

# 1 Samuel 23

## 1 Samuel 23:1–23

## David Delivers Keilah/God Delivers David

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**Introduction:** 1 Sam. 23 is actually two chapters, for all intents and purposes. In the first half of this chapter, David forgets about his own problems and about being pursued by Saul when he hears about the city of Keilah being attacked by the Philistines. Most people would have said: “Look, I’m sorry, but I’ve got troubles of my own. I really can’t help you.” Not David; he asked guidance from God, and, when it became clear that this people became his responsibility, he took on their distress as his own. He rescued the citizens of Keilah from the Philistines, and set himself up at the same time for an assault by Saul. Furthermore, rather than being assured of the support of these grateful citizens, David was guaranteed that they would have simply turned around and turned him into Saul.

When David leaves Keilah to escape Saul, this begins the second half of this chapter. What is amazing is that there is no clever outfoxing of Saul by David; David does not pull several slick maneuvers which result in the deliverance of his men; God steps in and causes David's deliverance.

The lesson is clear: God can and will deliver even in the bleakest of circumstances. However, if He has given you a responsibility, then it is up to you to see it through.

Now let's cover this chapter in more detail: David might have been at the famous Masada, but God, through Gad, had urged him to move into more central Judah (1Sam. 22:5); and wherever David moves to, he receives word that Keilah has been attacked by the Philistines (or, more properly, the threshing floors of Keilah) (1Sam. 23:1). David is told to move out against the Philistines by God, but his men question this call (1Sam. 23:2–3). David once again goes to God, and is told once again to take his men to defend the people of Keilah, which he does successfully (1Sam. 23:4–5). Abiathar the priest is said to come to David while he is in Keilah, and he brings the ephod with him (1Sam. 22:20–23 23:6). Saul hears about David defending the people of Keilah and begins to gather every man that he can to go to Keilah to get David (1Sam. 23:7–8). David, like Saul, also hears things, and he hears that Saul is plotting evil against him (1Sam. 23:9). Therefore, David calls upon Abiathar the priest to determine via the ephod two hypothetical questions: will Saul come down to Keilah after David and will the men of Keilah hand David over to Saul rather than risk the wrath of the full Israelite army? Both of David's questions are answered in the affirmative (1Sam. 23:10–12). Since David leaves Keilah with his men, to hide out with his men in the hill country of the wilderness of Ziph, Saul gives up his attack on Keilah (1Sam. 23:13–14a). However, Saul continues to search out David (1Sam. 23:14b).

Saul apparently searches for David in the very area where David is hidden out; and Jonathan seizes this opportunity to come to David and to reassure him of their friendship and bond, as well as of David's inevitable future (1Sam. 23:15–18). Saul eventually returns to Gibeah, and the Ziphites come up to him to remind him that David is still in their vicinity, and they promise to surrender David over to him (1Sam. 23:19–20). At first, Saul wants reassurances from these Ziphites as to where David is exactly, and where his various haunts are; then he simply saddles up and heads out in that direction (1Sam. 23:21–25). Just as Saul is closing in on David—he apparently does not realize just how close he is to catching David—he is told that the Philistines had made another raid on the land, and that his military might is needed elsewhere (1Sam. 23:26–27). So Saul leaves off chasing David and David stays in the strongholds of Engedi (1Sam. 23:28–29).

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## David Delivers Keilah

Slavishly literal:

**And so they make know to David to say, "Behold, Philistines are warring in Keilah and they are plundering the threshing floors."**

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Moderately literal:

**They then told David, saying, "Listen, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah and they are plundering [their] threshing floors."**

**They then told David, Saying, "Listen, the Philistines are at war with Keilah and they are plundering their threshing floors."**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text

And so they make know to David to say, "Behold, Philistines are warring in Keilah and they are plundering the threshing floors."

Septuagint

And it was told David, saying, "Listen, the Philistines war in Keila, and they rob, they trample on the threshing floors."

## Significant differences

**Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:**

CEV	One day some people told David, "The Philistines keep attacking the town of Keilah and stealing grain from the threshing place."
NAB	David received information that the Philistines were attacking Keilah and plundering the threshing floors.
NLT	One day news came to David that the Philistines were at Keilah stealing grain from the threshing floors.
REB	The Philistines had launched an assault on Keilah and were plundering the threshing-floors.
TEV	David heard that the Philistines were attacking the town of Keilah and were stealing the newly harvested grain.

**Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

God's Word™	David was asked, "Did you know that the Philistines are fighting against Keilah? They are robbing the threshing floors."
JPS (Tanakh)	David was told: "The Philistines are raiding Keilah and plundering the threshing floors."

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

NASB	Then they told David, saying, "Behold, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah, and are plundering the threshing floors."
Young's Updated LT	And they declare to David, saying, "Lo, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah, and they are spoiling the threshing floors."

**What is the gist of this verse?** For whatever reason, someone comes to David and tells him that the Philistines have attacked Keilah and they are stealing their produce.

1Samuel 23:1a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa or va (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâgad (נִגַּד) [pronounced <i>naw-GAHD</i> ]	<i>to make conspicuous, to make known, to expound, to explain, to declare, to inform, to confess, to make it pitifully obvious that</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #5046 BDB #616
lâmed (לְ) (pronounced <i>lê</i> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
Dâvid (דָּוִד); also Dâvîyd (דָּוִיִּד) [pronounced <i>daw-VEED</i> ]	<i>beloved and is transliterated David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187
lâmed (לְ) (pronounced <i>lê</i> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510

## 1 Samuel 23:1a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾāmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MARH]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #559 BDB #55
hinnēh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced hin-NAY]	<i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, pay attention, get this, check this out</i>	interjection, demonstrative particle	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243
P <sup>e</sup> lish <sup>t</sup> iy (פְּלִשְׁתִּי) [pronounced p <sup>e</sup> -lish-TEE]	transliterated <i>Philistines</i>	masculine plural gentilic adjective (acts like a proper noun)	Strong's #6430 BDB #814
lācham (לָחַם) [pronounced law-KHAHM]	<i>engage in battle, engage in war, to wage war; to fight, to battle</i>	masculine plural, Niphal participle	Strong's #3898 BDB #535
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
q <sup>e</sup> r'iy <sup>l</sup> āh (קִרְיָאֵה) [pronounced k <sup>e</sup> -gee-LAW]	<i>an inclosing, a citadel (this is uncertain); transliterated Keilah</i>	Masculine proper noun	Strong's #7084 BDB #890

**Translation:** They then told David, saying, “Listen, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah... As these chapters progress, David thinks less and less about his own problems and more and more about the problems of others. He also inquires of God as to what he should do, something which was completely absent from 1Sam. 21 (although this could merit some disagreement; see 1Sam. 22:9–10.

Keilah is maybe 5 miles south of Adullam and is almost directly between Gath and Ziph (it's slightly closer to Gath), on the southeast diagonal which runs between those two cities. It is found in the Shephelah, in the lowlands of Judah, not far from the ever-changing Israel-Philistine border. Keilah is only mentioned in three different contexts in Scripture: (1) as a city given to Judah (Joshua 15:44); (2) as a city under siege (1Sam. 23:1–13); and as a city which was later repopulated by the Jews who returned from captivity (Neh. 3:17–18). We also find Keilah mentioned in the Amarna Letters as Qilti, as an Egyptian base, in letters from the princes of Jerusalem and Hebron, each complaining of the other's occupation of Keilah at different times.<sup>1</sup> What is unusual is, Keilah is a fortified city (1Sam. 23:7); so an unprovoked attack like this was rather daring. However, the winnowing and storage of the grain would probably have been outside the city walls; therefore, the Philistines did not attack the walled city itself, but they attacked the Israelite granaries instead—they were simply interested in the produce of the Israelites.

When some thieves break into houses or into vehicles, what they end up stealing sometimes barely justifies the number of hours that they put into the actual planning, stealing and fencing. However, it is in their nature to steal, rather than to hold down a proper job which would pay them the same amount. The Philistines had an army of men who were well able to plant and to harvest; however, they felt that they could simply use their force to take what others had planted and harvested. They saw that as their proper vocation. They behaved exactly as a street thug would, except that they were more like a huge gang of street thugs.

