the future king, going to Saul at Gibeah, the seat of his informal government, and revealing David's location. They intended "to surrender him into the king's hand" (23:20). King Saul was delighted, of course. He asked them to do some more reconnaissance and went to Ziph. David had his own sources but stayed in the wilderness of Maon, where he was at this time, "and he came down to the rock" (v 25). We have no idea where or what "the rock" was but undoubtedly the original readers knew. So that is where he was! Saul continued to pursue and ended up on one side of "the mountain" (maybe that is what "the rock" was, big rock, a mountain) while David and his men were on the other side of "the mountain."

The text says, "David was hurrying to get away from Saul, for Saul and his men were surrounding David and his men to seize them" (v 26). But just as things were about to get exciting, Saul got word the Philistines had made a raid on Israel so he went to do his kingly duty and chase them away. The Lord faithfully saved His future king again and foiled the treachery of the Ziphites. So "the rock" got a new name, "the Rock of Escape," and "David went up from there and stayed in the strongholds of Engedi" (v 28, see Appendix).

Betrayed now at Keilah and Ziph, David was learning to “trust in the Lord with all your heart” (Pro 3:5) not “in mortal man, in whom there is no salvation (Psa 146:3).” We, also, following David and Paul, must learn to ask, “am I now seeking the favor of men or of God?” (Galatians 1:10). Like serving riches, this is an either/or proposition, “no one can serve two masters,” neither man nor riches (Matt 6:24 and Luke 16:13). God was grooming his future king and, by similar circumstances, is grooming us to serve Him, as well.

## DAVID SPARES SAUL FIRST TIME

The Scripture now takes us to the next adventure in David’s personal growth. Saul returns from fighting the Philistines to take up his pursuit of future king David, in chapter 24. He takes three thousand men and goes to the wilderness of En-gedi, specifically to the Rocks of the Wild Goats (24:2), a local tourist hot spot. Saul, after a long journey, of course needs to relieve himself (v 3). We learn that, arriving at the sheepfolds, he finds a suitable cave and proceeds to take care of business. Unknown to him, David and his men have also sought refuge in the cave. As is common knowledge all caves are air conditioned at about 50 degrees, being formed into the sides of mountains or the earth itself and maintain that temperature year ‘round. So they are a good place to take a break.

The situation is an obvious advantage to David and his men urged him to take advantage of it since it appeared to be the hand of God. David cut off the edge of Saul’s robe as proof of the situation and convinced his men to spare Saul at this time, referring to Saul as the Lord’s anointed.



David and Saul in Cave <sup>2</sup>

Sometimes what appears to be the hand of God must be understood with sound wisdom and principles convinced of beforehand. David wanted God’s will in God’s way and refused to force God’s timing himself. This can be inconvenient and, in David’s case, dangerous, but the Lord can be trusted to do what is best for His children. We must be willing to take David’s own advice, inspired by the Holy Spirit:

*Wait for the LORD;  
Be strong and let your heart take courage;  
Yes, wait for the LORD. Psa 27:17.*

For his part Saul had “forced” himself, in his own words, when Samuel delayed to meet him, rather than wait for the right time to do things the right way (1 Samuel 13:12). This actually prompted God to take the kingdom from Saul and give it to David. There are times we must wait.

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<sup>2</sup> [https://www.thoughtco.com/thmb/uNBg4bcvptlAC0aoevHIuUdGvtw=/534x0/filters:no\\_upscale\(\):max\\_bytes\(150000\):strip\\_icc\(\)/DavidandSaul-590131462-598b8a6b054ad9001162b138.jpg](https://www.thoughtco.com/thmb/uNBg4bcvptlAC0aoevHIuUdGvtw=/534x0/filters:no_upscale():max_bytes(150000):strip_icc()/DavidandSaul-590131462-598b8a6b054ad9001162b138.jpg)

After Saul left the cave, David followed him and “called after Saul.” What follows in the text is a conversation between David and Saul, David defending himself with the edge of Saul’s robe in hand as Exhibit A. David says, “My hand shall not be against you . . . The LORD therefore be judge and decide between you and me; and may He see and plead my cause and deliver me from your hand” (24:12c, 15).

Saul’s response was emotional, he even wept. Saul conceded his own sin and David’s righteousness, “you are more righteous than I; for you have dealt well with me, while I have dealt wickedly with you” (v 17). Saul proceeded to actually bless David, in verse 19, “May the Lord therefore reward you with good” and concede his successful ascension to the Monarchy. “I know that you will surely be king and that the kingdom of Israel will be established in your hand” (v 20). Then Saul obtained a promise from David to preserve his descendants and his reputation after he was gone (v 21-22). The two men subsequently parted.

