

Sunday Night Message

February 2, 2020

1 Samuel 26 – David Spares Saul Again

Topics – David;

Series – *1 Samuel*

Text – 1 Samuel 26

Introduction

The location of Hachilah (חִילָה – *Chakiylah* – meaning dark) is likely slightly to the southeast of Ziph (see map). The word, “Jeshimon,” (יְשִׁמוֹן – *yěshiyimown*) represents the whole region and is sometimes translated, “desert,” or “wilderness.” This is the same location where David was reported to be, again by the Ziphites, back in chapter 23.

The area where David was hiding out was near Abigail’s possessions. The Ziphites who lived in the area were certainly not friends of David, but in themselves they posed no threat to him.

This is actually the twentieth specific attempt on David’s life, though there may have been many more as:

*"And David abode in the wilderness in strong holds, and remained in a mountain in the wilderness of Ziph. And **Saul sought him every day**, but God delivered him not into his hand." (1 Samuel 23:14)*

Perhaps, David thought he was safe to be in the place where Saul had previously found him because Saul had led David to believe that it would be well between them. And, he may have been safe, had there not been:

I. Troublemakers Who Provoked Saul (the Ziphites v. 1)

These are the same guys who “ratted out” David in chapter 23 (1 Samuel 23:19 – 24).

These Ziphites were causing trouble for David by going to Saul and telling him about David’s location. Saul probably would have let David alone had he not been given this intelligence. The Ziphites were traitors – they were descendants of Caleb from the tribe of Judah (1 Chronicles 4:2). Note – Nabal was also a Calebite. It could be that the Ziphites were now more upset with David because Nabal had died shortly after his dealings with David’s men, and David had taken Nabal’s wife.

John Wesley stated: “Probably *Saul* would have pursued *David* no more, had not these wretches set him on.”¹

"Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth." (Proverbs 26:20)

Saul had surrounded himself with a bunch of wicked people who loved to stir up trouble.

¹ John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes upon the Old Testament*, vol. 2 (Bristol: William Pine, 1765), 981.

II. The Trench that Saul Camped In (vs. 2 – 5)

Saul travelled to the vicinity that the Ziphites reported to him, but apparently David was not there but out somewhere nearby in the Judaeian wilderness. However, David also had his spies, and they had reported to him that Saul was at Hachilah.

Saul was with a group of three thousand chosen men, which were probably the same elite group of soldiers that Saul took with him back in chapter twenty-four when David found him in the cave.

Abner is with Saul. He is the captain of Saul's army and is usually by his side for protection. He is also Saul's cousin (1 Samuel 14:50).

Again, David is able to sneak up on these men as they slept. We will learn later on that these men were not just careless in keeping watch, the Bible will reveal that God caused them to sleep deeply.

It appears that David had the military advantage. He was observing Saul's movements through his own spies, and was well aware of Saul's location. It seems that Saul was unfamiliar with the territory. David knew the area very well as he had been hiding there for some time.

III. The Temptation that David Could Not Resist (vs. 6 – 12)

David wanted to get close to Saul and mess with him a little. It worked once, and David was sure that God would protect him again.

David offers this special assignment to two men. Abishai and Ahimelech. Interestingly, Ahimelech does not volunteer. This particular Ahimelech is not mentioned anywhere else in Scripture.

Abishai does volunteer to go with David. Abishai is David's nephew, the son of his sister Zeruiah, and he is the brother of Joab and Asahel. These three brothers were certainly mighty warriors who fought bravely for David.

Abishai was one of David's "mighty men:"

"And Abishai, the brother of Joab, the son of Zeruiah, was chief among three. And he lifted up his spear against three hundred, and slew them, and had the name among three." (2 Samuel 23:18)

"Moreover Abishai the son of Zeruiah slew of the Edomites in the valley of salt eighteen thousand." (1 Chronicles 18:12)

Saul was not in a tent but in a trench, which could indicate that Saul's army were very hasty in finding David. His spear in the ground would indicate his position.

