

DAVID'S REGARD FOR THE LORD'S ANOINTED

[BIBLE TEXT](#) : 1 Samuel 24:1-22;

LESSON 214 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "The LORD forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the LORD'S anointed" (1 Samuel 26:11).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

1 Samuel 24:1-22

¹ And it came to pass, when Saul was returned from following the Philistines, that it was told him, saying, Behold, David *is* in the wilderness of Engedi.

² Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and went to seek David and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats.

³ And he came to the sheepcotes by the way, where *was* a cave; and Saul went in to cover his feet: and David and his men remained in the sides of the cave.

⁴ And the men of David said unto him, Behold the day of which the LORD said unto thee, Behold, I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand, that thou mayest do to him as it shall seem good unto thee. Then David arose, and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe privily.

⁵ And it came to pass afterward, that David's heart smote him, because he had cut off Saul's skirt.

⁶ And he said unto his men, The LORD forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the LORD'S anointed, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he *is* the anointed of the LORD.

⁷ So David stayed his servants with these words, and suffered them not to rise against Saul. But Saul rose up out of the cave, and went on *his* way.

⁸ David also arose afterward, and went out of the cave, and cried after Saul, saying, My lord the king. And when Saul looked behind him, David stooped with his face to the earth, and bowed himself.

⁹ And David said to Saul,

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

Pursuit of David

The invasion of the Philistines had, for a time, ended Saul's pursuit of David. After Saul returned from following the Philistines, it was told him that David was dwelling in the wilderness of Engedi. Such a report stirred up Saul's hatred. He desired to do mischief to David, so he resolved to have another thrust at him.

With 3000 chosen men, Saul renewed his pursuit of David. These soldiers would greatly outnumber David's men, who, at this time, numbered 600 (**1 Samuel 23:13** ¹³ Then David and his men, *which were* about six hundred, arose and departed out of Keilah, and went whithersoever they could go. And it was told Saul that David was escaped from Keilah; and he forbore to go forth.). With such a force, it seemed that victory was assured for Saul over David's handful of men.

David's Protection

There had been another time when there was every prospect of victory for Saul against David. "Saul and his men compassed David and his men round about to take them" (1 Samuel 23:26). God intervened; Saul and his men withdrew, leaving David and his men to escape.

David had been anointed king at the commandment of the Lord. God was well able to keep and protect him until the day when Saul would be removed and David would take the kingship.

There may be a time in your Christian experience that, from all appearances, you could be overcome by the enemy. God is well able to protect you and cause the enemy to withdraw. Like David, keep your trust and faith in God. David said, "O God ... my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge" (Psalm 57:1).

Among the Rocks

David was exiled, and found it necessary to hide among the caves and rocks in the wilderness. Even there Saul would give him no peace. Saul was uneasy, and wanted to destroy David. Saul and his men sought David in the rocks of the wild goats, in high places that were steep and hard to reach. Only evil — hatred, envy, rage, and jealousy — would cause a man to chase one of his subjects, his son-in-law, among such rocks and precipices.

In a Cave

Among the rocks were natural caves which were used as sheepcotes, places of protection for the sheep. Saul, perhaps to rest awhile, went into a cave, the very one in which David and his men had taken shelter. Going into a dark cave from the light outside, Saul would not have been able to see very clearly at first. The eyes of David and his men were accustomed to the dark and they could see well as they watched the king. Perhaps they waited to see if Saul's men would follow him. It appears that Saul was all alone. Saul was at the mercy of David and his men. Had it been the other way, with David walking into a cave in which Saul

Wherefore hearest thou men's words, saying, Behold, David seeketh thy hurt?

¹⁰ Behold, this day thine eyes have seen how that the LORD had delivered thee to day into mine hand in the cave: and *some* bade *me* kill thee: but *mine eye* spared thee; and I said, I will not put forth mine hand against my lord; for he *is* the LORD'S anointed.

¹¹ Moreover, my father, see, yea, see the skirt of thy robe in my hand: for in that I cut off the skirt of thy robe, and killed thee not, know thou and see that *there is* neither evil nor transgression in mine hand, and I have not sinned against thee; yet thou huntest my soul to take it.

