

1 Samuel 26-27

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Date: 16 February 2025

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[0 : 00] All right, well, good morning, everyone. Welcome to session number 18 in our journey through 1 Samuel. And if you've been with us, then you'll remember that we've been tracking David's flight from Saul.

Saul, of course, is the king of Israel, anointed as king, but due to conspicuous sin and error that we've studied, he was rejected by God. And we've seen God call Samuel to anoint a new king, King David, king anointed but not yet installed. And what we've been seeing is how Saul has become jealous of David.

Saul has lost the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. And in fact, we've seen how a harmful spirit from God has been sent to him. And David does have the Holy Spirit upon him. And Saul has become paranoid and jealous of David, who's been very successful militarily. Now, today, we're going to cover chapters 26 and 27.

And it's going to feel like a bit of a repeat. If you recall, in chapter 23, David was in the exact same place, the wilderness of Ziph. And the Ziphites went and told Saul. And Saul was about to capture David.

And there was that drama where they were on opposite sides of the mountain. It's the same mountain that's in view today. And then, of course, there was the Philistine attack. And that was what caused Saul to leave.

[1 : 32] And then David fled over to En Gedi. Now, Saul is, I guess you could say, David's mortal enemy, which is to say, Saul wants to kill David. And David knows it. But David will not strike.

When David had the opportunity over there in En Gedi, he rebuked his men. He said to them in verse 6 and 7 of chapter 24, Far be it from me, because of the Lord, that I would do this thing to my Lord, the Lord's anointed, to reach out with my hand against him, since he is the Lord's anointed. And David rebuked his men with these words and did not allow them to rise up against Saul.

So we see how David is waiting. He's waiting for God to fulfill what he has promised. And then no one will be able to say that David took the kingdom by force. And then last week, we had a little bit of a sidebar, I guess, a little bit of a break where we saw how David came to marry Abigail, who was the widow of Nabal.

Nabal was offended, or was offensive to David. David was offended by him. But unlike with Saul, David was ready to destroy him. And it took Abigail's wisdom to prevent the bloodshed.

All right, well, we're ready to get going into chapter 26. So hopefully you've turned there. 1 Samuel 26, verse 1. Then the Ziphites came to Saul in Gibeah, saying, Is not David keeping himself hidden on the hill of Hakila, which is opposite Yeshimon? So Saul set out and went down to the wilderness of Ziph, taking with him three thousand chosen men of Israel to search for David in the wilderness of Ziph.

[3 : 24] And Saul camped on the hill of Hakila, which is opposite Yeshimon beside the road. And David was staying in the wilderness. Now let's pause there. So after the episode in Ma'on with Nabal, David has made his way east. I'm sorry, he made his way west to the hill of Hakila, or Hakila, if you want to try and pronounce it authentically. I'm just going to stick with Hakila. Now, as I said, this is, it sounds very familiar, because we've been here before. 1 Samuel 23, 19 says, Then Ziphites came to Saul in Gibeah, saying, Is David not keeping himself hidden with us in the strongholds at Horesh on the hill of Hakila, which is south of Yeshimon? Same place, same people, and basically the same message.

So could it be the same event recorded twice? Answer, no, it can't be. Now there are similarities, of course, and we'll note them as we go. But really, there are far more contrasts and differences.

But the main reason that they cannot be the same event recorded twice is because they are in two different locations. As I said, in 23 and 24, we had this encounter in the wilderness of Ziph, near the hill of Hakila, but they actually then went over to En Gedi, which is where there was the near miss, if you like, in the cave. Whereas here, it's all taking place in one location, at the hill of Hakila, coming from the word Hakil, which is a Hebrew word meaning dark, obscure, or hidden.

And the Ziphites betray David to Saul. The Ziphites, of course, are locals. And as we've mentioned before, they are men of Judah. So Judah's David's kinsmen. And I mentioned how Psalm 54 has a header, and it's written at the time when the Ziphites betrayed David, which we now realise could be either one of these two episodes that we've just read. So now one other contrast. Last time, chapter 23, in response to the message from the Ziphites, Saul asked them, hey, go spy out exactly where David is.

