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## Wait On the Lord

### I Samuel 24

**Intro:** David has had it pretty rough of late. From the time Saul set his heart to dispose of him in **ch18** up to his latest narrow escape at the end of **ch23**, David has dodged spears, turncoats & Philistines at least **12 times**. But now, the atmosphere is a little different for David. No, he's still not out of the woods yet (literally or figuratively) but he's also not alone. He now has 600 men riding & hiding with him & 600 fugitives are a lot harder to arrest than just one. Altho it may seem like David's won himself a little wiggle room, he's actually now in far greater danger than he was before because now David must face an enemy with much greater power than Saul could ever have – David must face **himself!**

That brings us to **chs24, 25 & 26**. Like the cheese on Ms. Kelly's Valentine lasagna, these 3 **chs** all hang together. They each deal with different events but they share a common theme, namely: the patients of David as he waits for **YHWH's** promise. The author had established early on that, btw Saul & David, David was **the man after YHWH's own heart**. These next 3 **chs** will show that **the man after YHWH's own heart doesn't grasp for the kingship that YHWH has promised him but he waits** for it to be given to him. This must have been an important lesson in David's heart because he mentions it directly some 22 times in the **Psalms**. Let's see what the Lord has to say to us today...

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**1-7-** Saul returns from the Philistines invasion & is immediately running down David. It's almost as if David's saying, "**I can't catch a break!**" That is until he does catch a break, a miraculous break! At least that's what his men think it is.

**attend-** KJV "**cover his feet**" its a euphemism for using the restroom, which, if you think about it is a euphemism itself. Basically, Saul took his copy of the Jerusalem Times & shuffled off to the nearest cave for some "alone" time. As it turns out, the spot he picked for privacy wasn't as private as he thought it was. He's no better at picking restrooms than he was at finding donkeys or fugitive servants. This is how far off you can get when you choose to reject God's Word. What are the odds he'd pick the exact cave David & all his men were in? He hadn't been able to find David one time & now they're in the same cave & David has the upper hand? Clearly this is **Providence** – **but to what end?**

While Saul's **reading the paper**, David & his men are having a heated debate about the will of God for David's life. They take this as a God-send, David's enemy, the last remaining obstacle to ascending to the throne has been hand delivered, defenseless & unaware, at their feet. I'm sure they were singing "**This is the day...**" with all the appropriate hand motions. to them, it was providence clear & simple & you didn't need a theology degree to see **YHWH's** hand.

In response, David sneaks up and cuts off the corner of Saul's robe. This act had significance. In **15:27-28**, when Saul tore Samuel's robe, it signified **Saul's forfeiture of the kingdom**. Thus David "**staked his claim to the kingdom that day in the cave when he removed a piece from Saul's robe**" (**Gordon**). For David, this might have been a symbolic

declaration of revolt (Davies). This may seem to be a stretch to us, but only this heavy symbolism could explain David's deep remorse (5). Surprisingly, in David's heart, even his symbolic action had *gone too far!*

After everything Saul's done to David, why did he feel bad about cutting off a piece of Saul's robe? A principle's given in vs6. As YHWH's anointed, Saul's person was sacrosanct (untouchable) & must not be violated (Groningen). But try telling that to David's men. David has to get pretty forceful with them. We don't see it in our English translations that say he restrained, stayed, persuaded or rebuked his men but the Hebrew text reads, "so David *tore apart his men with these words*" which implies he had to resort to violent & threatening words to keep them from killing Saul. Of course, Saul saunters off on his way, not realizing his proximity to eternity or that his #1 enemy has just saved his royal skin.

What's the lesson here? Watch this, because the struggle David is facing here is the same one we face on a regular basis. As David is sitting there looking at Saul, what's going thru his mind? Is this "the day" or not? Is it *providence* or is it *temptation*? This was a critical test for YHWH's servant. Let's be real: *it could go either way*. But how do you go about discerning the difference? The only answer to the test was the principle of the sanctity of YHWH's anointed. Now, that principle wasn't so clear to David's men but for David, at least, it was *one thing* to have the *promise* of the kingdom but *how* he was to *receive* that kingdom was quite another thing. David's men assumed that one automatically implied the other but David knew YHWH well enough to know that YHWH's *will must be achieved in YHWH's way*; the *end* that God has *ordained* must be reached by the *means* that God *approves*. David's men didn't really see it.

Know what? David's Son faced the exact same test when Satan came to Him in the wilderness (Mt 4:8-9). What Satan was offering Jesus was the *will of God for His life*. Ps 2:8-9 tells us the Father already promised to give Him *all these kingdoms and their splendor*. But God's will must come to pass in God's way; not thru submission to the devil but thru the humiliation of the cross.

Of course, this test is not just for David or Jesus; it comes over & over to almost all of God's servants. The *temptation* of the *short cut!* And don't we desire to take it! "Boy, if I could just find some way to make reading the Bible easier." If we could find some *key*, discover some *breakthrough* or get some *insight* that would elevate our Christian walk up to a higher plane of living, just enough to be above the hindrance, frustration & despair we're constantly faced with now. Aren't there plenty of so-called Christian leaders out there who claim to have found this secret? (Your Best Life Now).