¹² The LORD judge between me and thee, and the LORD avenge me of thee: but mine hand shall not be upon thee.

¹³ As saith the proverb of the ancients, Wickedness proceedeth from the wicked: but mine hand shall not be upon thee.

¹⁴ After whom is the king of Israel come out? after whom dost thou pursue? after a dead dog, after a flea.

¹⁵ The LORD therefore be judge, and judge between me and thee, and see, and plead my cause, and deliver me out of thine hand.

¹⁶ And it came to pass, when David had made an end of speaking these words unto Saul, that Saul said, *Is this thy voice, my son David? And Saul lifted up his voice, and wept.*

¹⁷ And he said to David, Thou *art* more righteous than I: for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil.

¹⁸ And thou hast shewed this day how that thou hast dealt well with me: forasmuch as when the LORD had delivered me into thine hand, thou killedst me not.

¹⁹ For if a man find his enemy, will

and his men were hidden, they would have shown little mercy to David.

A Cut Robe

The companions of David encouraged him to take action against Saul. They said that God had given him this chance. Maybe they even expected David to destroy Saul. Perhaps it would seem the natural thing to do when Saul had been seeking to slay David. Urged by his men, David slipped over to Saul. Then without Saul even knowing that he was anywhere near, David cut off the skirt of Saul's robe. David did no real harm to Saul; but it was an insult to the dignity of a king to have a part of his outer garment cut away. It was proof, too, that David had not destroyed Saul when it was in his power to do so.

Warned

Afterwards, David's heart smote him for the offense he had committed against the royal dignity of Saul. As king, Saul was anointed of the Lord. God had given Saul his place, and permitted him to stay there for a season even after Saul had rejected the Lord. As long as Saul remained in that position, David did not put forth his hand to harm him. Regardless of Saul's treatment of him, David purposed to obey and honor the one who had the rule over him.

It is a good thing to have a tender spirit and a conscience which will smite one for a small offense. Perhaps that very thing prevented David from later committing a sin and trespass against Saul by doing harm to him. When the Spirit of God checks us even in a small thing, let us not consider it lightly lest our conscience become seared and will no longer take a warning from God's Spirit.

Against the Lord's Anointed

Miriam was smitten with leprosy when she and Aaron criticized their brother, Moses. They had not even touched Moses; they had only spoken against him. God said, "Wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?" (Numbers 12:8).

David loved the Lord and feared to displease Him. David regarded as precious that which God had anointed. Our ministers, today, are the anointed of the Lord. They should be treated with the respect due to those whom God has appointed to preach the Word. We should speak to them in a respectful manner and speak of them reverently. We should also regard God's children as being precious in the eyes of the Lord, because He loved them enough to wash away their sins in the Blood of Jesus and to anoint them with His Holy Spirit. David did not harm Saul, nor did he permit his men to do so. David did not treat Saul as an enemy, but as the Lord's anointed to whom honor was due (**1 Thessalonians 5:12-13** ¹² And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; ¹³ And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves.), and as his master to whom he must be faithful (**1 Peter 2:18** ¹⁸ Servants, be subject to *your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.*). David's men had respect for David, and they obeyed him and honored his decision to do no harm to Saul.

A Talk with Saul

In time, Saul left the cave. David followed him and called to him. As Saul turned to face him, David bowed himself in a

he let him go well away?
wherefore the LORD reward thee
good for that thou hast done unto
me this day.

²⁰ And now, behold, I know well
that thou shalt surely be king, and
that the kingdom of Israel shall be
established in thine hand.

²¹ Swear now therefore unto me
by the LORD, that thou wilt not
cut off my seed after me, and that
thou wilt not destroy my name out
of my father's house.

²² And David sware unto Saul. And
Saul went home; but David and
his men gat them up unto the
hold.

respectful manner, giving honor to the king. David showed Saul the piece of garment, and confessed, "I cut off the skirt of thy robe." David wanted to talk to the king about his deed so there would be no misunderstanding.

