

David Spares Saul in the Cave

When Saul enters a cave where David is hiding, David has the perfect opportunity for revenge but chooses mercy, cutting only the corner of Saul's robe.

1 Samuel 24:1-22

CHARACTERS: David, Saul, David's Men

THEMES: Mercy, Patience, Trust in God's Timing, Integrity

SAUL HAD BEEN pursuing David with three thousand chosen men of Israel. When Saul entered a cave to relieve himself, he did not know that David and his men were hiding in the recesses of that very cave.

David's men whispered to him, 'This is the day the Lord spoke of when he said, "I will give your enemy into your hands for you to deal with as you wish."' David crept up unnoticed and cut off a corner of Saul's robe.

Afterward, David was conscience-stricken for having done even this. He said to his men, 'The Lord forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, the Lord's anointed, or lift my hand against him; for he is the anointed of the Lord.' With these words David sharply rebuked his men and did not allow them to attack Saul.

When Saul left the cave and went on his way, David went out and called after him, 'My lord the king!' When Saul looked behind him, David bowed down prostrate before him.

'Why do you listen when men say, "David is bent on harming you"?' David asked. 'This day you have seen with your own eyes how the Lord delivered you into my hands in the cave. Some urged me to kill you, but I spared you. I said, "I will not lift my hand against my master, because he

is the Lord's anointed." 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. I have not wronged you, but you are hunting me down to take my life. May the Lord judge between you and me.'

Saul wept aloud. '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; the Lord delivered me into your hands, but you did not kill me. When a man finds his enemy, does he let him get away unharmed? May the Lord reward you well for the way you treated me today. I know that you will surely be king.'

David refused to take vengeance into his own hands, trusting that God would judge between them. His restraint demonstrated the heart of a true king—one who feared God more than he feared his enemy.

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