<sup>1</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; Merrill Tenney, ed., Zondervan Publishing House, ©1976; Vol. 3, p. 781.

Recall that we do not know exactly where David is. One possibility is that he was at the famous Masada, which is directly across a peninsula which leads into Moab, where his parents were. Gad the prophet had told David to move from there (which is far eastern Judah) to Judah (or, as we have discussed, to make himself more visible in Judah). It is possible that David moved closer to Keilah—he went to the forest of Hereth, which location is unknown to us (1Sam. 22:5). Logically, we would assume that David is now much closer to Keilah than before, in a place where someone might come to him and inform him that Keilah had been attacked (he was too far away and too remote in Masada for such information to come to him).

We don't know exactly in what context this information was brought to David. There were no newspapers in those days, and it was possible that a runner (or several runners) were spreading this information. Some men may have come to David, knowing that he had a small army nearby. Had David still been in Masada (if that is where he was), he would have been too far for someone to have come to notify him of this news. Had he moved considerably northwest, that would have placed him closer to Keilah than Saul was. Now, if someone had come to David in hopes of enlisting his aide, this would explain David's immediate reaction ("Should I go and help these people?"). Furthermore, since David was a famous military figure (1Sam. 21:11), then we should expect men to come to him for help.

### 1Samuel 23:1b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hêmmâh (הֵמָּה) [pronounced <i>haym-mawh</i> ]	<i>they, these</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural personal pronoun	Strong's #1992 BDB #241
shâçâh (שָׁחָה) [pronounced <i>shaw-SAW</i> ]	<i>to plunder, to spoil, to pillage, to loot during war</i>	masculine plural, Qal active participle	Strong's #8154 BDB #1042
êth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i> ]	generally untranslated	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
gôren (גֹּרֵן) [pronounced <i>GOH-ren</i> ]	<i>threshing floor</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #1637 BDB #175

**Translation:** *...and they are plundering [their] threshing floors.*" The Philistines realized that Israel's greatest soldier, David, was no longer functioning as an officer-soldier for Saul (see 1Sam. 21:10–15), so they felt as though they could no attack Israel with impunity. After all, the Philistines could either grow their own crops or they could wait for the Israelites to grow and harvest these crops and simply steal them. Such activity was not unusual in the ancient world (compare Judges 6:11). Sometimes such an attack would result in one country paying another tribute, which would include a portion of their harvest.

According to Gnana Robinson (whose theological positions I don't subscribe to) tells us that the Philistines were known as sea-bandits, and that they raided numerous ships and cities along the seas for goods. Robinson claims *recent archaeological activity has revealed that it was they who destroyed the ancient city-states of Ugarit and Ebla, who civilization had great influence on the history of early Israel.*<sup>2</sup> That the Philistines also stole from nearby cities would be in character.

<sup>2</sup> Gnana Robinson, *1 & 2 Samuel; Let Us Be Like the Nations*; International Theological Commentary; Eerdmans's Publishing Co., Grand rapids, ©1993; p. 128.

And so inquires David in Y<sup>e</sup>howah to say, “Should I go and strike the Philistines the these?”

And so says Y<sup>e</sup>howah unto David, “Go, strike in the Philistines and you have delivered Keilah.”

David then asked Jehovah, Should I go and fight against these Philistines?”

Jehovah answered him, saying, “Go and strike the Philistines and deliver Keilah.”

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23:2

David then inquired of Y<sup>e</sup>howah, saying, “Should I go and strike these Philistines?”

And Y<sup>e</sup>howah said to David, “Go [and] strike the Philistines and you will deliver Keilah.”

Here is how others have translated this verse:

**Ancient texts:**

Masoretic Text                      And so says Y<sup>e</sup>howah unto David, “Go, strike in the Philistines and you have delivered Keilah.”

Septuagint                              And David inquired of the Lord, saying, Should I go and strike these Philistines?” And the Lord said, “Go and you will strike these Philistines and you will save Keila.”

Significant differences              .

**Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:**

CEV    David asked the LORD, “Should I attack these Philistines?” “Yes,” the LORD answered. “Attack them and rescue Keilah.”

**Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

God’s Word™                              David asked the LORD, “Should I go and attack these Philistines?” “Go,” the LORD told David, “attack the Philistines, and save Keilah.”

JPS (Tanakh)                              David consulted the LORD, “Shall I go and attack those Philistines?” And the LORD said to David, “Go; attack the Philistines and you will save Keilah.”

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

NASB    So David inquired of the LORD, saying, “Shall I go and attack these Philistines?” And the LORD said to David, “Go and attack the Philistines, and deliver Keilah.”

Young’s Updated LT                      And David asks at Jehovah, saying, “Do I go? And have I struck among these Philistines?” And Jehovah says unto David, “Go, and you have struck among the Philistines, and saved Keilah.”

**What is the gist of this verse?** David asks God if he should defend Keilah from the marauding Philistines. God tells him yes.

1Samuel 23:2a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	and so, then	wāw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253

## 1Samuel 23:2a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shā`al (שׂאַל) [pronounced shaw-AHL]	<i>to ask, to petition, to request, to inquire; to demand; to question, to interrogate</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7592 BDB #981
Dâvid (דָּוִד); also Dâvîyd (דָּוִיִּד) [pronounced daw-VEED]	<i>beloved and is transliterated David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yohh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
lâmed (ל) (pronounced l <sup>e</sup> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
`amar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MARH]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #559 BDB #55
hă (הַ) [pronounced heh]	interrogative particle which acts almost like a piece of punctuation, like the upside-down question mark which begins a Spanish sentence. The verb <i>to be</i> may be implied.		Strong's #none BDB #209
hâlak <sup>e</sup> (הָלַךְ) [pronounced haw-LAHK <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
nâkâh (נָכַח) [pronounced naw-KAWH]	<i>to smite, to assault, to hit, to strike, to strike [something or someone] down, to defeat</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Hiphil perfect	Strong #5221 BDB #645
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
P <sup>e</sup> lish <sup>e</sup> tîy (פְּלִשְׁתִּי) [pronounced p <sup>e</sup> -lish-TEE]	transliterated <i>Philistines</i>	masculine plural gentilic adjective (acts like a proper noun) with the definite article	Strong's #6430 BDB #814
`elleh (אֵלֶּה) [pronounced KEHLleh]	<i>these, these things</i>	demonstrative plural adjective with the definite article	Strong's #428 BDB #41



**Translation:** David then inquired of Y<sup>e</sup>howah, saying, “Should I go and strike these Philistines?” David is placed in a moderately awkward position here. He had just gone to the Philistines for deliverance from Saul, and now they are attacking Israel. However, if David understands the consequences of his actions correctly, he will realize that he is the cause of this. The Philistines are striking Israel because they do not fear David—as far as they are concerned, David has gone a little bonkers on them and is no longer a threat.

What is important is that David now looks to God for guidance. David recently moved into Judah, taking a more identifiable position (except to Saul) as per Gad’s guidance (1Sam. 22:5). We are not given the nuts and bolts of this, but originally, I suspected that David is inquiring through Abiathar utilizing the ephod, as one often would use the ephod to answer a *yes or no* question. This is because Abiathar is said to have come to David in 1Sam. 22:20–21. However, that was properly stated with the context of 1Sam. 22. In this chapter, we are given the actual time frame that Abiathar came to David—he came to David *after* David was *already* in Keilah (1Sam. 23:6). Therefore, David would have asked Gad. Now, bear in mind that we have no indication that Gad is traveling with David or continues to travel with David; and we won’t hear from Gad again until 2Sam. 24:11, which is way off into the future. However, Gad would be the most reasonable person for David to have inquired God through. The key to the timing of Abiathar’s arrival is in the Hebrew of v. 6, which we will cover when I exegete that verse. However, regardless of what any expositor says,<sup>3</sup> Abiathar will not be with David until David actually goes to Keilah.