The spear (Hebrew, *chanith*) was a heavier weapon than the javelin (Hebrew, *kidron*). The word is translated both *spear* and *javelin*. It was the chanith with which Saul endeavored to strike David (1 Samuel 18:10–11; 19:9–10), although the KJV translates the word as *javelin* in both cases. It was also the chanith that he aimed at Jonathan (1 Samuel 20:33).

The heavy spear had at its butt end a point by which it could be stuck in the ground. It was

in this way that the position of Saul was marked while he lay sleeping in the camp at Hachilah, his spear being his standard (1 Samuel 26:7). The butt end of the spear was almost as formidable as the head. Often riders used it to strike backwards at pursuers, and it was with the butt end (hinder end, KJV) of the spear that Abner killed Asahel (2 Samuel 2:23).²

His “bolster” was the position of his head. The word has been translated “pillow[s]” (Genesis 28:11 & 18), and “at his head” (1 Kings 19:6).

Abishai wants to kill Saul. Abishai believes that God had delivered Saul into David’s hands. It seems like Abishai was always eager to kill people for David. Later on in David’s story, there is a man, named Shimei, who is cursing at David and throwing rocks at him:

"Then said Abishai the son of Zeruiah unto the king, Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head." (2 Samuel 16:9)

David did not allow Abishai to kill Shimei, either.

Notice the phrase in v. 8, *"and I will not smite him the second time."* He only needed one shot to get the job done.

Once again, David will not allow himself or any of his men to *"stretch forth his hand against the Lord’s anointed."* (v. 9; 1 Samuel 24:6, 10)

In verse 10, David confidently declares that God would take care of Saul in His time, but David would not be the one to do it.

"Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." (Romans 12:19)

"Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!" (Matthew 18:7)

"The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born." (Matthew 26:24)

David stated that somebody was going to take care of Saul, but it would have been sin for him to do it himself.

David instructs Abishai to get the king’s spear and cruse of water from right where his head was. Abishai is able to do it because the Lord had cause them to be deep in sleep. Under normal circumstances, there is no way that Abishai or David would have gotten anywhere near the king.

Practical Point – Things that are impossible to do normally are made possible by God.

² James M. Freeman and Harold J. Chadwick, *Manners & Customs of the Bible* (North Brunswick, NJ: Bridge-Logos Publishers, 1998), 210.

IV. David's Taunting of Abner (vs. 13 – 16)

David takes the opportunity to taunt Abner for not being a good guard. He allowed Abishai to get right to where he could have easily killed Saul, which as David points out, is an offence worthy of death.

