

1 Samuel 24 – David Cuts Saul’s Robe

When Saul returned from battle with the Philistines, he was told, “David is hiding in the wilderness of En-gedi.” So, Saul chose 3000 able men and led them toward the Craggs of the Wild Goats in pursuit of David.

They came to an area where there was a cave, and Saul went in alone to relieve himself. David and his men were in the innermost parts of the cave. The men came to David and said, “Here is the day of which the Lord has said, ‘I will deliver your enemy into your hands and you shall do to him as it seems good to you.’”

David crept forward and quietly cut off a corner of Saul’s robe.

Afterward, David was conscience-stricken for having cut off a corner of his robe. He said to his men, “The Lord forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, the king. I will not lay my hand upon him; for he is the anointed of the Lord.” With these words David rebuked his men and did not allow them to attack Saul. And Saul, unharmed, left the cave and went his way.

David came out of the cave and called out to Saul, “My lord the king!” When Saul looked behind him, David bowed down and prostrated himself with his face to the ground. He said to Saul, “Why do you listen when men say, ‘David is bent on harming you’? 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 lay my hand upon my lord, because he is the Lord’s anointed.’ And then, holding up the corner of Saul’s robe, David said, “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. By that fact you may know for certain that there is no wrong or treason in my hands. I haven’t wronged you, but you’re hunting me down to take my life. May the Lord judge between you and me. And may the Lord avenge our

wrongs, but my hand will not touch you. An ancient proverb says, ‘From evildoers come evil deeds,’ so my hand won’t touch you.

“Against whom has the king of Israel come out? Who are you pursuing? May he consider my cause and uphold it; may he vindicate me by delivering me from your hand.”

When David finished speaking, Saul asked, “Is that your voice, David my son?” And Saul wept aloud. “You are more righteous than I. You have treated me well, but I have treated you badly. You have just now told me about the good you did to me; the Lord delivered me into your hands, but you didn’t kill me. What man has ever found his enemy and let him walk safely away? May the Lord reward you well for the way you treated me today. I now know that you will surely be king and that the kingdom of Israel will be established in your hands. But swear to me by the Lord that you will not kill off my descendants or wipe out my name from my father’s family.”

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