

## Exegetical Notes – 1 Samuel 23:15-29

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(David has fled from King Saul. David, driven by his fear of Saul who is trying to kill him, has been relying on his own understanding and not seeking the will of God. This has gotten him into some tight scrapes. But in last week's text, David turned to God before he moved. In this week's text, David continues to turn back to the Lord. He seems to be recapturing his base and remembering that "our help is in the name of the Lord.")

### 1 Samuel 23:15-29

#### Verses 15-18

***<sup>15</sup> While David was at Horesh in the Desert of Ziph, he learned that Saul had come out to take his life. <sup>16</sup> And Saul's son Jonathan went to David at Horesh and helped him find strength in God. <sup>17</sup> "Don't be afraid," he said. "My father Saul will not lay a hand on you. You will be king over Israel, and I will be second to you. Even my father Saul knows this." <sup>18</sup> The two of them made a covenant before the LORD. Then Jonathan went home, but David remained at Horesh.***

- David hid at Horesh in the desert of Ziph. Saul was looking for him to kill him.
- Jonathan, Saul's son and David's best friend, came to David at Horesh. It is interesting to note that Jonathan could find David, but Saul could not. Perhaps this was because God was protecting David from Saul.
- Jonathan told David that he did not need to be afraid of Saul because God had promised that David would be Israel's next king. Jonathan accepted this fact as God's will even though it meant that his place would be taken by David. He reminded David that he is protected by God.
- Jonathan made or reaffirmed the covenant of friendship between them and Jonathan returned home (see 20:14-15).
- Jonathan was David's good friend and was used by God to call David back to YHWH.

### Verses 19-20

***<sup>19</sup> The Ziphites went up to Saul at Gibeah and said, “Is not David hiding among us in the strongholds at Horesh, on the hill of Hakilah, south of Jeshimon? <sup>20</sup> Now, Your Majesty, come down whenever it pleases you to do so, and we will be responsible for giving him into your hands.”***

- The people who lived in the area where David was hiding knew exactly where David was hiding. They gave Saul his exact location. Interesting, again, that they knew exactly where David was and tell Saul, but Saul can't find David. Probably because they knew how Saul treated others who sought to aide David, they thought it in their best interest to appear to be on Saul's side. So they offered to help Saul capture David.

### Verses 21-23

***<sup>21</sup> Saul replied, “The LORD bless you for your concern for me. <sup>22</sup> Go and get more information. Find out where David usually goes and who has seen him there. They tell me he is very crafty. <sup>23</sup> Find out about all the hiding places he uses and come back to me with definite information. Then I will go with you; if he is in the area, I will track him down among all the clans of Judah.”***

- Saul seemed grateful for their offer to help him capture/kill David, but was reluctant to move against David. He told them to collect more information about David's whereabouts and that when he was convinced that they were on his side, he would move against David. Perhaps he was afraid that these people could not be trusted.

### Verse 24-25

***<sup>24</sup> So they set out and went to Ziph ahead of Saul. Now David and his men were in the Desert of Maon, in the Arabah south of Jeshimon. <sup>25</sup> Saul and his men began the search, and when David was told about it, he went down to the rock and stayed in the Desert of Maon. When Saul heard this, he went into the Desert of Maon in pursuit of David.***

- Saul was in hot pursuit of David. He knew where David was and was closing in on David. They were both moving in the same area, close to each other in the desert of Maon.

## Verses 26-29

***<sup>26</sup> Saul was going along one side of the mountain, and David and his men were on the other side, hurrying to get away from Saul. As Saul and his forces were closing in on David and his men to capture them, <sup>27</sup> a messenger came to Saul, saying, “Come quickly! The Philistines are raiding the land.” <sup>28</sup> Then Saul broke off his pursuit of David and went to meet the Philistines. That is why they call this place Sela Hammahlekoth. <sup>29</sup> And David went up from there and lived in the strongholds of En Gedi.***

- David was moving down one side of a hill with his men. Saul was moving on the opposite side of the same hill. The battle between Saul’s forces and David’s men was about to begin.
- But just before the battle, Saul received word that the Philistines were invading Israel. He was forced to break off his pursuit of David to defend the nation against the Philistines. The place was named Sela Hammahlekoth. It means “rock of parting” or “rock of disengagement.” Here, YHWH interceded to protect David from Saul.
- After this, David moved to En Gedi. En Gedi is a desert oasis east of Hebron north of the Dead Sea.

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