Sadly, what we're really looking for is just a *short cut* around the *difficult, exhausting, time-consuming work* of *sanctification* (Heb 12:1-13). Wonder if Joel O put that in his book? If you want your best Christian life now, it's right there. That's how you get it. Do we need discernment! Lord, help us not to look only 4 the short cut & miss Your will!

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8-15- David takes up the lion's share of the verses offering his defense to Saul. I'll bet the hair stood up on the back of Saul's neck when he heard David cry out! David argues the case for his innocence & pleads for YHWH's justice. David begins by explaining to Saul

what we already know: the **providential** pit stop (10a); the voice of **opportunity** (10b); the restraining principle (10c); & the proof of it all (11). Saul was probably glad he'd just came from the rest room because I'm sure he got a little loose in the bowels when he saw David hold up the corner of his royal robe. David asks why Saul seeks to kill him when there's clearly no harm, rebellion or wrong intended by David toward him (11b).

This is a major reversal of fortunes. Whatever lies were swirling around the king's court about David's murderous intentions have all now been shown for what they are: **lies**. Yet, David doesn't entrust his security to any change of heart in Saul or any fresh promise from Saul. No, David makes his case before **YHWH** (12a). He's confident that God will bring vengeance on Saul **for him** (12b). Twice, David assures Saul that he won't raise his hands against him & in between, he offers a proverb that implies that **such wickedness** will not come from David. Now, we can't fully surmise David's intention in quoting this proverb but clearly it is seen as a vindication for himself (**he has no murderous designs on Saul**) but it is just as clearly a condemnation of Saul (**who is wickedly seeking David's life**). Yet, Saul's not just wicked, he's stupid (14). Why waste so much time, effort & critical resources chasing a nobody? The takeaway is: David not only **will not** harm Saul, he **cannot!** Why? Because he's committed his cause to **YHWH** (15).

That's the secret that explains David's waiting: **he has confidence in YHWH who will bring justice for him**. There will be a reckoning & **YHWH** will bring it. David will take no revenge for himself. The case is in **YHWH's** hands; He will prosecute it & decide in David's favor. Thus, David will wait instead of grasp **YHWH's** promised gift. David's obeying Paul's principle in **Rom 12:19** centuries before he wrote it (although Paul did distill it from **Deut 32** & **Lev 19**). Having this confidence in the Lord is critical for waiting on His will. This confidence **guides** our discernment when we're tested.

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**16-22-** Saul's response is surprisingly gracious. I guess seeing your life flash before your eyes (or flush) brings new perspective. Saul admits that David has shown him indisputable & undeserved goodness. Saul then goes on to declare what Jonathan had already told David that Saul knew – that David would be king of Israel. Thus, Saul asks David to promise not to wipe out Saul's royal family after he comes to power; a promise he's already given to Jonathan & now readily offers to Saul.

So what does David get from Saul's speech? Nothing but another assurance that **YHWH's** promise of the kingdom to him will surely come to pass. The only benefit David gets is that he hears yet again that **YHWH's word is dependable!** Just because its coming from a rat like Saul doesn't mean its not so. If God can speak to Balaam thru the front end of his own donkey, surely He can speak to David thru the back end of a donkey who just happens to be a deranged king. Its one thing to be told you're going to be king by your friends & "co-workers" but when your enemy tells you that, it must be doubly **assuring**; especially if he's the very same king you're going to replace!

To be **reassured** is one thing but to be stupid is quite another. David's no fool. He knows he can't trust fickle Saul any further than he can throw him. So Saul goes home but David lights out for the strongholds in the countryside.

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Providence or temptation? Now that I mention it, it's hard to believe how many times we regularly face this dilemma in our lives. Is this a God-send or a trap? A step up or a trip down? How can we discern God's guidance? Thru the truths & principles of His Word 1<sup>st</sup> & foremost, but we can also rely secondarily on the godly experience & advice of other trusted brothers & sisters. People that you know are not just going to tell you what you want to hear.

This is an important lesson for every believer at any age but I feel it is especially applicable to younger Christians because they possess the unfortunate combination of having a lot of high energy & great expectation with low patience & not so great discernment. Our young people are still facing some of the most crucial decision in life that will require the patience of Job & the discernment of Daniel in order to avert the misery of Lot. They could really use our prayers & whether they know it or not, whether they want it or not, they could also use our godly advice.

Is our confidence firmly placed in the justice of God? Not in seeking revenge on those who may have harmed us but in simply trusting that ultimately, God is doing & will always continue to do what is best for us whether we know it or see it or agree with it or not. That really is the secret of waiting on the Lord. That's what will keep you from making certain mistakes that will haunt you for the rest of your life. Waiting on the Lord, what else are you going to do?