This time, however, Saul is immediately off. Off he goes with his army of 3,000. He's ready to get things done. David, for comparison, just has 600 men.

[6:14] Reading on verse 3. When he saw that Saul had come after him into the wilderness, David sent out spies, and he learned that Saul was definitely coming. So again, another interesting contrast, actually.

Saul asked the Ziphites to spy on David. Here, it's the opposite. David is spying on Saul, or David sends men out to gather intelligence on Saul. And one thing that struck me in today's text is that David feels a lot more proactive and strategic. In the chapters 23 and 24, David very much felt like he was on the back foot.

You remember the drama in chapter 23 where David was fleeing and Saul was pursuing, and it sort of climaxed with him being on opposite sides of the mountain, and it looked like it was all over. And God intervened, giving Saul notice that the Philistines were coming, and so he broke it off. So David very much on the back foot, very much fleeing.

Whereas here, David is proactive, and we'll see how he's sending out spies, and later we'll see him go into the camp. Now, why is David spying? Well, you remember that last time we saw David and Saul together, they were at peace, right?

[7:41] They were at peace. End of chapter 24, Saul was expressing some measure of regret for his actions. And it's quite likely, I think, that they were together again when they mourned the death of the prophet Samuel.

We don't know. But the point is, they were definitely at peace last time they were together. And then David hears, ah, Saul's coming, Saul's coming. Is he? Is he?

Yes, he learns that Saul is definitely coming. And, you know, we could talk about the false repentance of Saul, how he clearly was not repentant last time, but we'll save that for the end.

Verse 5. David then set out and came to the place where Saul had camped. And David saw the place where Saul lay, and Abner, the son of Ner, the commander of his army, and Saul was lying in the circle of the camp, and the people were camped around him.

Then David said to Achimelech, the Hittite, and to Abishai, the son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, saying, Who will go down with me to Saul in the camp?

[8:51] And Abishai said, I will go down with you. So we're introduced to some new names, some awesome names here that we may not know. So let's take a minute to be introduced.

First up, we've got Abner, the son of Ner. Now, I always find it funny when he's referred to Abner, the son of Ner, because Abner means my father is Ner. And I don't know if it's meant to be comical, but I've always found it funny.

Anyway, Ner is a Hebrew word meaning light or lamp. So Abner, who is he? He is the commander of Saul's army. And he's also Saul's cousin.

Ner, his father, is the brother of Saul's father, Kish. Now, we saw Abner when David slew Goliath. Saul and Abner were there together, and they were like, whose kid is that?

And the last time we saw Abner was at the banquet, you remember, in chapter 20. Saul was throwing a banquet, and at that banquet, he was trying to capture David.

[9:56] Surprise. And they were sat next to one another, David. I'm sorry, Saul and Abner. So they're clearly one of Saul's closest confidants and one of his most trusted generals.

That's Abner. And we've got Achimelech, the Hittite. Now, his name may sound familiar because actually he shares his name with one of the priests at Nov.

Ahimelech was the priest at Nov who was slain by Saul. But this is a different guy. This guy is a Hittite, which means that he is a son of Heth. They were a prominent group native to Canaan. That is to say that they were one of the nations whom God commanded Israel to clear out, to wipe out. So really, Ahimelech and David should be enemies.

And in the natural, they certainly would be. Now, we don't really know anything else about this Ahimelech, the Hittite. He doesn't show up again. So all we could really say is he is a Hittite.

[11:08] And there's another prominent Hittite whom we will meet in 2 Samuel by the name of Uriah. And what these two Hittites show us, I think, is that even though they came from sinful nations, they were able to come in and attach themselves to Israel.

And Ahimelech here has clearly become one of David's closest men in that it's he and Abishai who are invited to come with him. So remarkable, I think, isn't it, that God would allow in his mercy these men to come into and be attached to the nation of Israel.

And then we have Abishai. Abishai, the son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother. So Abishai and Joab are two of the three sons of Zeruiah, or Zeruiah, however you want to say that.

Now, Zeruiah is actually their mother. And she is David's sister, possibly half-sister, possibly stepsister. If you want to check it out, then you want to have a look at 2 Samuel 17, verse 25 and 1 Chronicles 2, 16, where you can see that.