We read in Romans 12:17-21, the principles given to us by Paul, that we are to do as David has illustrated to us by his actions toward Saul. Leave it to God. “Never pay back evil for evil to anyone” but, “If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. Never take your *own* revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath *of God*, for it is written, “VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY,” says the Lord.” “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” These are words of wisdom today in the days of the new covenant and for David, future king of Israel.

So we have seen David being prepared by his trials to be king, as the man after God’s own heart (1 Sam 13:14). The betrayals by the men of Keilah and Ziph teaching him not to trust “in mortal man, in whom there is no salvation (Psa 146:3).” The temptation to take the easy opportunity with Saul showing his preference for mercy and for God’s timing over his own will. “Mercy triumphs over judgment” and “never take your own revenge” are timeless principles to live by (James 2:13, Romans 12:19).

All three of these circumstances were probably very difficult for the “man after God’s own heart,” despite the scriptures of the Old Covenant only covering the circumstance itself. That is typical of the Old Covenant, leaving the more revealing details for the New Covenant after the coming of the Messiah. More revealing insight is for those of us “upon whom the ends of the ages have come” (1 Corinthians 10:11).

We know from the New Testament that true character does not come naturally, but through a process of death and life (John 12:24; 2 Corinthians 4:10-11), transforming us into the image of the One who is our focus (2 Cor 3:18). We know from the Psalms that our mutual Lord was the focus of David’s life (Psa 27:4) so he became like Him.

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## Appendix

**Horesh.** Hebrew word translated as a place-name in 1 Samuel 23:15–19 (part of the wilderness of Ziph). David hid from Saul there, and met secretly with Jonathan. The word is translated simply as “wooded hills” (KJV in the forests) in 2 Chronicles 27:4. Authorities differ on whether the place-name in 1 Samuel is warranted.<sup>3</sup>

**HORESH.** A place in the wilderness of Ziph (1 Sa. 23:15–19), possibly to be identified with Khirbet Khoreisa some 9–10 km S of Hebron. AV, RV ‘wood’, is grammatically possible but topographically unlikely; trees could scarcely have grown in this region.<sup>4</sup>

**Hereth.** Section of forested land in the territory of Judah where David and his men hid for a time as they fled from King Saul (1 Sm 22:5, KJV Hareth).<sup>5</sup>



**Jeshimon.** 1. Desolate wilderness at the end of the Dead Sea, not far from Pisgah and Peor (Nm 21:20; 23:28). In both passages the RSV renders it “desert” in the text, but has “Jeshimon” in the margin, allowing it to be translated as a specific area.

2. Wilderness to the north of the hill of Hachilah and of Maon (1 Sm 23:19, 24; 26:1, 3); this location was probably just a few miles south of Hebron.<sup>6</sup>

**Engedi.** See below.

<sup>3</sup> Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, “[Horesh.](#)” *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 998.