### 1Samuel 23:2b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MARH</i> ]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong’s #559 BDB #55
YHWH (יְהוָה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i> ]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong’s #3068 BDB #217
ʾel (אֶל) [pronounced <i>el</i> ]	<i>unto, in, into, toward, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong’s #413 BDB #39
Dâvid (דָּוִד); also Dâvîyd (דָּוִיִד) [pronounced <i>daw-VEED</i> ]	<i>beloved and is transliterated David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong’s #1732 BDB #187
hâlak <sup>e</sup> (הָלַךְ) [pronounced <i>haw-LAHK<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>go, come, depart, walk; advance</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperative	Strong’s #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
nâkâh (נָכַח) [pronounced <i>naw-KAWH</i> ]	<i>to smite, to assault, to hit, to strike, to strike [something or someone] down, to defeat</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil imperative	Strong #5221 BDB #645

<sup>3</sup> Quite a number of expositors mistakenly put David’s question to Abiathar: Keil and Delitzsch, Clarke, Kimchi and Abarbinel. Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; Dr. John Gill, *John Gill’s Exposition of the Entire Bible*; both courtesy of e-Sword; 1Sam. 23:2. And Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; 1Sam. 23:2, 3–6. It was Gill that set me straight here.



## 1Samuel 23:2b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
P <sup>e</sup> lish <sup>e</sup> tîy (יְתִישְׁתִּי) [pronounced p <sup>e</sup> -lish-TEE]	transliterated <i>Philistines</i>	masculine plural gentilic adjective (acts like a proper noun) with the definite article	Strong's #6430 BDB #814

**Translation:** And Y<sup>e</sup>howah said to David, "Go [and] strike the Philistines... God gives David and order and then also tells him the result. The order is for David to pick up and go and to strike these Philistines. If David had inquired of God through Abiathar, then either the left or right stone would have lit up or done something to indicate an affirmative answer to David's question. However, when he asks Gad the prophet for guidance, Gad gives David God's will in full sentences.

## 1Samuel 23:2c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
yâsha <sup>h</sup> (יַשֵּׂה) [pronounced yaw-SHAHQ]	<i>to deliver, to save</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil perfect	Strong's #3467 BDB #446
êth (אֵת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
q <sup>e</sup> rîylâh (קֵרְיֵלָה) [pronounced k <sup>e</sup> -gee-LAW]	<i>an inclosing, a citadel</i> (this is uncertain); transliterated <i>Keilah</i>	Masculine proper noun	Strong's #7084 BDB #890

**Translation:** ...and you will deliver Keilah." The result is that David will deliver Keilah. David is told not only to attack the Philistines, but he is told that he will be victorious as well. Besides this association with Gad, another way that David will know that he is in the will of God is, once he settles into Keilah for a short time (which would only occur because he goes to Keilah to deliver the people there), then Abiathar, the only remaining priest from the line of Ithamar, comes to him. If anything is a sign, that is.

Now recall, these men with whom David has allied himself are not professional soldiers; if anything, they are professional malcontents. They don't mind airing their own grievances, but they don't see themselves as the kind of men who go around and rescue others. They will tell David this in no uncertain terms.

And so say men of David unto him, “Behold we here in Judah are afraid; and in fact for we go [to] Keilah unto ranks of Philistine.”

1Samuel  
23:3

Then David’s men said to him, “Listen, we are afraid [being] here in Judah; how much more [will we be afraid if] we go [to] Keilah against the ranks of the Philistines.”

Then David’s men said to him, “Listen, we live in fear just being here in Judah. We are going to be even more afraid if we go to Keilah to face the army of Philistines.”

Here is how others have translated this verse:

**Ancient texts:**

Masoretic Text	And so say men of David unto him, “Behold we here in Judah are afraid; and in fact for we go [to] Keilah unto ranks of Philistine.”
Septuagint	And the men of David said to him, “Listen, we are afraid here in Judæ; and how will it be if we go to Keilah? Should we go after the spoils of the Philistines?”

Significant differences .

**Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:**

CEV	But David's men said, “Look, even here in Judah we're afraid of the Philistines. We will be terrified if we try to fight them at Keilah!”
NLT	But David’s men said, “We’re afraid even here in Judah. We certainly don’t want to go to Keilah to fight the whole Philistine army!”
REB	But David’s men said to him, ‘Here in Judah we are afraid. How much worse if we challenge the Philistine forces at Keilah!’

**Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

God’s Word™	David's men told him, “We're afraid of staying here in Judah. How much more afraid do you think we'll be if we go to Keilah against the Philistine army?”
JPS (Tanakh)	But David’s men said to him, “Look, we are afraid here in Judah, how much more if we go to Keilah against the forces of the Philistines!”

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

NASB	But David’s men said to him, “Behold, we are afraid here in Judah. How much more then if we go to Keilah against the ranks of the Philistines?”
Young’s Updated LT	And David's men say unto him, “Lo, we here in Judah are afraid; and how much more when we go to Keilah, unto the ranks of the Philistines?”

**What is the gist of this verse?** David’s men protest against this idea of going to Keilah to challenge the Philistines. Their reasoning is simple: if they are already afraid just being in Judah (a move mandated by God), then they are going to be all the more afraid to face the Philistines.

1Samuel 23:3a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
wa (or va) (1) [pronounced wah]	and so, then	wâw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253

## 1Samuel 23:3a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾāmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MARH]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
ʾīysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced eesh]	<i>men; inhabitants, citizens; companions, soldiers, companions</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #376 BDB #35
Dâvid (דָּוִד); also Dâvîyd (דָּוִיִּד) [pronounced daw-VEED]	<i>beloved and is transliterated David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187
ʾel (אֶל) [pronounced el]	<i>unto, in, into, toward, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39
hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced hin-NAY]	<i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, pay attention, get this, check this out</i>	interjection, demonstrative particle	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243
ʾānach <sup>e</sup> nûw (אֲנַחְנוּ) [pronounced uh-NAHKH-noo]	<i>we</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person plural pronoun	Strong's #587 BDB #59
pôh (פֹּה) [pronounced poe]	<i>here</i>	adverb	Strong's #6311 BDB #805
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
Y <sup>e</sup> hûwdâh (יְהוּדָה) [pronounced y <sup>eh</sup> hoo-DAW]	<i>possibly means to praise, to be praised; and is transliterated Judah</i>	masculine proper noun/location	Strong's #3063 BDB #397
yârê <sup>ʾ</sup> (יָרֵא) [pronounced yaw-RAY]	<i>to fear, to fear-respect, to reverence, to have a reverential respect</i>	masculine plural, Qal active participle	Strong's #3372 BDB #431

**Translation:** Then David's men said to him, "Listen, we are afraid [being] here in Judah;... God has already told David what he must do. This is not a simple matter of saying, "Okay, boys, saddle up; we're headin' out to face them Philistines." David was with a group of misfits; certainly, there may have been some in his group who were unfairly persecuted; however, for the most part, these are outlaws, malcontents, tax evaders, and anti-establishment types. They do not so much stand with David as stand against Saul and the state of Israel. It is not simply a matter of standing by their conscience; they would probably be the same group of guys no matter who is in power. Like David had been, these are self-serving men who have banded for their mutual protection. However, the idea of doing anything altruistic is not within the realm of their thinking. So, when David says, "Okay, men, saddle up and let's ride to Keilah," they respond with "Hey, we're afraid just hanging out where we are. We don't need to increase our fear by getting involved with the people of Keilah." They had good reason to fear; they

were persona non grata already, and they were even more so in hanging out with David. For all they knew, Saul had posted a heavy reward for delivering David and his men, dead or alive. So, in Judah, the plan was to hide out, not to make themselves conspicuous.