But Zeruiah, David's sister, and Abishai and Joab then are David's nephews. His name, Abishai, possibly, interestingly, it may mean my father is Jesse, because of the way that the consonants and the vowels fall.

[12:40] Abi, my father, and the yeshi is Jesse. And so Abishai, he is the one who volunteers to go down to the camp.

So we note immediately then that Abishai is a brave guy. Actually, if we read on, and as we read on, we discover that this Abishai guy, he is a powerful guy, a powerful dude, a masterful warrior. He will be instrumental in establishing David's kingdom in the future. 18,000 Edomites he will destroy. We can reasonably infer he did that with the backing of his army.

But this was him. This was his military might. And towards the end of David's reign, David is almost defeated by one of the descendants of Goliath.

And it's Abishai who saves him and kills the giant. So Abishai, powerful, powerful guy. Powerful dude. All right. So there's those guys. Let's read on verse 7.

[13:43] So David and Abishai came to the people by night. And behold, Saul lay sleeping inside the circle of the camp with his spear stuck in the ground at his head.

And Abner and the people were lying around him. Then Abishai said to David, today, God has handed your enemy over to you. Now then, please let me pin him with his with the spear to the ground with one thrust, and I will not do it to him a second time.

So Saul in the center of the camp, the most protected part, and his spear there indicates his location. Now, many have suggested that the spear of Saul sort of acts as a symbol of his royalty, kind of like a scepter.

And that's certainly true in the case of many ancient weapons. I haven't been able to corroborate that biblically, but it seems reasonable. But, you know, for me, it just reminded me of Saul's paranoia and his violent madness, because the only times we've seen that spear referenced is when he's been hurling it at David.

But in any case, it enables David and Abishai to easily locate Saul. And Abishai is ready to use it to pin Saul to the ground.

[15:01] Verse nine. But David said to Abishai, do not kill him. For who can reach out with his hand against the Lord's anointed and remain innocent? David also said, as the Lord lives, the Lord will certainly strike him.

Or his day will come that he dies. Or he will go down in battle and perish. The Lord forbid that I would reach out with my hand against the Lord's anointed.

But now, please take the spear that is at his head and the jug of water and let's go. So David took the spear and the jug of water that were at Saul's head and they left.

And no one saw or knew about it, nor did anyone awaken. For they were all asleep, because a deep sleep from the Lord had fallen on them. And so, just like chapter 24, verse 6, David says no. In that case, the men were urging David to take action. And David said he would not. Verse 6 of chapter 24, David said, Far be it from me, because of the Lord, that I would do this thing to my Lord,

the Lord's anointed, to reach out with my hand against him, since he is the Lord's anointed.
[16 : 15] And here, the offer is from Abishai. Hey, I'll get it done for you. And David's rhetorical question implies that no one can attack the Lord's anointed and remain innocent before the Lord.

It doesn't matter that he's gone astray. It doesn't matter that he is sinning. It is for God to take action, because he is God's anointed.

He is the Lord's anointed. It's the same principle, isn't it? God says, vengeance is mine. Verse 10, David says, the Lord will strike him.

Either naturally, he'll die naturally, or he'll die in battle. The Lord will handle it. So, Abishai and David, they grab tokens to show that they had been there.

The spear and the jug of water. And I do think that we can extract some symbolism from taking these. The spear, it either represents war and military might.

[17 : 23] Again, because we saw Saul wield it against David. But again, it also probably also represents his rulership and his right to judge.

So you could argue that David took his rulership in a symbolic way. And then the water would be a representation of life. Water is needed to live, of course, especially in the wilderness.

You need water. And David took it. In symbol, then, perhaps, taking Saul's life. His rulership and his life, both taken symbolically.

Now, it would seem quite unbelievable that these two men could sneak into the camp unnoticed. Where were the sentries? Who was on watch?

Three thousand men, Saul, and nobody was on watch? And it would seem unbelievable, were it not for the author noting that a deep sleep from the Lord had fallen on them.

[18 : 21] Which I think shows that God is working. Of course it does. It shows that God is working on behalf of David and enabling David's actions. In the cave, when David cut Saul's garment, his conscience struck him.