May we learn a lesson from David in this thing. A talk with your fellow man may not only clear up a misunderstanding; it may also give an opportunity to show that you are a true follower of the Lord. Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, taught: "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift" (Matthew 5:23, 24). Notice that Jesus did not say, "If you have wronged your brother," or, "If you are guilty." It is true that Saul was no longer "a brother," for after he rejected God, then God rejected him; but David wanted no man to have anything against him.

A False Report

David sought to convince the king that he had been falsely accused — David had not sought to harm the king. David did not blame Saul, but blamed the men who had counseled the king. David reasoned with the king and produced evidence to prove the falsehood. The fact that David only cut the king's garment when he had a chance to slay Saul was proof that David had no evil intention toward Saul or his kingdom. "Know thou and see that there is neither evil nor transgression in mine hand, and I have not sinned against thee."

David said, "Thou huntest my soul to take it . . . but mine hand shall not be upon thee." David said that Saul's chase of him had not been justified, that it was below the dignity of a king to hunt one such as David — a servant, a shepherd, and an exile. In a humble manner, David likened the pursuit to that of the king after a dead dog or after a flea. David would give no more resistance than either a dead dog or a flea. David would not avenge himself, for vengeance and recompense belong to God (**Deuteronomy 32:35** ³⁵ *To me belongeth vengeance, and recompense; their foot shall slide in **due** time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste*).

The Wicked

According to an old saying, the wicked do wickedly. The Prophet Isaiah spoke similar words, "The vile person will speak villany, and his heart will work iniquity" (Isaiah 32:6). David said, "The LORD judge between me and thee" although it was not hard to see which one — David or Saul — had done wickedly.

Was there anything accomplished by David's talk with Saul? By David's words, he himself was justified; he showed his faith that God would deliver him; and Saul was rightfully condemned, as we can see by Saul's own words.

Saul's Confession

Saul wept, but his tears were not tears of repentance. David's reasoning and kindness forced from Saul these words: "Thou art more righteous than I." He admitted that David had done right and he had done the wrong thing. David returned good for evil. David loved his enemy and did good to Saul who hated him (**Matthew 5:44** ⁴⁴ *But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;*). Saul did not ask forgiveness from either God or David. He did say that God would reward David for his kindness.

Saul acknowledged that David would be the king, and asked a pledge that David would not destroy Saul's family, as was customary in many nations when a new king took over the kingdom. David gave Saul his word. The fulfillment of that promise resulted in David's care of Mephibosheth, the crippled son of Jonathan, (**2 Samuel 9:7** ⁷ And David said unto him, Fear not: for I will surely shew thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually. **2 Samuel 9:13** ¹³ So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem: for he did eat continually at the king's table; and was lame on both his feet.), and in the punishment of the slayers of Ish-bosheth, the son of Saul (**2 Samuel 4:5** ⁵ And the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, went, and came about the heat of the day to the house of Ishbosheth, who lay on a bed at noon. **2 Samuel 4:11-12** ¹¹ How much more, when wicked men have slain a righteous person in his own house upon his bed? shall I not therefore now require his blood of your hand, and take you away from the earth? ¹² And David commanded his young men, and they slew them, and cut off their hands and their feet, and hanged *them* up over the pool in Hebron. But they took the head of Ishbosheth, and buried *it* in the sepulchre of Abner in Hebron.).

At Peace

David and Saul parted in peace. "When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him" (Proverbs 16: 7). For a time Saul ceased his pursuit of David. Saul went home, no doubt condemned and ashamed. David continued to live among the strongholds of the rocks. He must have felt a peace in his heart, because he was clear before God and man. He had not stretched forth his hand to harm the Lord's anointed.

QUESTIONS

- 1 Where was David taking shelter?
- 2 Why was David in such a place?
- 3 Why was Saul seeking David?
- 4 How did Saul happen to find David?
- 5 Why did David cut Saul's garment?
- 6 What did David's men want to do to Saul?
- 7 Why was not Saul slain?
- 8 What did David mean by "the LORD'S anointed"?
- 9 How did it happen that they parted in peace?