### 1 Samuel 23:3b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʾaph (אֲפֹ) [pronounced <i>ah</i> ]	<i>in fact, furthermore, also, yea, even, indeed</i>	conjunction	Strong's #637 BDB #64
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced <i>kee</i> ]	<i>when, that, for, because</i>	conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
Together, these two conjunctions mean <i>in fact, more than; but also; but even; much more; how much more</i> [when an affirmation precedes]; <i>how much less</i> [when a negation precedes]. <sup>4</sup>			
hâlak <sup>e</sup> (הָלַךְ) [pronounced <i>haw-LAHK<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
q <sup>e</sup> rîylâh (קִרְיָלָה) [pronounced <i>k<sup>e</sup>-gēe-LAW</i> ]	<i>an inclosing, a citadel</i> (this is uncertain); transliterated <i>Keilah</i>	Masculine proper noun	Strong's #7084 BDB #890
ʾel (אֶל) [pronounced <i>el</i> ]	<i>unto, in, into, toward, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
maʿārekeh (מַעְרֶכֶה) [pronounced <i>māh-gūh-reh-KEH</i> ]	<i>row, rank, battle line; this is also translated armies</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #4634 BDB #790
P <sup>e</sup> lish <sup>e</sup> tîy (פְּלִשְׁתִּים) [pronounced <i>p<sup>e</sup>-lish-TEE</i> ]	transliterated <i>Philistines</i>	masculine plural gentilic adjective (acts like a proper noun)	Strong's #6430 BDB #814

In the Septuagint, David's men ask (instead): "Should we go after the spoils of the Philistines?" The Hebrew seems to be more in keeping with the tenor of their questions.

**Translation:** ...how much more [will we be afraid if] we go [to] Keilah against the ranks of the Philistines." These men continue their line of reasoning with David: "If we are afraid now simply by living in Judah, how much more are we going to be afraid if we go to Keilah and attack the Philistines?" The presumed result of attacking the Philistines was two-fold: (1) the Philistines would kill them, as the Philistines are a trained fighting force and they are a rag tag outfit of misfits. (2) Once the Philistines got through with killing them, Saul would know where they are and he would come and finish the job. As Gill put it, these men would be voluntarily placing themselves between two fires, which, from the standpoint of human viewpoint, is a stupid thing to do.

**Application:** One has to be careful here. There are some who read something like this, and decide that, *if they think God is telling them to do something, and if it's a stupid enough idea, then they should do it.* David has been told here, in no uncertain terms, to defend the city of Keilah. When God's will is unquestionable, you follow His

<sup>4</sup> H.W.F. Gesenius, *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament*; ©1979 by Baker Books; p. 69.

will despise what seems reasonable. However, if that still, small voice inside of you is telling you to buy that piece of jewelry, even though it will put you in debt for the next 5 years, you don't go ahead and do it, since it must be God's will. I spoke to a woman the other night, and she told me that whenever God told her to move, she moved. Always being interested in things like this, I asked how did God contact her. I wouldn't have asked, had I known that I would get a sermon on the 4 ways which God contacts us. However, one of the ways, is God speaks to her just as she and I spoke to one another. If God is speaking to you audibly, as you and I speak to one another, then you need anti-psychotic drugs. The number of people that God spoke audibly to in Scripture is a small percentage of those people mentioned in Scripture. The number of times that God spoke to these men was relatively few (Moses being an exception to this). My point in all of this is, *just because a particular choice is stupid and because you think God is leading you that way, that does not mean that it is God's will!* On the other hand, there are choices and opinions which run contrary to Scripture which are held by society in general. At the time that I write this, the majority of American society believes that homosexual actions are not wrong, that women should be in the pulpit, and that we got here through some form of evolution (even if it is theistic evolution). The correct stance on these matters comes from clear statements of Scripture, and we may take that stance, even though society may view us as ignorant. That is a far cry from choosing to do something stupid because you think God is telling you to do that.

**Application:** There is a lot of over-thinking in Christendom today when it comes to divine guidance. People get wrapped up in such inconsequential matters, such as, should I take a left turn or a right turn at the next intersection. Believers tend to focus on meaningless questions. Divine guidance, for the most part, is simple. You need to take in God's Word every day and you need to be in fellowship for a maximum amount of time. After that, there are a large number of mandates which help us to guide our lives. This lady that I spoke to, who speaks to God—I would bet that she has on several occasions, she has screwed her creditors. Now, it is a clear violation of Scripture to act dishonorably in the financial realm. You do not lie and cheat people in order to bilk them out of a few dollars. When you owe someone money, then you make arrangements to pay them what you owe them. If you have a credit record filled with debt that you have walked away from, then you don't need a new car; you don't need to move; you need to take responsibility for your actions and you need to pay your debts.

**Application:** If you have a credit report filled with R-9's and R-8's, then do not brag to someone about what a great Christian you are and how God speaks to you—especially if that person will have an opportunity to see your credit report. Don't give your testimony to someone who is going to also see your credit and find out that you are a liar and a cheat. God doesn't need that kind of testimony. Now, let's say that you have run into serious financial difficulty—even if it was your own fault—and you have paid off those R-9's and those R-8's; then you have some room to give your testimony to someone who will hold your credit report. "I messed up and I made a lot of bonehead mistakes; however, I was convinced by the Word of God that I should be an honest steward of His resources; therefore, even though I racked up several R-9's and R-8's, and that the accumulation of that debt was my fault, you can also see that I also paid these accounts down to zero." Now, that is a great Christian testimony. An unbeliever might hear that, and think, "Maybe this fellow is not the hypocrite I thought he was."

The word used with *the Philistines* is *ma'ārekeh*, which refers to the organized rows, the ranks, the battle line of Philistines. This is a reference to a highly trained military force. These men have enough sense to realize who they are up against. David is the man with the faith. His troops have no spiritual strength or orientation.

**And so adds again David to inquire in Y<sup>e</sup>howah and so answers him Y<sup>e</sup>howah and so He says,** 1Samuel  
**"Stand up, go down [to] Keilah and I am giving** 23:4  
**the Philistines into your hand."**

**So David again inquired of Y<sup>e</sup>howah, and Y<sup>e</sup>howah answered him, saying, "Arise [and] go down [to] Keilah and I will give the Philistines into your hand."**

**So David again inquired of Jehovah, and Jehovah answered him, "Arise and go down to Keilah and I will give the Philistines into your hand."**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

**Ancient texts:**

**Masoretic Text** And so adds again David to inquire in Y<sup>e</sup>howah and so answers him Y<sup>e</sup>howah and so He says, “Stand up, go down [to] Keilah and I am giving Philistines into your hand.”

**Septuagint** And David inquired yet again of the Lord; and the Lord answered him and said to him, “Arise and go down to Keila, for I will deliver the Philistines into your hands.”

**Significant differences** .

**Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:**

**CEV** David asked the LORD about it again. “Leave right now,” the LORD answered. “I will give you victory over the Philistines at Keilah.”

**NLT** So David asked the LORD again, and again the LORD replied, “Go down to Keilah, for I will help you conquer the Philistines.”

**REB** David consulted the LORD once again and got the answer, ‘Go down at once to Keilah; I shall give the Philistines into your hands.’

**Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

**God’s Word™** David asked the LORD again, and the LORD answered him. He said, “Go to Keilah. I’m giving you the power to defeat the Philistines.”

**JPS (Tanakh)** So David consulted the LORD again, and the LORD answered him, “March down at once to Keilah, for I am going to deliver the Philistines into your hands.”

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

**NASB** Then David inquired of the LORD once more. And the LORD answered him and said, “Arise, go down to Keilah, for I will give the Philistines into your hand.”

**Young’s Updated LT** And David adds again to ask at Jehovah, and Jehovah answers him, and says, “Rise, go down to Keilah, for I am giving the Philistines into your hand.”

**What is the gist of this verse?** David double-checks with God, and God again tells him to go to Keilah and promises David victory over the Philistines.