But not here, not in this case. This time, David knows God is with him. All right, let's read on verse 13. Then David crossed over to the other side and stood on top of the mountain at a distance with a large area between them.

So, unfortunately, the location of the hill of Hachilah is not known today. I can't show you the topology. But the idea here is that David found a sort of a natural amphitheater, a place where the topography allowed the sound to travel while David remained at a safe distance from Saul.

Verse 14. And David called to the people and to Abner, the son of Ner, saying, Will you not answer, Abner? Then Abner replied, Who are you who calls to the king?

So David said to Abner, Are you not a man? And who is like you in Israel? Why then have you not guarded your lord the king? For one of the people came to kill the king your lord.

[19 : 44] This thing that you have done is not good. As the lord lives, all of you undoubtedly must die, because you did not guard your lord, the lord's anointed. And now see where the king's spear is, and the jug of water that was at his head.

And David's little speech seems to me to be somewhat mocking. Someone came in to kill the king. Yeah, it was me. And he's like, Abner, you had one job to do, man.

One job. And of course, the missing spear and the water jug providing the evidence that they'd been there. But, you know, this is a heavy thing, right? A heavy, heavy thing.

As the lord lives, all of you undoubtedly must die. The all of is an italics in the New American 2020 edition. That's because the you is plural, which, of course, we don't see in English.

But David is saying, you, all of you, all of this great army has failed to protect their king. All of you undoubtedly must die.

[20 : 45] Wow. Verse 17. Then Saul recognized David's voice and said, Is that your voice, my son David? And David said, It is my voice, my lord the king.

He also said, Why then is my lord pursuing his servant? For what have I done? Or what evil is in my hand? Now then, please let my lord the king listen to the words of his servant.

If the lord has incited you against me, may he accept an offering. But if it is people, curse to they before the lord, because they have driven me out today, so that I would have no share in the inheritance of the lord, saying, Go, serve other gods.

Now then, do not let my blood fall to the ground far from the presence of the lord, for the king of Israel has come out to search for a single flea, just as one hunts a partridge in the mountains.

So Saul recognized David's voice, where perhaps Abner did not. And notice what David says. He sees two possibilities for why Saul is after him.

[21 : 52] The first one is that the lord has incited Saul, which would mean that God has some purpose in it. Perhaps God is bringing judgment through Saul, in which case, says David, Well, then let there be a suitable offering to restore peace and fellowship.

The other possibility is that other people have incited Saul. That is, he's listened to slander about David, and Saul has been deceived into coming out after him.

And David says, well, in that case, then their intention is actually to drive him out of the land to serve other gods, with the ancient idea being that gods were the gods of the land or the nation. And so if you're banished from one country, or if you have to change countries, then, well, you have to change your gods too. Now, David had better theology than that, because he understood God was everywhere, in every nation.

He wrote Psalm 139, verse 7, in which he rhetorically asks, Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence?

[23 : 03] And of course, nowhere, nowhere. There is no way to flee from God, for he is everywhere, omnipresent. So those are the two possibilities that David suggests.

And interestingly, it doesn't occur to him to suggest the possibility that Saul is just being a paranoid madman. Probably wouldn't be politically expedient, even if it is, as we know, the actual reason. Verse 21, Then Saul said, I have sinned. Return, my son David, for I will not harm you again, since my life was precious in your sight this day.

Behold, I have played the fool, and have made a very great mistake. David replied, Behold, the spear of the king. Now, have one of the young men come over and take it, and the Lord will repay each man for his righteousness and his faithfulness.

For the Lord handed you over to me today, but I refused to reach out with my hand against the Lord's anointed. Therefore, behold, just as your life was highly valued in my sight this day, so may my life be highly valued in the sight of the Lord, and may he rescue me from all distress.

[24 : 24] Then Saul said to David, Blessed are you, my son David. You will both accomplish much and assuredly prevail. So David went on his way, and Saul returned to his place.

And so they part. And this is the last time that Saul and David are together, in the land of the living at least. And David returns the spear, which if it is indeed a symbol of his rule, then it is a sign that David is surrendering the kingdom.

He is allowing Saul to continue headship in the kingdom of Israel, because he's content to wait for God to transfer it to him. And then Saul's words, of course, they echo his previous remarks in chapter 24, verse 17 and forward.

