

1 **OUTLAWS & KINGS, PT 3**

1 Samuel 23

2 **WARRIORS & POETS**

- A verse-by-verse, story-by-story study through the United Kingdom period of Israel and Judah, and particularly her kings: Saul, David, and Solomon.
- Saul, a humble farmer from the tribe of Benjamin, was chosen by God to be king over His people Israel. Now, lifted up in the pride of his heart, Saul has become mad, paranoid, and suspicious.

3 **OUTLAWS & KINGS**

- Saul is pursuing David, his son-in-law and the captain of his bodyguard.
- David has also been anointed by the prophet Samuel to be the next king over Israel.
- David has been on the run from Saul for some time now, gathering a following and learning difficult, but important lessons about God and how God works in the lives of His servants.

4 **THE PHILISTINES ATTACK KEILAH**

- *1 Now they told David, "Behold, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah and are robbing the threshing floors." 2 Therefore David inquired of the Lord, "Shall I go and attack these Philistines?" And the Lord said to David, "Go and attack the Philistines and save Keilah." (1 Samuel 23:1-2)*

5 **THE PHILISTINES ATTACK KEILAH**

- David and his men are currently taking refuge in the wilderness of Judah. Keilah, which is in Judah but which closely borders on the Philistine territories, is under attack.
- The Philistines are "fighting against Keilah and are robbing the threshing floors," so this seems to indicate a prolonged period of raids.
- David consults God to see whether or not he should intervene. God confirms that he should, though God does not actually promise an outcome.

6 **THE PHILISTINES ATTACK KEILAH**

- *3 But David's men said to him, "Behold, we are afraid here in Judah; how much more then if we go to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines?" 4 Then David inquired of the Lord again. And the Lord answered him, "Arise, go down to Keilah, for I will give the Philistines into your hand." 5 And David and his men went to Keilah and fought with the Philistines and brought away their livestock and struck them with a great blow. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah. (1 Samuel 23:3-5)*

7 **THE PHILISTINES ATTACK KEILAH**

- David's men are fearful. They have already left the highly-defensible position of the cave of Adullam, safely out of Saul's reach, and are now in the Judean wilderness.
- They are already uncomfortable with this situation and fear that, small as their numbers are, attacking the Philistines would be an "out of the frying pan, into the fire" situation.

8 **THE PHILISTINES ATTACK KEILAH**

- David goes to God again for guidance. God tells David to go against the Philistines at

Keilah, for the victory is assured.

- Confident in this, David and his men attack the Philistines, route them, carry away their livestock as spoil, and save the city of Keilah.

9 **THE PRIESTLY EPHOD**

- *6 When Abiathar the son of Ahimelech had fled to David to Keilah, he had come down with an ephod in his hand. (1 Samuel 23:6)*

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10 **THE PRIESTLY EPHOD**

- Abiathar the priest -- the last surviving of the eighty-five priests of Nob and now the high priest -- had fled to David for safety. When he did so, he brought with him the high priestly ephod.
- The ephod was a very important part of the priestly vestments. It contained within it, inside of a pouch, the Urim and the Thummim -- black and white stones that God used to communicate His will to the people of Israel.

11 **THE PRIESTLY EPHOD**

- *15 You shall make a breastpiece of judgment, in skilled work. In the style of the ephod you shall make it of gold, blue and purple and scarlet yarns, and fine twined linen shall you make it. (Exodus 28:15)*

12 **THE PRIESTLY EPHOD**

- *30 And in the breastpiece of judgment you shall put the Urim and the Thummim, and they shall be on Aaron's heart, when he goes in before the Lord. Thus Aaron shall bear the judgment of the people of Israel on his heart before the Lord regularly. (Exodus 28:30)*

13 **THE PRIESTLY EPHOD**

- This phrase "an ephod" is used earlier in 1 Samuel to refer to the high priestly vestments, and the Urim and Thummim as a way of seeking out the will of God.

14 **THE PRIESTLY EPHOD**

- *2 Saul was staying in the outskirts of Gibeah in the pomegranate cave[a] at Migron. The people who were with him were about six hundred men, 3 including Ahijah the son of Ahitub, Ichabod's brother, son of Phinehas, son of Eli, the priest of the Lord in Shiloh, wearing an ephod. And the people did not know that Jonathan had gone. (1 Samuel 14:2-3)*

15 **THE PRIESTLY EPHOD**

- *41 Therefore Saul said, "O Lord God of Israel, why have you not answered your servant this day? If this guilt is in me or in Jonathan my son, O Lord, God of Israel, give Urim. But if this guilt is in your people Israel, give Thummim." And Jonathan and Saul were taken, but the people escaped. 42 Then Saul said, "Cast the lot between me and my son Jonathan." And Jonathan was taken. (1 Samuel 14:41-42)*

16 **THE PRIESTLY EPHOD**

- The important thing to understand is that David, now accompanied by the priest, is seeking God's will rather than trying to figure things out himself, something he has learned the hard way through recent events (all of the destruction that came about after he lied to Ahimelech).