1Samuel 23:4a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253
yâçaph (וַיַּצֵּף) [pronounced yaw-SAHPH]	<i>to add, to augment, to continue to do a thing</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong’s #3254 BDB #414
‘ôwd (וַעֲדָ) [pronounced <i>ôhd</i> ]	<i>still, yet, again, besides, in addition to, even yet</i>	adverb	Strong’s #5750 BDB #728
Dâvid (דָּוִד); also Dâvîyd (דָּוִיִּד) [pronounced daw-VEED]	<i>beloved and is transliterated David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong’s #1732 BDB #187
lâmed (לְ) (pronounced <i>l</i> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition	No Strong’s # BDB #510



## 1Samuel 23:4a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shâ`al (שָׁאַל) [pronounced shaw-AHL]	<i>to ask, to petition, to request, to inquire; to demand; to question, to interrogate</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #7592 BDB #981
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yohh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217

**Translation:** [So David again inquired of Y<sup>e</sup>howah,...](#) David is not certain that he go this message right. He has suggested to his *troops* that they should go down to Keilah and they were unenthusiastic, and several offered reasonable arguments as to why they shouldn't face the Philistines. So, David, thinking that maybe he got the message wrong, inquires of God once again. Even though several exegetes<sup>5</sup> suggest that David asked God a second time simply for the benefit of his men, I believe that he was rechecking for himself. You cannot assume that David is at some spiritual pinnacle. In 1Sam. 21, David is a failure in many respects. However, in the following two chapters, David gets up off the ground, dusts himself off, and he moves ahead. He does not go from 0 to 100 in one chapter. It takes time for him to mature. If he were fully mature in the spiritual realm, God would kill Saul and make David king over Israel. However, it is not time for David because he has not matured enough for that responsibility. Therefore, there is nothing wrong that David double-checks God's orders for himself at this point in his spiritual life. We don't have to cover for him and say that he did this for his followers; nor do we have to look down on David for rechecking God's command here. His men gave him good reason why he should not defend Keilah. From human viewpoint, certainly their argument was certainly convincing.

As before, we are not given the exact mechanics and my educated guess would be that David again asked God through Gad.

## 1Samuel 23:4b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʿânâh (עָנָה) [pronounced gaw-NAWH]	<i>to answer, to respond; to speak loudly, to speak up [in a public forum]; to testify; to sing, to chant, to sing responsively</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #6030 BDB #772
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yohh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217

<sup>5</sup> Clarke, Gill and Wesley; Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; John Wesley; *Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible*; all from e-Sword, 1Sam. 23:4.



## 1Samuel 23:4b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MARH</i> ]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
qûwm (קוּם) [pronounced <i>koom</i> ]	<i>to stand, to rise up, to establish, to establish a vow, to cause a vow to stand, to confirm or to fulfill a vow</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperative	Strong's #6965 BDB #877
yârad (יָרַד) [pronounced <i>yaw-RAHD</i> ]	<i>descend, go down</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperative	Strong's #3381 BDB #432
q <sup>er</sup> iyâlâh (קַעֲיִלָּה) [pronounced <i>k<sup>e</sup>-gee-LAW</i> ]	<i>an inclosing, a citadel (this is uncertain); transliterated Keilah</i>	Masculine proper noun	Strong's #7084 BDB #890

**Translation:** ...and Y<sup>e</sup>howah answered him, saying, "Arise [and] go down [to] Keilah... We are not told exactly what occurred; whether this was an audible voice or whether there were impressions received by Gad (or even David), we are not told. However, it appears to be an audible voice. God again tells David to get up and go down to Keilah (which is somewhat a play on words).

## 1Samuel 23:4c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced <i>kee</i> ]	<i>when, that, for, because</i>	conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
ʾânîy (אֲנִי) [pronounced <i>aw-NEE</i> ]	<i>I, me; in answer to a question, it means I am, it is I</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #589 BDB #58
nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced <i>naw-THAHN</i> ]	<i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
ʾêth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i> ]	generally untranslated	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
P <sup>e</sup> lish <sup>e</sup> tîy (פְּלִשְׁתִּים) [pronounced <i>p<sup>e</sup>-lish-TEE</i> ]	transliterated <i>Philistines</i>	masculine plural gentilic adjective (acts like a proper noun)	Strong's #6430 BDB #814
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's # none BDB #88

## 1Samuel 23:4c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
yâd (יָד) [pronounced yawd]	generally translated <i>hand</i>	feminine singular noun with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3027 BDB #388

One early printed edition, the Septuagint and the Syriac have *hands* here instead.<sup>6</sup>

**Translation:** ...and I will give the Philistines into your hand.” Jehovah makes it clear to David that he will deliver the Philistines into his hand. This, David finds interesting, as he could not even get his men to follow him on the first try.

And so goes David and his men [to] Keilah and so he fights in the Philistines and so he leads their livestock and so he strikes in them a striking great and so delivers David inhabitants of Keilah.

1Samuel  
23:5

David and his soldiers went [to] Keilah and they [lit., he] fought against the Philistines. He led away their livestock and struck them [with] a great slaughter and David delivered the inhabitants of Keilah.

David and his soldiers went to Keilah and they fought against the Philistines. He slaughtered a huge number of Philistines and led away their cattle as plunder. And so David delivered the citizens of Keilah.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

##### Masoretic Text

And so goes David and his men [to] Keilah and so he fights in the Philistines and so he leads their livestock and so he strikes in them a striking great and so delivers David inhabitants of Keilah.

##### Septuagint

So David and his men with him went to Keila, and fought with the Philistines; and they fled from before him, and he carried off their cattle, and struck them with a great slaughter, and David rescued the inhabitants of Keila.

##### Significant differences

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#### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

##### CEV

David and his men went there and fiercely attacked the Philistines. They killed many of them, then led away their cattle, and rescued the people of Keilah.

##### NLT

So David and his men went to Keilah. They slaughtered the Philistines and took all their livestock and rescued the people of Keilah.

##### TEV

So David and his men went to Keilah and attacked the Philistines; they killed many of them and took their livestock. And so it was that David saved the town.

#### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

##### God's Word™

David and his men went to Keilah, fought the Philistines, drove off their livestock, and decisively defeated them. So David rescued the people who lived in Keilah.

<sup>6</sup> Joseph Bryant Rotherham's *The Emphasized Bible*; ©1971 by Kregel Publications; p. 312.

JPS (Tanakh) David and his men went to Keilah and fought against the Philistines; he drove off their cattle and inflicted a severe defeat on them. Thus David saved the inhabitants of Keilah.

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

NASB So David and his men went to Keilah and fought with the Philistines; and he led away their livestock and struck them with a great slaughter. Thus David delivered the inhabitants of Keilah.

Young's Updated LT And David goes, and his men, to Keilah, and fights with the Philistines, and leads away their cattle, and strikes among them—a great striking, and David saves the inhabitants of Keilah.

**What is the gist of this verse?** David leads his men to Keilah and the fight and defeat the Philistines, thus delivering Keilah. Furthermore, they plunder this army for their livestock.

1Samuel 23:5a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâlak <sup>e</sup> (הָלַךְ) [pronounced <i>haw-LAHK<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
Dâvid (דָּוִד); also Dâvîyd (דָּוִיִּד) [pronounced <i>daw-VEED</i> ]	<i>beloved and is transliterated David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וְ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʾîysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced <i>eesh</i> ]	<i>men; inhabitants, citizens; companions, soldiers, companions</i>	masculine plural noun with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #376 BDB #35
Rotherham informs us that this is written <i>man</i> but read <i>men</i> . The difference would be that a yodh is left out. Although Owen lists this as a plural in his English morphology, in the Hebrew of his text, it is singular. The fact that this is <i>read</i> men should indicate that for centuries even prior to the MT this was taken to be plural.			
q <sup>e</sup> r ʾîylâh (קְרַעֲיִלָּה) [pronounced <i>k<sup>e</sup>-gee-LAW</i> ]	<i>an inclosing, a citadel (this is uncertain); transliterated Keilah</i>	Masculine proper noun	Strong's #7084 BDB #890

**Translation:** David and his soldiers went [to] Keilah... David's first lesson was that he was the leader of this rag-tag group of malcontents. He did not need to discuss what his plans were, or put these things to a vote. He gave the order, and saddled up and took off. These men chose to follow him. David was a leader, which is part of what he had to learn, and what the people of Israel needed to see.