And again, we see this acknowledgement of sin. I've played the fool. I've made a very great mistake. We've heard that before, Saul. We've heard it before, man. Now, notice Saul asks David to return.

I won't harm you again. But David does not trust this. He doesn't trust the remorse. And he says, rather, have one of the young men come. Come and take the spear.

[25 : 41] Come and take what's yours. And then they go their separate ways. David does not return to Saul. Let's read on. Chapter 27, verse 1.

Then David said to himself, Now I will perish one day by the hand of Saul. There is nothing better for me than to safely escape into the land of the Philistines. Then Saul will despair of searching for me anymore in all the territory of Israel, and I will escape from his hand.

So we see what David thinks of those words of Saul and his alleged repentance. A bit of a déjà vu moment, I suppose.

So he decides to flee into the Philistine territory, which is a pretty risky move, to be honest. Of course, Gath is where Goliath hailed from, whom David had killed.

And David did already go there, you may recall, back in chapter 21. When he first fled from Saul, he went to Gath. And he went to Achish.

[26 : 50] But they knew him. And they said, this is the guy that they sing songs about. He's slain tens of thousands. And David then has to pretend to be a madman.

And he pretends he's lost his mind. And then he's able to flee. Now, this was probably five, six, maybe seven years ago now. And David, he's thinking, I got no choice, man.

If I stay in Israel, Saul will catch me. I cannot trust his words. I'm out. I'm out of here. Verse 2. So David set out and went over, he and the 600 men who were with him, to Achish, the son of Maioch, king of Gath.

And David lived with Achish in Gath, he and his men, each with his own household. David was with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess and Abigail the Carmelitess, Nabal's widow.

Now, it was reported to Saul that David had fled to Gath, so he no longer searched for him. So back to King Achish then, or Achish.

[28 : 00] Probably it is the same Achish as before. Some have suggested that Achish may be a title. I don't buy it, to be honest. It hasn't been that long.

And there just doesn't seem to be any reason to think it's a title rather than a name. So Gath then seems to be a fairly substantial city in that it is able to accommodate 600 households, 600 new households coming in.

And interestingly, isn't it, it's amazing that they would welcome David, or at least have enough trust to welcome them in. How did the conversation between David and Achish go?

No idea. I have no idea. But clearly, Achish has heard satisfactorily that David is an enemy to King Saul.

That he is now a rebel and an outcast. And I guess it's kind of a, you know, the enemy of my enemy is my friend. And, and yes, Saul doesn't have the resources to continue seeking David.

[29 : 05] It does say, doesn't it, it does say that Saul no longer searched for him. The implication of that little phrase then is that Saul was searching for him until he fled.

So, so much for his repentance. Verse five. Then David said to Achish, If now I have found favor in your sight, have them give me a place in one of the cities in the country, so that I may live there.

For why should your servant live in the royal city with you? So Achish gave him Ziklag that day.

Therefore Ziklag has belonged to the kings of Judah to this day. The number of days that David lived in the country of the Philistines was a year and four months.

Now David is a wise strategist. He knows that if, if he were to remain in Gath, it would be easy for the Philistines to spy on him.

He would have very little freedom of movement, movement. Whereas, if he were to live in the country, freedom, able to come and go as pleases them. And this, this period of time, this year and four months, it gives David a good opportunity to become familiar with the terrain.

[30 : 22] This is essential military intelligence. Because again, David is going to be king. David will have to resume the campaign against the Philistines as part of his getting the land, clearing the land, the promised land.

So this gives him this great opportunity to get to know the terrain and become familiar with it. So they settle in Ziklag. The location of Ziklag is not known with any certainty.

Now there is a site called Khayabat al-Rai. Khayabat is just the Arabic for ruin. Now, what's notable about this location is that it has both Philistine and Israeli architecture or archaeology, perhaps I should say.

And that, that fact makes it a strong contender. Again, if you want to know more about that, you can Google it. Khayabat al-Rai. K-H-I-R-B-E-T.

A-L hyphen R-A-I. Now, what I think is interesting, though, is the detail that's added for us in 1 Chronicles chapter 12, because there the chronicler has documented the names of many of the 600 men, and they are all powerful.