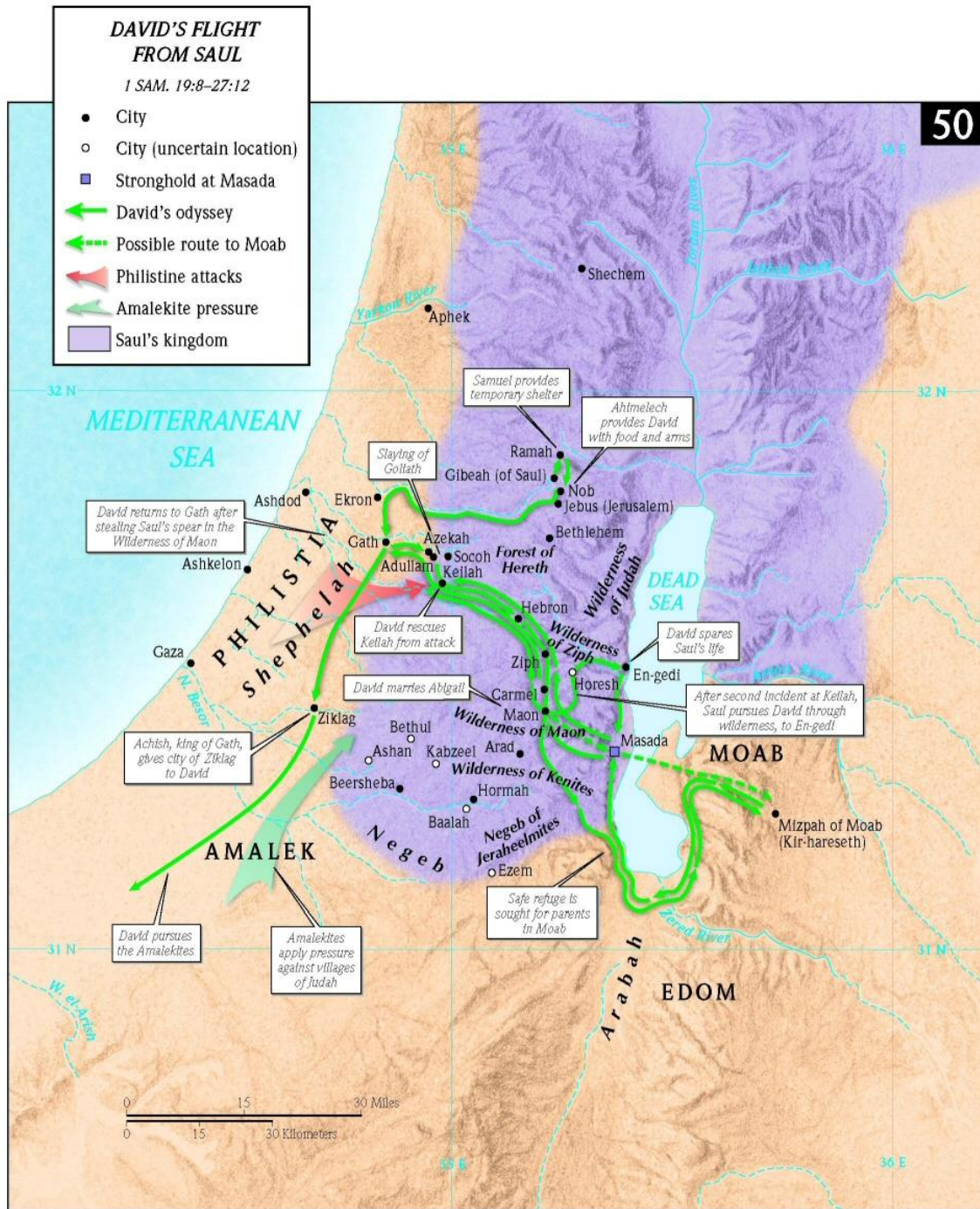
<sup>4</sup> R. P. Gordon, “[Horesh.](#)” ed. D. R. W. Wood et al., *New Bible Dictionary* (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 481.

<sup>5</sup> Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, “[Hereth.](#)” *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 963.

<sup>6</sup> Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, “[Jeshimon.](#)” *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 1139.

<sup>7</sup> John D. Currid and David P. Barrett, *Crossway ESV Bible Atlas* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 123.





<sup>8</sup> Thomas V. Brisco, *Holman Bible Atlas*, Holman Reference (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998), 99.

## Engedi

### David's Flight from Saul

Around 1000 BC, En Gedi served as one of the main places of refuge for David as he fled from Saul. David "dwelt in strongholds at En Gedi" (1 Sam 23:29). En Gedi means literally "the spring of the kid (goat)." Evidence exists that young ibex have always lived near the springs of En Gedi. One time when David was fleeing from King Saul, the pursuers searched the "Crag of the Ibex" in the vicinity of En Gedi. In a cave near here, David cut off the corner of Saul's robe (1 Sam 24).

### Dead Sea Oasis

En Gedi is the largest oasis along the western shore of the [Dead Sea](#). The springs here have allowed nearly continuous inhabitation of the site since the Chalcolithic period (ca. 3500 BC). The area was allotted to the tribe of Judah, and was famous in the time of Solomon ([Josh 15:62](#)). Today, the Israeli kibbutz of En Gedi sits along the southern bank of the Nahal Arugot.



### Springs

Even though there are many springs around the Dead Sea, most of them have a high salt content. En Gedi is one of only two freshwater springs located on the western shore of the Dead Sea and, because of the greater availability of land for agriculture at En Gedi, it is the best spring by which to settle.

Josephus praised En Gedi for its palm trees and balsam, and the writer of Ecclesiasticus spoke of wisdom that was exalted "like a palm tree in En Gedi" (24:14). One day, the prophet Ezekiel predicted, fishermen would line the shores of the Dead Sea by En Gedi (47:10).



[www.bibleplaces.com/engedi](http://www.bibleplaces.com/engedi)





www.bibleistrue.com Lion Tracks Photo QnA -- The spring of Engedi...



En-Gedi is an oasis on the western shore of the Dead Sea and stands as one of the most significant archaeological sites in the Judean Desert. The name En-Gedi is associated with the perennial spring flowing from a height of 200 m above the Dead Sea. The area around the spring is referred to as the “wilderness of En-Gedi” in biblical narratives, particularly in stories about David’s interactions with Saul. The site is also mentioned in the Song of Songs, in connection with its vineyards, and in a prophecy by Ezekiel.

<https://biblical-archaeology.org/en/locations/%D7%A2%D7%99%D7%9F-%D7%92%D7%93%D7%99/>