## 1Samuel 23:5b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
lâcham (לָחַם) [pronounced <i>law-KHAHM</i> ]	<i>engage in battle, engage in war, to wage war; to fight, to battle</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #3898 BDB #535
Even though this war was fought with David and his soldiers, all of the verbs here are found in the singular. It was common in the Hebrew to speak of a war effort in terms of the one leading that effort.			
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
P <sup>e</sup> lish <sup>tîy</sup> (פְּלִשְׁתִּי) [pronounced <i>p<sup>e</sup>-lish-TEE</i> ]	transliterated <i>Philistines</i>	masculine plural gentilic adjective (acts like a proper noun) with the definite article	Strong's #6430 BDB #814

**Translation:** ...and they [lit., he] fought against the Philistines. As mentioned, in the Hebrew, often a singular verb is used in a war effort, even though the entire army was involved. The idea is that there would have been no defense of the people of Keilah without David. It is his personal choice to lead his men against the Philistines. We already know that, had this been left up to them, then they would have passed on the notion of attacking the Philistines. Part of what a true leader does is inspire those under him to do greater things than they believe that they can do.

## 1Samuel 23:5c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâhag (נָהַג) [pronounced <i>naw-HAHG</i> ]	<i>to bring, to lead, to urge on a course, to drive [animals] along, to drive away, to lead away [as a captive]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5090 BDB #624
êth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i> ]	generally untranslated	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
mîq <sup>neh</sup> (מִקְנֵה) [pronounced <i>mik-NEH</i> ]	<i>cattle, livestock (specifically sheep, cows and goats)</i>	Masculine plural noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #4735 BDB #889

**Translation:** He led away their livestock... God did not put these Philistines or their possessions under the ban, so to speak, so that whatever David's men wanted, they could take. The reason that these Philistines had livestock is that was their lunch wagon that traveled with them. The wives of these soldiers didn't give them

several packages of dried food; the soldiers traveled with a moving meal wagon—their livestock. We recall that David was hungry and this indicates that God knew and God would have taken care of that problem.

1Samuel 23:5d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâkâh (נָכַח) [pronounced <i>naw-KAWH</i> ]	<i>to smite, to assault, to hit, to strike, to strike [something or someone] down, to defeat</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong #5221 BDB #645
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural suffix	Strong's# none BDB #88
makkâh (מַכָּה) [pronounced <i>mahk-KAW</i> ]	<i>a blow, a wounding, a wound, a slaughter, a beating, a scourging</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #4347 BDB #646
gâdôwl (גָּדוֹל) [pronounced <i>gaw-DOHL</i> ]	<i>great in quantity, great in magnitude and extent, mighty, vast, unyielding, immutable, significant, astonishing</i>	masculine singular adjective with a definite article (it functions as a substantive here)	Strong's #1419 BDB #152

**Translation:** ...and struck them [with] a great slaughter... In the English, this phrase would have been given first. The previous phrase was a result of this great slaughter. Because David killed most or all of his enemies, he was able to take from them their possessions, which was their livestock.

1Samuel 23:5e			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâsha' (יָשָׁע) [pronounced <i>yaw-SHAHÇ</i> ]	<i>to deliver, to save</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #3467 BDB #446
Dâvid (דָּוִד); also Dâvîyd (דָּוִיִּד) [pronounced <i>daw-VEED</i> ]	<i>beloved and is transliterated David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187
êth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i> ]	generally untranslated	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84

## 1Samuel 23:5e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
yâshab (יָשַׁב) [pronounced yaw-SHAH <sup>B</sup> V]	<i>those inhabiting, those staying, those dwelling in, the inhabitants of, the ones dwelling in, dwellers of, those sitting [here], the ones sitting</i>	masculine plural, Qal active participle, construct form	Strong's #3427 BDB #442
q <sup>er</sup> îylâh (קִיְלָאֵה) [pronounced k <sup>e</sup> -gee-LAW]	<i>an inclosing, a citadel (this is uncertain); transliterated Keilah</i>	Masculine proper noun	Strong's #7084 BDB #890

**Translation:** ...and David delivered the inhabitants of Keilah. This was the most important factor of David's action—he delivered the people of Keilah. The Philistines thought that they could attack the nearby cities of Judah and David made it clear that they could not. David's actions will garner for him important grass roots support. Recall that the main reason that the people of Israel wanted a king was so that he could protect them from outside forces. It is obvious that Saul is too obsessed by David to do what the people wanted him to do. David, even though he is on the run and even though his life is in danger, still he looks after the people of Israel.

**And so he is in a fleeing Abiathar a son of Ahimelech unto David [in] Keilah; an ephod he came down in his hand.**

1Samuel  
23:6

**It was when Abiathar ben Ahimelech fled to David [in] Keilah [that] he came down [with] the ephod in his possession [lit., in his hand].**

**When Abiathar fled to David in Keilah, he had the ephod in his possession.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	And so he is in a fleeing Abiathar a son of Ahimelech unto David [in] Keilah; an ephod he came down in his hand.
Septuagint	And it came to pass when Abiathar the son of Achimelech fled to David, that he went down with David to Keila, having an ephod in his hand.

Significant differences .

#### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	Meanwhile, Saul heard that David was in Keilah. "God has let me catch David," Saul said. "David is trapped inside a walled town where the gates can be locked." Saul decided to go there and surround the town, in order to trap David and his men. He sent messengers who told the towns and villages, "Send men to serve in Saul's army!" By this time, Abiathar had joined David in Keilah and had brought along everything he needed to get answers from God. [vv. 6–8]
NLT	Abiathar the priest went to Keilah with David, taking the ephod with him to get answers for David from the LORD.

#### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™	When Ahimelech's son Abiathar fled to David at Keilah, Abiathar brought a priestly ephod with him.
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JPS (Tanakh) When Abiathar son of Ahimelech fled to David at Keilah, he brought down an ephod with him.

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

*The Amplified Bible* When Abiathar son of Ahimelech fled to David at Keilah, he came with an ephod in his hand.

*Updated Emphasized Bible* Now it came to pass <when Abiathar son of Ahimelech, fled to David at Keilah> that he came down with ||an ephod|| in his hand.

NASB Now it came about, when Abiathar the son of Ahimelech fled to David at Keilah, that he came down with an ephod in his hand.

*Young's Updated LT* And it comes to pass, in the fleeing of Abiathar son of Ahimelech unto David, to Keilah, an ephod came down in his hand.

**What is the gist of this verse?** Abiathar came to David with the ephod while David was in Keilah.

You should note immediately the disparity between the literal renderings of this verse and those translations which are less than literal. In the less than literal renderings, most of them have Abiathar coming to David first, and then going down to Keilah with David. However, in the Hebrew, Abiathar comes down to David while David is in Keilah. There is no contradiction here when following the more literal understanding of this verse. Although it appears to us that 1Sam. 22:20–23 occurred prior to this chapter in time, it did not. That portion of 1Sam. 22 occurred *after* David had saved Keilah. However, it was included with chapter 22 because thematically, it belonged there. David's guidance, therefore, came through the prophet Gad.

## 1Samuel 23:6a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i> ]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
bârach (בָּרַח) [pronounced <i>baw-RAHKH</i> ]	<i>to go through, to flee</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #1272 BDB #137
The infinitive construct, when combined with the bêyth preposition, can often take on a temporal meaning and may be rendered <i>when [such and such happens]</i> . It can serve as a temporal marker that denotes an event which occurs simultaneously with the action of the main verb.			
ʿeb <sup>e</sup> yâthâr (אֲבִי־תָר) [pronounced <i>eb<sup>e</sup>-yâw-THAWR</i> ]	<i>the Great One is father; my father is great; transliterated Abiathar</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #54 BDB #5
bên (בֶּן) [pronounced <i>bane</i> ]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119



### 1Samuel 23:6a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾăchîymelek <sup>e</sup> (אָחִימֶלֶךְ) [pronounced <i>uh-khee-MEH-lek</i> ]	<i>brother of Melek or brother of a king and is transliterated Ahimelech</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #288 BDB #27
ʾel (עַל) [pronounced <i>el</i> ]	<i>unto, in, into, toward, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
Dâvid (דָּוִד); also Dâvîyd (דָּוִיִּד) [pronounced <i>daw-VEED</i> ]	<i>beloved and is transliterated David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187
q <sup>e</sup> ʾîylâh (קֵעֵי־לָא) [pronounced <i>k<sup>e</sup>-gee-LAW</i> ]	<i>an inclosing, a citadel (this is uncertain); transliterated Keilah</i>	Masculine proper noun	Strong's #7084 BDB #890

**Translation:** *It was when Abiathar ben Ahimelech fled to David [in] Keilah...* This actually helps us to better iron out some minor details. First of all, we must be clear that the writing of the Hebrews is more topical than chronological. Therefore, when Saul killed all of the priests and Abiathar escaped, fleeing to David, that was all related topically; however, that does not mean that it all occurred prior to David's deliverance of Keilah. What appears to be the case is that these were simultaneous events. While Saul was taking his army to destroy the citizens of Nob, David finds out about the attack of the Philistines on Keilah. While Saul kills the men, women and children of Nob, Abiathar escapes to David after David has delivered the people of Keilah from the Philistines. This tells us that David did not consult Abiathar prior to delivering Keilah, as Abiathar came to David at Keilah and he carried the ephod with him. This indicates that there must have been an alternate method for David to ascertain God's will with regards to Keilah, which logically, then, points to Gad (from 1Sam. 22:5).

