

1 Samuel 23

February 3, 2021

This chapter begins and ends with Philistine incursions. At the start, David delivers a great blow to the Philistines and saves the town of Keilah. Later on, Saul appears to have less military success. His response to the Philistines actually draws him away from an attack on David just as his troops are about to close in on the anointed king and favorite of the Lord.

God has used the Philistines for His purposes. And not for the first time. A Philistine invasion leads to the downfall of the corrupt priesthood of Eli's sons. The Israelites gain new reverence for the ark after the Philistines capture it. The new king Saul at first prevails against the Philistines but later is eclipsed by the victories of David over the "ten thousands." The Philistines will in time clear the path for David to ascend the throne.

The Philistines bring much suffering to God's people. They are His enemies, not his allies. But it may be said they are also His tools to fashion His will. Would David have grown into the leader he was had he never battled against them?

The Philistines can be called a type of Satan. They can also represent suffering inflicted on God's people. God does not provoke these but He does permit them – to strengthen us and to glorify Himself in the end.



Questions for study and discussion:

1. Saul invokes the name of God in verses 7 and 21. How does this differ from the ways David calls upon God in this chapter?
2. Do the citizens of Keilah show gratitude to David for rescuing them from the Philistines? What is the parallel in the life of our Lord?

3. See verse 9. How was the ephod used to determine the Lord's will in a decision?
4. Why is the ephod in David's possession? Is there a connection between our actions and God revealing His will to us?
5. Should Jonathan have stayed with David rather than return home? What do you think?
6. Read Psalm 54. What does it tell us about David?
7. How does Saul show lack of understanding toward the Lord?