

The Book of SAMUEL

Hunting The Lion

1st Samuel 18:6-8

January 31, 2026

After Goliath's defeat, the relationship between Saul and David quickly deteriorated. Saul became jealous and fearful for his throne and his jealousy quickly morphed into anger and hatred. David had to go:

Attempt 1 –

While David was playing his harp, Saul threw his spear hoping to pin David to the wall – David escaped.

Attempt 2 –

Hoping that David would be killed in battle, Saul made him a commander of 1000 men. However, Yahweh gave David success in everything he did – NOT the outcome Saul was hoping for.

Attempt 3 –

Saul offered David his eldest daughter, Merab, in marriage if he would fight valiantly against the Philistines. David humbly declined the honor and Merab was given to Adriel of Meholah instead.

Attempt 4 –

Saul's youngest daughter, Michal, loved with David, so Saul suggested David marry her instead of Merab. Again David declined so Saul sweetened the deal, *"I won't ask for a dowry, only that you bring me 100 Philistine foreskins."* David thought this was a great idea, so he and his men brought back 200 Philistine foreskins!!!

After David won another victory over the Philistines, he became Saul's enemy for life.

Attempt 5 –

Saul told Jonathan and all his attendants to kill David. Jonathan loved David and had sworn loyalty to him, so instead, he went to David and told him to go into hiding. He would speak to his father and report back.

After his conversation with Jonathan, Saul promised that he would not have David killed and David was restored to his position attending Saul.

Attempt 6 –

While playing his harp, David dodged the spear Saul threw at him and hurried home to share the situation with Michal. She helped David escape by lowering him out a window. He fled to Samuel in Ramah then they both went to Naioth.

Meanwhile, Michal placed an idol in the bed and covered it with a blanket. When Saul's guards came to get David, Michal insisted that he was ill and in bed.

Psalm 59 is David's response to these events.

Attempt 7 –

When Saul found out that David was with Samuel, he sent men on 2 separate occasions to capture him – without success.

Finally, Saul went himself – he was also unsuccessful.

David left Ramah to find Jonathan, "What have I done? What sin have I committed that your father is trying to kill me?"

Jonathan was not convinced of Saul's intent, but David had no doubt, so he suggested a test, "A feast is coming up that I should attend. Instead, I will go into hiding. If Saul notices my absence and is not bothered, great! But if he gets angry, you will know I am telling the truth."

Jonathan agreed to David's plan and then they agreed to a signal - the day after the feast, Jonathan would do some target practice. If he shot to the side of David's hiding place, all was well. If, however, he shot beyond David's hiding place, it was time for David to flee.

At the feast, Saul noticed David's absence and got so angry at Jonathan for allowing it that he tried to kill Jonathan by hurling a spear at him. Jonathan now understood his father's real intent and his anger surpassed Saul's. He got up from the table and left the feast.

Both Jonathan and David were devastated. They wept together and reaffirmed their covenant then David fled to Nob and Jonathan returned to town.

These events inspired Psalm 11.

The descendants of Eli lived at Nob. When David arrived there, Ahimelech, the high priest, greeted him with fear and asked David why no one was with him.

David claimed to be on a secret mission for the king and asked Ahimelech for some food.

Ahimelech's responded that all he had on hand was the old Bread of the Presence (which only the priest's were allowed to eat). But after confirming that David and his men had abstained from sexual relations, Ahimelech gave David the old Show Bread.

Doeg, the Edomite - one of Saul's servants - overheard their conversation....

David also asked if Ahimelech had any weapons. He claimed that in his haste to go on Saul's secret mission, he had failed to bring his weapons.

The Sword of Goliath was being stored behind the Ephod, so David took it and fled – he went to Achish, the *Seranim* "ruler" of Gath - one of the 5 Philistine cities.

The servants of Achish were suspicious of David, so he pretended to be insane, which enabled him to escape and run to the cave of Adullam.

The headings of Psalms 34, 56 and 142 connect them to this story.

- Men who were dissatisfied with Saul's rule began to gather around David – 400 in total.
- David took his family to Moab where they remained for many years.
- The prophet Gad told David to return to Judah, so he went to the forest of Hereth.

Meanwhile..... Saul was becoming increasingly desperate and paranoid. He accused his courtiers of high treason by conspiring against him and siding with David – an accusation they denied.

Doeg stepped up and told Saul what he'd overheard at Nob. Saul sent for Ahimelech and his family and accused Ahimelech of conspiring with David against him.

Ahimelech responded by reminding Saul that no one was more loyal to him than David and that he knew nothing of what was going on.

Saul was having none of it and declared that Ahimelech and his entire family would die that day.