An alternate understanding would be that Abiathar guided David to save Keilah, but remained behind and traveled there after the fight. However, the problem with that is that Abiathar would not necessarily be fleeing. Also, this seems to contradict what David 1Sam. 22:23 ("*Stay with me, don't be afraid*"). Under this scenario, however, Abiathar could have come to David first, given him guidance, and then decided to remain where he was while David and his men attacked the Philistines in Keilah. For whatever reason, Abiathar did not feel safe, and he fled to Keilah, where David was, and David then told him to remain with him (1Sam. 22:23). Obviously, although this is a possibility, it chops up the end of 1Sam. 22 several times and scatters those pieces into 1Sam. 23.

In any case, 1Sam. 23 does not simply follow 1Sam. 22 chronologically. Both chapters are topical, presenting their related events in chronological order. The first scenario which I suggested—that Abiathar comes to David after David defeats the Philistines at Keilah, seems to make the most sense and is the least convoluted way of dealing with the overlapping of the two chapters. To help with this, let me place the actions of Saul and David side-by-side:

A Simultaneous Time Line for David and Saul	
David	Saul
David leaves Gath for the Cave of Adullam. His family comes to him there, along with everyone else who is in distress (1Sam. 22:1–2).	Saul is either stewing in Gibeah because of David's freedom and Jonathan's alliance with David; or he has his army out looking for David.
David takes his family (and probably his 400 followers)	

## A Simultaneous Time Line for David and Saul

David	Saul
to Moab (or, at least to the edge of Judah near the peninsula which leads to Moab). David secures a safe haven for his parents with the king of Moab, and returns to the eastern edge of Judah, the stronghold (also known as Masada—1Sam. 22:3–4).*	
Gad tells David that God’s instructions are for him to move to a more visible place in Judah. If David is in Masada (far east Judah) or at the cave of Adullam (far west Judah), Gad is telling David to move to a more populated area in Judah. If David is in Moab, or in Gad (or on the border between each), then Gad simply tells David to go to Judah. 1Sam. 22:5	Saul hears that David is somewhere in Judah. Given where this is mentioned, this suggests that Saul gains this information after Gad tells David to move to Judah (1Sam. 22:6).
David finds out, now that he is in more central Judah, that Keilah, a Jewish settlement, had been attacked by the Philistines. Gad tells David to go and deliver Keilah.† Although David meets with some resistance from his men, he goes to Keilah and defeats the Philistines. 1Sam. 23:1–5	Saul gathers many of his followers in Gibeah and demands to know where David is hiding. It is very possible that none of them know, as these are primarily Benjamites (1Sam. 22:7). Finally, Doeg speaks up, telling Saul that he last saw David in Nob, getting guidance, bread and a sword from Ahimelech, the priest at Nob (1Sam. 22:9–10, which looks back to 1Sam. 21:1–9).  Saul first gathers the priests from Nob to him in Gibeah, and directs Doeg to slaughter them. Then Saul takes his soldiers to Nob and they kill every man woman and child in Nob and destroy all of their livestock. 1Sam. 23:11–19.
Abiathar ben Ahimelech comes to David after David has delivered Keilah. David recognizes his own failure with respect to the priests of Nob and offers Abiathar refuge with him. This event obviously immediately follows the event on the right. 1Sam. 22:20–23 23:6	Abiathar ben Ahimelech escapes this great slaughter. Although several scenarios may be supposed, I suspect that when the army of Saul came to Nob, Abiathar was hiding in the Tabernacle of God, where Saul’s army did not go out of fear and because they had already killed all the priests. 1Sam. 22:20
David remains in Keilah for awhile after defeating the Philistines. He finds out through Abiathar that the population of Keilah will not return David’s loyalty. 1Sam. 23:8–12	Saul hears that David is in Keilah and apparently goes to Keilah after David has escaped (1Sam. 23:7—it is unclear whether Saul went all the way to Keilah or not, or what happened when he went there).

\* There are two alternative views: (1) David stayed in a *stronghold* on the border of Moab; or (2) David returned to the cave of Adullam. This means that he probably went around the northern end of the Dead Sea to get to Moab in both of these alternative scenarios. If David stayed at Masada, in the eastern mountains of Judah, then he would have taken his parents to the king of Moab by boat.

† This is a supposition on my part that Gad guides David at this point, as we only find Gad’s name back in 1Sam. 22:5. If the guidance comes from Abiathar (which would complicate this parallel history considerably), we have the problem with the lengthy answers which David receives (Abiathar could tell David *yes or no* and he could tell David *which tribe*). Although God can speak to David directly, I don’t know that God ever does speak to David directly.

This is not the last time that we will have to set up a parallel time line; there will be several events which follow which are not altogether in chronological order.

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### 1Samuel 23:6b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿêphôwd (אֶפֹּוֹד) [pronounced ay-FÖHD]	is transliterated <i>ephod</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #646 BDB #65
yârad (יָרַד) [pronounced yaw-RAHD]	<i>to descend, to go down</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #3381 BDB #432
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
yâd (יָד) [pronounced yawd]	generally translated <i>hand</i>	feminine singular noun with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3027 BDB #388

**Translation:** ...[that] he came down [with] the ephod in his possession [lit., in his hand]. This is our biggest point of difficulty—if Abiathar comes down to David for the first time in Keilah, then how did David receive divine guidance prior to this point in time? How did he know that God required him to deliver Keilah? We are aware that God did speak to man directly and that He also spoke to man in his dreams. Therefore, there were other ways for God to guide David. However, we are also told that David asked God a second time, “Now, are You sure about this Keilah thing? My men have already poo-pooed the idea.” The simple solution, again, is that Gad the prophet provided David this guidance.

You will note the wording of v. 6b: Abiathar comes to David with *the ephod in his hand*. He is not wearing the ephod, as only the High Priest wears the ephod. He is aware that Saul had killed all of the priests, including his father. However, Abiathar does not put on the ephod and come to David as the new High Priest. He is shaken up; the full impact of having his father killed by Saul not having sunk in yet (Saul murdered all of Abiathar's family). It probably does not even dawn on him that he is the new High Priest; or, if it does, it is something that he does not really think about, given the shock of all that has happened. In all likelihood, Abiathar knew that the Ephod is of great spiritual import and it was under his father's care, so he grabbed it for both spiritual and emotional reasons. When his father went to Saul, along with all of the other priests, he probably placed his son in charge of the Tabernacle and this most famous artifact of the Tabernacle. Of all that was in the Tabernacle, this was the only item that Abiathar could pick up and run with.

Now might be an excellent time to examine the [Doctrine of the Ephod—PDF version](#).