V. The Termination of Saul's Pursuit of David (vs. 17 – 25)

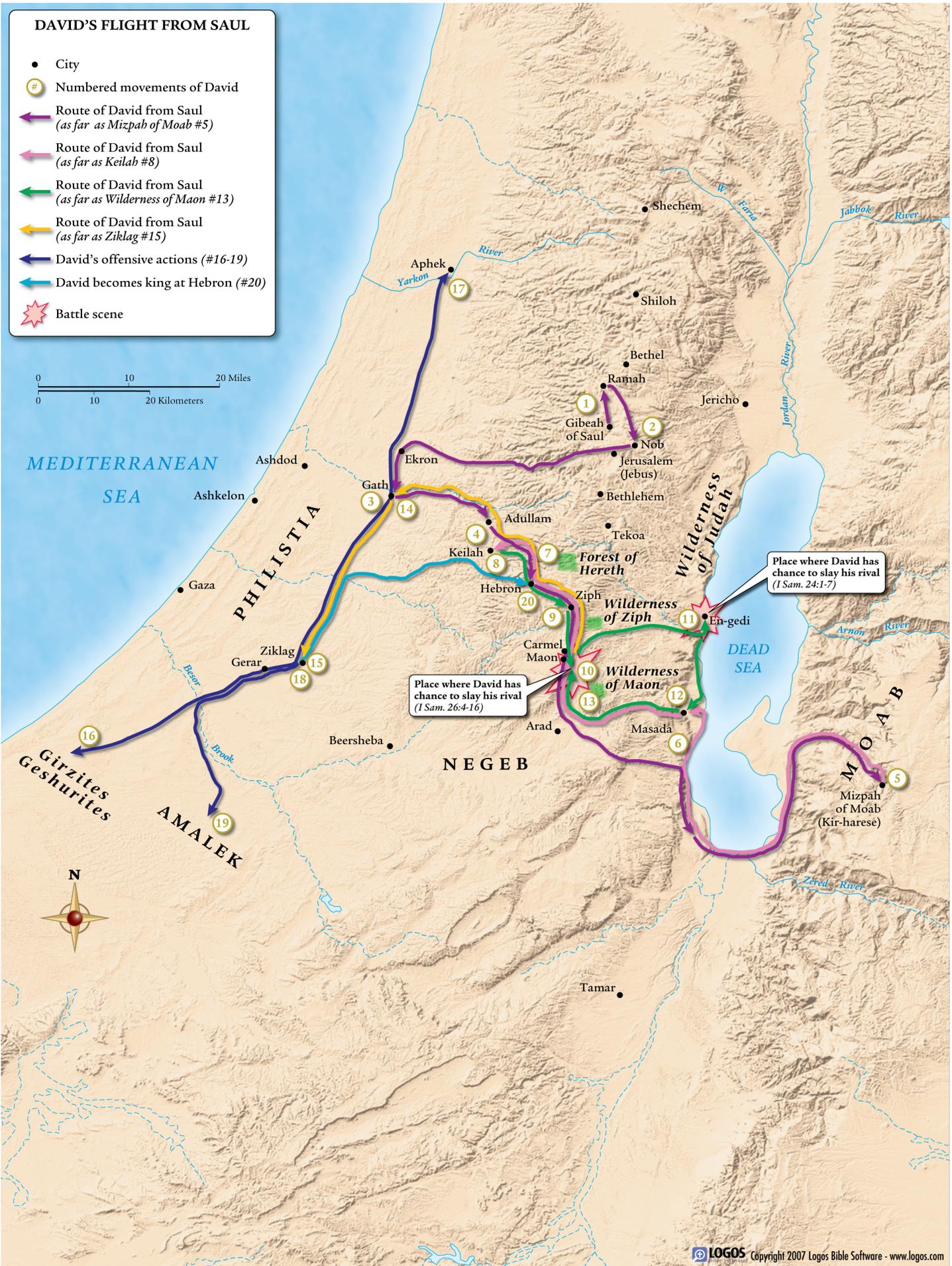
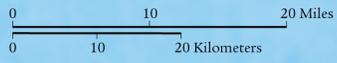
David reminds Saul once again that he has been listening to people who have been lying to him about David. They had Saul convinced that David was his enemy when, in fact, David had never been anything but a friend to Saul and to Israel. David says that Saul is not only driving him away from the nation ("the inheritance of the Lord"), he is driving him away from God because the Lord's sanctuary was in Israel (v. 19).

Notice – David calls himself "a flea" (v. 20).

This time, Saul promises to leave David alone, and he does. There is no more mention of Saul coming after David again in the Scripture.

DAVID'S FLIGHT FROM SAUL

- City
- ① Numbered movements of David
- ← Route of David from Saul (as far as Mizpah of Moab #5)
- ← Route of David from Saul (as far as Keilah #8)
- ← Route of David from Saul (as far as Wilderness of Maon #13)
- ← Route of David from Saul (as far as Ziklag #15)
- ← David's offensive actions (#16-19)
- ← David becomes king at Hebron (#20)
- ★ Battle scene



Place where David has chance to slay his rival (1 Sam. 24:1-7)

Place where David has chance to slay his rival (1 Sam. 26:4-16)



DAVID'S FLIGHT FROM SAUL

1 SAM. 19:8-27:12

- City
- City (uncertain location)
- Stronghold at Masada
- ← David's odyssey
- ← Possible route to Moab
- ← Philistine attacks
- ← Amalekite pressure
- Saul's kingdom

