

Introduction: There are at least two things God wants every person to know about Him. *** First, He created every person out of the ground: Adam, male and female, the first woman, Eve, from Adam, both in God's image (Genesis 1:26-2:25). From these two people came all people on earth. God 'fashioned' these people from their parents from the womb, as a potter ('fashioner') works in clay (Psalm 139:16; Jeremiah 18:1-11). Can we imagine why God did this? Yes. *** Second, God desires an intimate relationship with every person, both individually and as children adopted into His family by faith in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:26). The mind-blowing amazing creator and 'fashioner' of all people is also the Covenant God: Yahweh. His covenant with people is simply stated: God desires to live with people always and be their God and they will be His people – relationship (Leviticus 26:12; Exodus 6:7; Jeremiah 24:7; Revelation 24:3)! *** All this can be summed up: God desires to have an intimate relationship with all people. *** The key to any good relationship is communication. Communication leads to better knowledge. Intimate knowledge leads to love. God has 'wired' into the nature of people that we become like what or who we love. The deeper and stronger our love for God, the more He reconciles us to Himself. As this happens, He enables us to desire for ourselves what He wants us to desire. Jesus put it this way: Seek first the Kingdom of God (namely King God himself) and His righteousness (that is His character), and all these things (the basic necessities of life) will be added (given) to ('us' – Matthew 6:33). *** In today's episode of David's life we observe him constantly seeking his God, Yahweh, in prayer and through the high priest. *** First, he needs to know whether he should attack the Philistines when his men are afraid. He is told to attack and he is assured by Yahweh. So he and his men attack and Yahweh gives them victory. *** Then, he needs to know what Saul's intentions are towards him; and, how he should respond. With the help of Abiathar the high priest and the Urim and Thummim, he also receives guidance from Yahweh. Even though Saul tries to destroy him every day, Yahweh saves David. *** David declares in a psalm that Yahweh is the righteous judge who is a strong high tower for the oppressed. He will never forsake those seeking Him in faith. So, He will be praised for His justice.)

I. David seeks Yahweh on behalf of the people of Keilah, is told to fight, and is given victory; Saul is convinced God has forsaken David, then David seeks Yahweh through the high priest and is warned to leave. (1 Samuel 23:1-12)

- A. When David heard the Philistines were fighting and looting Keilah, he sought Yahweh twice for guidance, and was told the Philistines would be given to him, and they were. (*Verses 1-5*)
1. They told David: Behold! The Philistines are fighting Keilah and plundering the threshingfloor. (*Verse 1*)
Keilah: Keilah, meaning fortress, was about fifteen miles southwest of Jerusalem and ten miles northwest of Hebron in northern Judah. The Philistines were making war on this city and taking the grain as it was being threshed to make flour for bread.
 2. Then David inquired of Yahweh: Will I go and attack these Philistines? Then Yahweh said to David: Thou must go and slay the Philistines and save Keilah. (*Verse 2*)
David asks: David seeks his Covenant God by asking Him if he should go and attack the Philistines. Yahweh says he must attack to save the people of his tribe of Judah.
 3. Then David's men said: Behold! We (are) here in Judah, being afraid, more than (we will fear), if we go to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines. (*Verse 3*)
The men fear: David's rag-tag army of about six hundred men (verse 13) are fearful of Saul. They say they are even more afraid of the Philistine armies.
 4. Then, yet again, David inquired of Yahweh; then, Yahweh answered him: Thou must go down to Keilah because I will give the Philistines into thy hand. (*Verse 4*)
Second ask: Due to the fearful response of his men, David seeks Yahweh again. Yahweh graciously re-commands David to go and save Keilah AND gives His Word to David that He, Himself, will give the Philistines into David's hand (if he obeys).
 5. Then David and his men went to Keilah, and they fought the Philistines; then, they took away their livestock, and 'he' struck them a great slaughter, and David saved those dwelling in Keilah. (*Verse 5*)
Trust and see: David obeyed in faith all Yahweh commanded him and his men followed their leader. Yahweh did all He said He would do to the Philistines and for David and Keilah. It is interesting that the key verb – to strike, smite, kill – only has a pronoun. Since David is twice named, could the 'he' be Yahweh??? David sought Yahweh. Yahweh guided him. And, Yahweh acted on His Word!!!

Those who seek God are guided by Him

Application: As followers of Jesus, may we all be motivated to seek God in faith and expect Him to guide us and protect us as we stay in Him by the faith of Jesus Christ.

- B. Saul was told David was in a city with doubled gates and is convinced God has seen David over to him; but, David seeks Yahweh through Abiathar, and is told Keilah will turn him over. (*Verses 6-12*)
1. Then, when he fled, Abiathar son of Ahimelek, he came down (with) the ephod in his hand. (*Verse 6*)
Ephod: The ephod was a robe. For the high priest it had two 'stones', near each shoulder, with the names of the twelve sons of Israel engraved on them. It also had the Urim and Thummim used to inquire of Yahweh. (Exodus 28)
 2. Then, it was told to Saul that David had come to Keilah; then Saul said: God has seen him into my hand, because he has been shut up in a city (with) double gates and barred; then, Saul summoned all the people to war, to go down to Keilah, and to relentlessly attack David and his men. (*Verses 7-8*)
God's provision: Saul misreads what is happening as God (the mighty creator) being gracious to him so he may have his desire of eliminating David fulfilled.
Confident of victory: So, confident of victory, Saul launches a full-out attack on Keilah to do away with the servant he fears, namely David.
 3. Then David knew that Saul was plotting evil against him; then, he said to Abiathar the priest: bring the ephod near. (*Verse 9*)
Asks Abiathar: David now intends to seek Yahweh through the high priest, using the Urim and Thummim to seek direction from Yahweh (Ezra 2:62-63; Nehemiah 7:64-65; Exodus 28:30).