17 **SAUL INTENDS MISCHIEF**

- *7 Now it was told Saul that David had come to Keilah. And Saul said, "God has given him into my hand, for he has shut himself in by entering a town that has gates and bars." 8 And Saul summoned all the people to war, to go down to Keilah, to besiege David and his men. (1 Samuel 23:7-8)*

18 **SAUL INTENDS MISCHIEF**

- Saul hears that David is in Keilah, which, as a walled city, can shut people out as well as it can shut them in (walls work two ways). Saul determines to besiege David.

19 **SAUL INTENDS MISCHIEF**

- Saul is so far gone by this point that even though he has just massacred the priests of God and has no way to seek out the will of God (Abiathar, the only surviving priest, has fled with the Urim and Thummim), that he looks for circumstances that please him and then uses these to validate his own desires about what the will of God should be.

20 **SAUL INTENDS MISCHIEF**

- *9 David knew that Saul was plotting harm against him. And he said to Abiathar the priest, "Bring the ephod here." 10 Then David said, "O Lord, the God of Israel, your servant has surely heard that Saul seeks to come to Keilah, to destroy the city on my account. 11 Will the men of Keilah surrender me into his hand? Will Saul come down, as your servant has heard? O Lord, the God of Israel, please tell your servant." And the Lord said, "He will come down." (1 Samuel 23:9-11)*

21 **SAUL INTENDS MISCHIEF**

- David hears that Saul is coming (perhaps informed by some of Saul's servants who are secretly loyal to David, or perhaps by his wife Michal), and inquires of the Lord as to whether or not Saul will come and besiege him.
- God lets David know, by Urim and Thummim, that he will.

22 **SAUL INTENDS MISCHIEF**

- *12 Then David said, "Will the men of Keilah surrender me and my men into the hand of Saul?" And the Lord said, "They will surrender you." 13 Then David and his men, who were about six hundred, arose and departed from Keilah, and they went wherever they could go. When Saul was told that David had escaped from Keilah, he gave up the expedition. (1 Samuel 23:12-13)*

23 **DAVID FLEES**

- David further needs to know whether or not the citizens of Keilah will give them up to Saul, rather than be subjected to a siege. God informs him that they will.
- Rather than wait out a siege from Saul or risk a confrontation/conflict with the men of Keilah, David chooses to disperse his small army and flee from Saul's wrath.

24 **DAVID FLEES**

- *14 And David remained in the strongholds in the wilderness, in the hill country of the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul sought him every day, but God did not give him into his hand. (1 Samuel 23:14)*

25 **DAVID ENDURES**

- David flees to the nearby wilderness of Ziph, a place where he and his small band of men can easily hide and remain safe from Saul's attacks.
- Saul seeks for David every day, to kill him or do him harm, but God protects David.

26 **THE WILL OF GOD**

27 **1) COMES FROM GOD'S WORD**

- David begins to experience real success when he stops relying on his own abilities and instead seeks the will of God.
- In David's time, this meant seeking the Urim and the Thummim.
- We have no need for these, since the revelation of Scripture is complete – nor should we seek after them.

28 **2) IS NOT YOUR WILL**

- This may seem obvious, but often when we speak of God's will, what we are actually looking for is circumstances that already validate what we already want or believe (as in the case of Saul).
- Understanding God's will is primarily a matter of submission. Saul was too full of pride to truly hear from God, so he only saw what he wanted to see.

29 **3) GUARANTEES NO SAFETY**

- God's will will not always take you to places that are safe or comfortable, as David has been learning the hard way. Elijah is an example of someone whom God provides for and protects by sending him into some very dangerous places.
- It is not God's chief goal or aim to make us comfortable. Rather, He would have us useful.

30 **4) IS THE SAFEST PLACE THERE IS**

- "There is nowhere safer than at the center of God's will."
- Perhaps a better way to phrase this is that there is nowhere *better* than the center of God's will. Being at the center of God's will is often unsafe.
- The most dangerous thing we can do is try to find safety in ourselves (Psalm 52).