[31 : 42] It talks about these bowmen and slingers from the tribe of Benjamin, capable with both hands. And of course, the tribe of Benjamin is Saul's own tribe.

So very, very interesting that David would have allies from Saul's own tribe. And then you've got these men from Gad, who are described as having faces like lions and being as swift as gazelles. The least of them equal to 100 men, and the strongest equal to 1,000. So formidable, formidable force. 600 men may not seem a lot compared to Saul's 3,000, but they are powerful, powerful men. So what will they do? Verse 8. Now David and his men went up and attacked the Geshurites, the Gerzites, and the Amalekites, for they were the inhabitants of the land from ancient times, as you come to Shur, even as far as the land of Egypt.

David attacked the land and did not leave a man or a woman alive, and he took the sheep, the cattle, the donkeys, the camels, and the clothing. Then he returned and came to Achish.

[32 : 52] Now Achish said, where did you carry out an attack today? And David said, against the Negev of Judah, against the Negev of the Jeremilites, and against the Negev of the Kenites.

And David did not leave a man or a woman alive to bring to Gath, saying, otherwise they will tell about us, saying, this is what David has done, and this has been his practice all the time he has lived in the country of the Philistines.

So Achish believed David, saying, he has undoubtedly made himself repulsive among his people Israel. Therefore, he will become my servant forever.

Now there's a map where you can see the approximate location of Ziklag and Gath. There is the territory where you can see of Saul's reign, or the boundary of Saul's reign, and then on the west you've got Philistia with Gath to the north, and Ziklag is, I don't know, maybe 25 miles to the south, the southwest.

Again, approximately, because we don't know exactly where Ziklag is. And then you can see that from there, he was then going on assaults or military campaigns out of Ziklag to the south, to the west, into the territory of Amalek, Geshur, and the Gerzites.

[34 : 14] Now, these nations are part of the natives, so they are part of the people groups whom God commanded to be eliminated during the conquest of the land.

The Gerzites, interestingly, aren't mentioned anywhere else, but the Geshurites and the Amalekites are well known. Now, the Amalekites, in fact, you may remember God commanded Saul to destroy them in 1 Samuel 15, and his failure to do so was one of the two conspicuous sins that led to his rejection by God.

And why? And why did God command the destruction of these nations? Well, it's simple. They were completely given over to wickedness.

You know, all nations are descended from Noah. They all are descended from worshippers of the one true God, but they have forsaken the way and they have turned to evil paganism with these horrendous worship practices.

And God has said, enough, they have had enough time to repent. It's time for judgment to come. And that is what God called the nation of Israel to do. And that is what David is doing here.

[35 : 31] He's doing the work of the king. Even though he's not yet been installed, he is doing the work of a king and taking the land that God has commanded be removed from these sinful nations and given to Israel.

But we have to face into the fact that David is deceiving, don't we? David is bringing back these spoils to Achish, and he's claiming that they are from attacks on these regions in Israel, when in reality he's come against Canaanite peoples.

And I've heard some commentators say, well, maybe it's not an outright lie, but just a deception. And, you know, he's not disabusing Achish of his assumptions.

I'm like, well, I'm pretty sure it is a straightforward lie. But, you know, Achish accepts it. If we were to read on the next couple of verses in chapter 28, you know, the chapter break really isn't in the best place, in my opinion.

It says this, it says, Now it came about in those days that the Philistines gathered their armed camps for war to fight against Israel. And Achish said to David, Know for certain that you will go out with me into the camp, you and your men.

[36 : 47] David said to Achish, Very well, you will learn what your servant can do. So Achish said to David, Then I will assuredly make you my bodyguard for life. So you see the level of trust that King Achish has for David.

But also note David's completely ambiguous statement. You will learn what your servant can do. Or you'll see what I'm capable of.

You know, it's very, very ambiguous. So how do we apply this? Let's talk about this deception. And we have to tackle this, don't we?

So when is deception justifiable? Is it ever acceptable for God's people to wield deception? Is David in the wrong? Is he sinning?

Does he need to repent here? Now we have covered this topic before. It's come up before in 1 Samuel, actually. But you can survey the Old Testament, And you will find many places where there is blatant deception.