4. Then David said: Yahweh, God of Israel, Thy servant has surely heard that Saul is seeking to come to Keilah to destroy the city on account of me; will the men of Keilah deliver me up into his hand? Will Saul come down as Thy servant has heard? Yahweh, God of Israel, Thou must tell Thy servant, please; Yahweh said: he will come down. (*Verses 10-11*)
Asks God of Israel: This time, through Yahweh's high priest, David seeks God to know if Saul will indeed come down against Keilah, his men and him. Yahweh answers in the affirmative!
5. Then David said: Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men up into Saul's hand? Then, Yahweh said: They will deliver (thee) up. (*Verse 12*)
Asks again: David seeks his God, Yahweh, for the fourth time in this narrative about defending Keilah from the Philistines, and surviving an attack from Saul: will we be delivered up to likely death? Yes

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Application: Just as David did not get the answer for which he may have hoped, we also must know that sometimes when we seek God, we will get an answer that is a warning.

II. David departs with six hundred men and stays in the wilderness, Saul seeks him daily and God protects him; David sings of Yahweh's righteous judgment, and He is protector of the oppressed who seek Him by faith.

(*1 Samuel 23:13-14; Psalm 9:7-12*)

- A. David departs Keilah with six hundred men, and Saul withdraws; then, David stays in the wilderness and Saul seeks him daily, but God protects him. (*1 Samuel 23: 13-14*)
 1. Then David arose and his men, about six hundred, then they went out from Keilah and they went where they went; and Saul was told that David had escaped from Keilah, then he ceased to go out. (*Verse 13*)
Escape: Thanks to Yahweh's guidance when David sought Him, he escaped Saul with some six hundred men, causing Saul to regroup.

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2. Then David dwelt in the wilderness in strongholds, and he kept dwelling in the hills of the wilderness of Ziph; then Saul sought him all the days; and God did not give him into his hand. (*Verse 14*)
Wilderness: This hilly, rocky wilderness was about ten miles west to east, twelve miles south of Keilah, and about four miles north to south, about forty square miles of desolation. But this is where Yahweh protected David from Saul, as He said he would when David sought Him!

Application: God wants us to know that we should take comfort that whatever God has planned for His faithful servants, He will give them the grace to seek Him; and, He will protect them to accomplish His purpose in them.

If we are determined to serve God to thank Him for His grace IN Jesus, then this is for us!

- B. David sings of the righteous judgment of Yahweh the King, who is a high tower for oppressed people seeking Him in faith; this results in praise declared to all. (*Psalm 9:7-12*)
 1. And Yahweh forever will sit / He has established for judgment, His throne. (*Verse 7*)
King and judge: The two half-lines must be read as a whole poetic thought. Yahweh is eternally sitting on His throne as King! And as He is the giver and enforcer of His Covenant with people, He is also the established judge.
 2. He will judge the (inhabited) world in righteousness / He will execute judgment to the people uprightly. (*Verse 8*)
Righteous: As the wholly righteous God, it is appropriate that he will be the final judge of all living on earth, and He will judge in a perfect and straight manner!
 3. Yahweh is a 'high tower' for the oppressed / a 'high tower' in a season of distress. (*Verse 9*)
High tower: A 'high tower' is a fortress refuge that is far above the earthly violence that wicked and powerful rulers often inflict on the poor and needy for their own greedy gain. It is a comfort for people to know that the all-powerful Covenant God is King and their 'high tower'!
 4. They will put their trust in Thee, those knowing Thy Name / because Thou have not forsaken those seeking Thee, Yahweh. (*Verse 10*)
Trust and seek: David concludes this poetic stanza with extreme confidence in Yahweh. Those who fully trust Him because they know His character, and seek Him in faith in who He is, will find Him to be THE 'high tower', or stronghold in the wilderness where He had protected David from Saul after David consistently sought Yahweh in faith.

Yahweh is a stronghold to those who seek Him

5. Y'all must sing praise to Yahweh (who is) dwelling in Zion / Y'all must tell among the peoples His doings // For the avenger of blood is mindful of them / and He does not forget the cry of the humble. (*Verses 11-12*)
Coda: This is the coda of praise to this portion of David's psalm of trust in Yahweh in the face of evil earthly rulers. A coda is a short or long formal conclusion to a piece of music. An example of a short coda is the strong final chord of Beethoven's fifth symphony. An example of a long coda is the three minute piano solo that concludes Eric Clapton's 'Layla'!
Words of praise: David exhorts all humble and oppressed believers in the Covenant God because He will never forsake them; and, he will always execute His justice on UN-repentant oppressors.

Application: To sum up all we have seen in God's Word about David and by David: We must truly know that whatever harm men may intend, and may even inflict upon God's people, He will ultimately avenge His children who are afflicted because He is the righteous judge.

Conclusion: David seeks Yahweh on behalf of the people of Keilah, is told to fight, and is given victory. Saul is convinced God has forsaken David, then David seeks Yahweh through the high priest and is warned to leave. David departs with six hundred men and stays in the wilderness, Saul seeks him daily and God protects him. David sings of Yahweh's righteous judgment, He is the protector of the oppressed who seek Him in faith.

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