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David Saves Keilah
First Samuel 23: 1-6

DIG: Why did the people come to David rather than to Sha'ul? Why was the city of Keilah so dangerous? By what means did David inquire of the LORD the first time? The second time? Why do David's men hesitate to go with him to Keilah? Why is David determined to continue on? How old was he when he led the attack?

REFLECT: When faced with a similar call to arms, or to serve, do you normally respond like David's men, or like David? Why? When have you paused to pray about God's will before an action or a decision? What difference did it make? When ADONAI says, "Go," how long do you usually wait before actually going? By what means do you seek the LORD to make your decisions? God's Word? Prayer? Mature believers? Or have you sometimes used other means like secular books or the horoscope (see the commentary on **Genesis Lw – The Witness of the Stars**)**? What happened?**

1014 BC

While in flight from **Sha'ul**, **David** did more than remain in hiding. **The Philistine** threat, relegated to the background for several chapters returns, and acting like a true **king**, **David** fought **them** on behalf of **his** beleaguered **people**, including the Ziphites.

David was told, "Look, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah and are looting the threshing floors." Notice it was to **David** that this report was brought and not to **Sha'ul**. This shows that **David** was viewed as the champion of **the people** and **he** would do what **the king** should have done. Not only that, **Keilah** was in the tribal territory of **Y'hudah**; therefore, the people of **Y'hudah** believed that **David** would come to **their** aide, rather than the Benjaminite **Sha'ul**. This was not a full-scale war, but merely a raid.[106]

Keilah was a border town in **Judah**, about twelve miles from **the Philistine** city of

Gath and some ten miles west of **the forest of Hereth** where **David** and **his** six hundred **men** were hiding. Situated close to the enemy, **Keilah** was extremely vulnerable, especially during the harvest season when **the Philistine** army was searching for food. Had **King Sha'ul** been concerned about defending **his people**, **he** would have sent a detachment of soldiers to protect **Keilah**, but instead **he** was obsessed with finding **David** and killing **him**.[107]

The first thing **David** did was to **inquire of the LORD** by using the Urim and Thummim (see the commentary on **Exodus, to see link click Gb – The Urim and Thummim: The Means of Making Decisions**) within the Ephod (see the commentary on **Exodus Fz – Make the Ephod of Gold, Blue, Purple and Scarlet Yarn**). **Abiathar son of Ahimelek** had **brought it with him when he fled** for **his** life from **Nov to David at Keilah (First Samuel 23:7).** The inquiry was: **Shall I go and attack the Philistines?** Then **ADONAI** gave **him** a one-word answer through the Urim and Thummim, saying: **Go . . .** in effect directing **him** to **attack the Philistines and save Keilah (First Samuel 23:1-2).**

But when **David's men** learned that **the LORD** had responded affirmatively to **his** first inquiry, **they said to him, "Here in Y'hudah we are afraid."** After all, **they** said, even in the relative security of certain parts of **Judah** (**the forest of Hereth** for example) **we are afraid**. But by going to **Keilah**, even closer to **the Philistines** who were dressed for battle and armed to the teeth, it would be even worse. **They** could easily be surrounded and their retreat blocked. **How much more afraid, then,** would **we** be **if we go to Keilah against the Philistine forces (First Sam 23:3)!** In fact, it would be too frightening to think about it.[108]

Consequently, **David inquired of YHVH once again** to the prophet **Gad** to ease the apprehension of **his** men. This time **God answered him** saying that **He Himself** (the **I** is emphatic) would guarantee **David's** victory over **the Philistines.** This gave them the assurance to **go** forward with the attack. **So** when **David** was about 26 years old, **he and his men went to Keilah, fought the Philistines and carried off their livestock. He inflicted heavy losses on the Philistines and saved the people of Keilah (First Samuel 23:4-6).** As in **Chapter 17** (see **Al – David Kills Goliath**), so also here, **the LORD** didn't chose the rejected **King Sha'ul**, but the fugitive **King**-elect **David** to deliver **His people**.

The true **king** of **Isra'el** was to rule by **God's** word, in close company with **God's** prophet **Gad**, and **God's** priest **Ahimelek.** We can therefore see why **the Davidic kingship** came to its ultimate fulfillment in **Yeshua Messiah**, who not only is **King**

over **God's people**, but is **Himself** our true **Prophet** and perfect **High Priest** as well.[109]