[37 : 54] One of the most conspicuous is, of course, The midwives before the Exodus, In, I think, chapter 1 of Exodus. You've got Rahab with the spies in the book of Joshua.

And then you've got, even in the book of Samuel, We've seen David's wife Michal deceive Saul's men by putting that statue in the bed And making it look like David.

David himself lied about why he wasn't at Saul's feast. And of course, David feigning madness before Achish in the previous episode. So plenty of places where deception is noted, If not explicitly commended.

You know, in the case of the midwives, They were rewarded and they were commended by God. Quite amazing. But then you can easily find places in the Old Testament Where this kind of deception is not allowed.

It is condemned. You know, we saw David, We saw Jacob deceiving his father Isaac. And it's not a good thing. It's not a good thing.

[38 : 59] Jacob the deceiver. And then he himself gets his just desserts when he's deceived by Laban. You know, and then you've got a lot of Proverbs In which it's clear that, and explicit, That lying lips are an abomination.

Not good. Not right. Now, in the end, for us, Our conclusion is Ephesians 4.25. Where we read this. Therefore, ridding yourselves of falsehood, Speak truth, each one of you with his neighbor, Because we are all parts of one another. And that, my friends, is the standard for us as Christians. It is truthfulness. We tell the truth. And using falsehood or deception for personal gain, Or to harm others, Or for convenience, Is unequivocally wrong.

We don't do it. We bear witness to the truth. Children of the light. Right? That's what we are. So what are we seeing here, then? Is David in the wrong?

[40 : 06] Well, what we've said and noted before is that when there is a higher principle, Such is life, To preserve life, Then we do not see the deception condemned.

Again, the midwives were preserving the lives of the infants. They were saving the lives of the babies that Pharaoh had ordered be cast into the Nile. And they are commended by God for it. We think of a more contemporary example would be Oskar Schindler, Who deceived his German authorities as to why he had, you know, over a thousand Jews working in his factory.

A great personal loss and risk to Mr. Schindler. Deceiving, but righteously so, in order to preserve life. David here in a hostile nation.

His life and the lives of his men are at risk. So you see, I guess, I think deception is being employed as an acceptable military strategy. You know, it's interesting.

[41 : 08] My family were watching Operation Mincemeat recently. A film all about deception during the warfare in World War II. And it's not unacceptable.

On the contrary, where it is used to preserve life and to save lives, it is acceptable. But for us, where we don't find ourselves generally in life or death conflict, Ephesians 4.25 holds sway. Rid yourselves of falsehood. All right, well, how else can we apply our text today? Well, I think we can learn a lot from David's conduct.

In particular, we note his patience. Again, David does not strike Saul. He does not even give permission for him to be struck. He's content to wait another year and four months or more for the fulfillment.

David is a very, very patient guy. And I got to thinking about this because, you know, we talk sometimes in the church about open doors and closed doors. And we pray, Lord, give an open door.

[42 : 08] And what we mean by that is, Lord, make a way and help us to know that this is the way we should go. Or firmly close it so it's clear we don't go that way. Now, the Lord caused a deep sleep on Saul and his men.

And David could have easily got, oh, an open door, an open door to come and take what God has promised. It's not. It's not. And David has the discernment to know this.

James 5, 7 to 8 is our call to patience. He says, therefore, be patient, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it until it gets early, until it gets the early and late rains.

You, too, be patient, strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. And, of course, that famous passage on love in 1 Corinthians chapter 13.

What's the first thing we read? Love is patient. Love is patient. And David models this, doesn't he? You know, when I thought of the sort of the anti-example of this, Abraham, where, I mean, to be fair, he was waiting a long time.

[43 : 26] But in the end, his patience wore out. And he decided, I need to make a baby myself. So he goes in to his concubine, and the result is Ishmael.

And we are still seeing the legacy of that decision today. All of the troubles in the Middle East today can be traced back to that one decision that Abraham made to try to fulfill the promise on his own. That is the consequence of impatience. God said he would do it. God said he'd do it to Abraham. God said he would do it to David. So how does David use this open door, this opportunity that the Lord has given?