None of Saul's men were willing to kill the high priest and his family. Doeg had no such qualms. He killed 85 priests (men who wore the linen ephod), but he didn't stop there. He went to Nob, destroying the entire city and everyone in it.

Abiathar, one of Ahimelech's sons, escaped and fled to David.

When Abiathar told David that Saul had killed Yahweh's priests, this is how David responded: *"That day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, I knew he would be sure to tell Saul. I am responsible for the death of your father's whole family. Stay with me; don't be afraid; the man who is seeking your life is seeking mine also. You will be safe with me."*

Psalm 52 written in response to this event.

We have seen throughout these connected stories, that David does not always make honorable choices and other people paid a high price. But even in this we see the difference between Saul and David in their response when confronted by their sin.....

Meanwhile the Philistines attacked Keilah. David asked Yahweh what he should do and was told to go up against the Philistines. The men were afraid, so David inquired again and was told the same thing – "Go to Keilah, I will deliver the Philistines into your hands." David defeated the Philistines and saved Keilah.

Attempt 8 –

When Saul was told that David was at Keilah, he was certain that God had delivered David into his hands, so he gathered his army and headed for Keilah.

David knew that Saul was up to no good so asked Abiathar to bring him the Ephod.

David: *"Yahweh, God of Israel, I have heard that Saul is coming to kill me and destroy Keilah. 1) Will the men of Keilah surrender me to Saul? 2) Is Saul really coming?"*

Yahweh: *"Yes, Saul is coming and yes, the men of Keilah will hand you over."*

David, and his now 600 men, hurriedly left Keilah and went further south into the wilderness of Ziph.

David stayed in the wilderness of Ziph while Saul continued to hunt him. Even though Saul sought him every day, Yahweh protected David and did not deliver him into Saul's hand.

Even though Saul was unable to find David, it would seem that Jonathan had no such problem. The Bible tells us that Jonathan went to Horesh, where David was staying, and "encouraged him in the Lord."

He said, *"Do not be afraid, because the hand of Saul my father shall not find you, and you will be king over Israel and I will be next to you; and Saul my father knows that also."*

These are the last recorded words of Jonathan in Scripture.

David stayed at Horesh and Jonathan returned home. This was likely that last time they would ever see each other.

Attempt 9 –

Meanwhile, the Ziphites, for whatever reason, turned on David and reported his location to Saul.

David, now in the wilderness of Maon, went around a mountain one way and Saul the other way. David was in danger of being surrounded, when a messenger came to Saul to report that the Philistines were raiding into Judah.

Saul immediately stopped pursuing David and returned home. David went to the strongholds of Engedi.

Psalm 54 written in response to this event.

Attempt 10 –

After Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, he resumed the hunt for David. Being told that David was in the desert of Engedi, he took 3000 men and set out in pursuit.

Saul had to use the bathroom, so when he came across a cave, he decided it was as good a place as any, so went in to relieve himself – not knowing that David and his men also occupied the cave....

David's men saw this as a God-ordained opportunity and tried to convince David to take Saul out. David quietly snuck up behind Saul and cut off a corner of his robe.

Afterward, however, David felt guilty and said to his men, "*Yahweh forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, Yahweh's anointed, or lift my hand against him.*"

David did not allow his men to attack Saul and Saul left the cave completely unaware.

David went out to the mouth of the cave and called to Saul, "*My lord king! Why do you listen when men say, 'David is bent on harming you'? This day you have seen how Yahweh delivered you into my hands in the cave. Some urged me to kill you, but I spared you. See, my father, look at this piece of your robe in my hand! I cut off the corner of your robe but did not kill you. Now understand and recognize that I am not guilty of wrongdoing or rebellion. I have not wronged you, but you are hunting me down to take my life. May Yahweh judge between you and me. And may He avenge the wrongs you have done to me, but my hand will not touch you. As the old saying goes, 'From evildoers come evil deeds,' so my hand will not touch you. Against whom has the king of Israel come out? Whom are you pursuing? A dead dog? A flea? May Yahweh be our judge and decide between us. May he consider my cause and uphold it; may he vindicate me by delivering me from your hand.*"

In response, Saul wept, "*You are more righteous than I,*" **he said. "*You have treated me well, but I have treated you badly. You have just now told me of the good you did to me; Yahweh delivered me into your hands, but you did not kill me. May He reward you well for the way you treated me today. I know that you will surely be king and that the kingdom of Israel will be established in your hands. Now swear to me by Yahweh that you will not cut off my descendants or wipe out my name from my father's family.*"**

David gave his oath to Saul. Then Saul returned home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold.

Psalms 27, 31 and 57 were written in response to these events.

Until Next Time.....