You know, again, it is interesting, isn't it? David doesn't flee in this case. He seeks Saul out. You know, and again, I reflected on what David said to Saul.

You know, the two possibilities for why Saul was coming after him. And again, he doesn't directly accuse Saul. There must be some other reason, some other factor that stirred you up against me. [44 : 34] And I think that what David did was he provided Saul an opportunity to see his error and repent. Well, what about Saul's conduct? What can we say about that?

What can we learn about that? And I think what we're seeing, unfortunately, is false repentance again. You know, when we talked about this, when Tony talked about this previously, he likened it to the seed that falls on the rocky places.

And I think that's valid. You know, some others have likened Saul to someone who is responding to an altar call at church.

You know, someone who's caught up in the emotion and is saying the right words, probably in floods of tears, while the heart remains unconverted and the desire for sin remains.

Is it genuinely true this time? Is it genuinely true that Saul is repentant? I mean, I would argue no, because as we saw, didn't we, how it was only after David fled into Philistia that Saul stopped pursuing him.

[45 : 42] So his words mean nothing. And even if he had, even if Saul didn't pursue David again, how could David even trust him? Because the false repentance seen earlier means that there's no way David could trust him.

A lot of time would be needed. You know, the evidence of repentance is a transformed life. And the evidence of faith is works.

That's what James makes his point very clearly in James chapter 2. The evidence of faith, the evidence of repentance, you see it. You see it. And, you know, when I considered the words that Saul used as well, what I saw was not a contrite heart, but I saw frustration and self-loathing and, or just self.

You know, Saul was focused on himself. Not David and not God. You know, he says, I played the fool. I made a great mistake. I won't harm you again. My life was precious.

It's me, me, me. It's me, me, me again. When we truly repent and when we truly come to saving faith, our focus comes off of ourselves and onto our savior.

[46 : 52] We no longer focus on our sins. We entrust them to Christ. We receive forgiveness. We focus on the one who paid it all on the cross. Now, how do we see Jesus Christ in these chapters?

As always, David is a foreshadowing of the son of David, Jesus Christ. David is anointed. He is Messiah, if you like. But he is suffering rejection and persecution.

And he entrusts himself to God to bring everything to pass at the right time. You know, it was within David's power to save himself, but he refused. And it got me to thinking about how Jesus said that he could have summoned 12 legions of angels to deliver him from the cross.

You know, you see the parallel. Jesus had the power to deliver himself, but he would not. He entrusted himself to God. David had the power and the military prowess and might to deliver himself.

He could have killed Saul and been done with it. But he did not. He trusted the Lord. You see the parallel. We see David in this chapter rejected by his own people.

[48 : 05] And so he goes to the nations. He goes to the Gentiles. And this, of course, is a foreshadowing of Jesus Christ rejected by Israel. And then he became a light to the Gentiles, which I'm very glad about.

Praise God. And now we saw Saul. We've seen Saul pursuing David. But in today's text, we saw David pursuing Saul.

It was David who set out to the camp of Saul. And I think in this, there is a picture of Christ's pursuit of fallen man. Luke 19, 10 says that the son of man has come to seek and save the lost.

And then finally, this. David came into his camp and he took the spear and the water. The spear of a sinner and a fool. You know, we are the fools.

We are the ones who, like Saul, can say, I have sinned. I have played the fool. I have gone astray. I've gone my own way. I'm a fool. Now, on the cross, Jesus Christ took a spear, didn't he?

[49 : 13] A spear of judgment from a centurion into his side. And what came forth? Water. Water mixed with blood. Water normally is a symbol of life.

But here at the cross, it flowed to show that Jesus Christ was dead. That the spear and the water there proved his death. They proved that his offering for sin was completed.

Paid in full. And David then, we see that he took a fool's spear. It took the symbol of rain and judgment. And it took the water.

The symbol of life. The son of David took our spear. The spear of judgment that should have fallen on us. We deserved to die a sinner's death. We deserved that spear of judgment.

But Christ suffered for our sins. The just for the unjust. And even as David returned the water of life to Saul, so Jesus gives us living water.

[50 : 11] He took our judgment. He died our death. And he gives us life evermore. Hallelujah.

Amen. Praise you, Lord God. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.