Since some might not go to the trouble of looking up this doctrine, I have the summary points below:

#### A Summary of the Doctrine of the Ephod of God

1. Ephod of God is described in the Law as a colorful shoulder piece and vest which is permanently affixed to the breast piece (or, *breast pouch*) of judgment (or, *decision*). On the shoulders were two stones, each representing 6 tribes of Israel. On this breast piece, we have the 12 precious stones, each of which

## A Summary of the Doctrine of the Ephod of God

represents a tribe of Israel. What appears to be the case is, Urim and Thummim (or, *Lights and Perfections*) are put inside the pouch. Exactly what Urim and Thummim are is really not known to us. Ex. 28 35:20–35 39

2. There are several times when an *ephod* is mentioned that do not refer to the Ephod of God. Some examples of these are: Samuel as a young boy wears an ephod (1Sam. 2:18); David wears a linen ephod when bringing the Ark of God into Jerusalem (2Sam. 6:14); Micah, the renegade priest, wears an ephod (Judges 18); Gideon makes an ephod which is later idolized (Judges 8).
3. The Ephod of God is mentioned, but not actually used, in Lev. 8:7 1Sam. 2:27–28 14:18 21:9 23:6.
4. There are several instances where the Ephod of God is not mentioned (nor is Urim and Thummim), but it appears as though it is utilized. Joshua 7:16–19 Judges 1:1–2 20:27–28
5. The number of recorded times when a leader calls upon the High Priest to use the Ephod are relatively few: In fact, there are only two clear instances where the Ephod is clearly used (1Sam. 14:3–42 30:6–8).
  - 1) Saul calls for it in 1Sam. 14:18, but does not actually use it. Later, in the same chapter, but sometime after 1Sam. 14:18, Saul appears to make use of the Ephod, but God does not answer him (1Sam. 14:37). Then Saul appears to use the Ephod in order to determine who broke his vow (1Sam. 14:36–42). King Saul decides not to execute Jonathan and he does not pursue the Philistines soldiers further either (1Sam. 14:45–46).
    - (1) Saul's inability to make contact with God is told to us in 1Sam. 28:6. The principle is simple: if you are out of fellowship, then you cannot be guided by God. Saul had been out of fellowship for about a decade. The passage quoted, I believe, does not speak of Saul simply in that hour of need, but refers pretty much to the previous decade of Saul's life out of fellowship.
    - 2) David makes use of the Ephod of God through the priest Abiathar in 1Sam. 30:6–8.
6. Although the Ephod of God was called upon probably more times than we find a record of it, the sparse number of times that it is found in Scripture indicates to us that this was never used (or, at least, not ever supposed to be used) for trivial decisions. If you are one of those people who is always *sensitive* to the urging of God, and you sometimes hyperventilate about whether you should make a right or a left turn up ahead, even the possession of the Ephod of God would not solve this problem. It was simply not to be trivialized.
7. Finally, the reason our knowledge of the Ephod and Urim and Thummim is so restricted is, God does not need for us to attempt to duplicate these objects and then use them to determine our immediate futures. The entire Word of God is sufficient to provide us with guidance.

This is a brief summary taken from a 13 page doctrine (this does not mean that you need to examine all 13 pages at this point—that is available if you want to explore any of these points in greater detail).

Closely related to this is the **Doctrine of Urim and Thummim** (which we examined in Deut. 33:8).

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And so he is made conspicuous to Saul that had come David [to] Keilah and so says Saul, “Alienated him Elohim in my hand for he had been enclosed to enter into a city of [two] gates and a bar.”

1Samuel  
23:7

Then it was made known to Saul that David had come [to] Keilah. So Saul said, “Elohim has given [Hebrew, *alienated*] him into my hand for he has enclosed [himself] by entering into a city of gates and a [wood] bar.”

When it was made known to Saul that David had gone to Keilah, Saul said, “God has given him into my hand, because he is enclosed in a city with gates and a bar.”

Here is how others have translated this verse:

**Ancient texts:**

**Masoretic Text** And so he is made conspicuous to Saul that had come David [to] Keilah and so says Saul, "Alienated him Elohim in my hand for he had been enclosed to enter into a city of [two] gates and a bar."  
**Septuagint** And it was told to Saul that David was come to Keila. And Saul said, "God has sold him into my hands, for he is shut up, having entered into a city that has gates and bars."

Significant differences .

**Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:**

**NLT** Saul soon learned that David was at Keilah. "Good!" he exclaimed. "We've got him now! God has handed him over to me, for he has trapped himself in a walled city!"  
**REB** It was reported to Saul that David had entered Keilah, and he said, 'God has put him into my hands; for he was walked into a trap by entering a walled town with its barred gates.'  
**TEV** Saul was told that David had gone to Keilah, and he said, "God has put him in my power. David has trapped himself by going into a walled town with fortified gates."

**Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

*God's Word™* When Saul was told that David went to Keilah, Saul said, "God has delivered him into my hands. He has trapped himself by going into a city which has a gate with a double door held shut by a bar."  
**JPS (Tanakh)** Saul was told that David had come to Keilah, and Saul thought, "God has delivered him into my hands, for he has shut himself in by entering a town with gates and bars." A footnote on the word *delivered*: *The meaning of many parts of 23:19ff. is uncertain. The events described in 23:19–24:22 are partly parallel in chapter 26, with variations.*<sup>7</sup>

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

*Updated Emphasized Bible* And <when it was told Saul that David had entered Keilah> Saul said—  
 God has given him over into my hand, for he has shut himself in by entering into a city with folding doors and a bar.  
**NASB** When it was told Saul that David had come to Keilah, Saul said, "God has delivered him into my hand, for he shut himself in by entering a city with double gates and bars."  
*Young's Updated LT* And it is declared to Saul that David hath come in to Keilah, and Saul says, "God has made him known for my hand, for he has been shut in, to enter into a city of doors and bar."

**What is the gist of this verse?** Saul finds out that David is in Keilah and he believes that this is a sign that God has trapped David for him.

1Samuel 23:7a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (1) [pronounced wah]	and so, then	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253

<sup>7</sup> Tanakh, the Jewish Bible by the Jewish Publication Society; ©1985; p. 456.



## 1Samuel 23:7a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
nâgad (נָגַד) [pronounced naw-GAHD]	<i>to be made conspicuous, to be made known, to be expounded, to be explained, to be declared, to be informed</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hophal imperfect	Strong's #5046 BDB #616
The Hophal is the passive of the Hiphil (causative stem) and the rarest of the seven stems. There is never a hint of reflexive in this stem and the agent of the verb is often not given in the immediate context. Most grammar books call it simply the causative passive stem.			
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <sup>l</sup> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
Shâ'ûwl (שׂוּאֵל) [pronounced shaw-OOL]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>when, that, for, because</i>	conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
bôw' (בָּוֵא) [pronounced boh]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
Dâvid (דָּוִד); also Dâvîyd (דָּוִיִּד) [pronounced daw-VEED]	<i>beloved</i> and is transliterated <i>David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187
q <sup>e</sup> rylâh (קִרְיָלָה) [pronounced k <sup>e</sup> -gee-LAW]	<i>an inclosing, a citadel</i> (this is uncertain); transliterated <i>Keilah</i>	Masculine proper noun	Strong's #7084 BDB #890

**Translation:** *Then it was made known to Saul that David had come [to] Keilah.* It came to be that the news about David and Saul began to be broadcast throughout the country of Israel. Saul is told that David has gone to Keilah. This would have been nationwide news, as it was first reported abroad that the Philistines attacked Keilah; and now the news was that David had delivered Keilah from the Philistines.

David thinks of himself as the hero of the hour and he remains in Keilah for awhile. It is his thinking that, as a local hero, he is safe in Keilah. What he fails to assess properly is that, Saul will kill anyone in order to get to David. Just as the news about Keilah has been spread throughout the land, so has the news about the great slaughter in Nob. So the inhabitants of Keilah have two antithetical influences; David's bravery and rescue of their city; and Saul's merciless and dogged determination to find and kill David.

## 1Samuel 23:7b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MARH]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55

## 1Samuel 23:7b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Shâ`ûwl (שׂוּל) [pronounced <i>shaw-OOL</i> ]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982
nâkar (נָכַר) [pronounced <i>naw-KAHR</i> ]	properly: <i>to be foreign, to be strange; to estrange, to alienate; not to know, to be ignorant of; to contemplate, to look at something [as though strange and unfamiliar]</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Piel imperfect	Strong's #5234 BDB #647
This word is a homonym with Strong's #5234 BDB #647.			
"God has rejected him (and delivered him) into my hand." nâkar (נָכַר) does not mean simply to look at, but also to find strange, and treat as strange, and then absolutely to reject (Jer. 19:4, as in the Arabic in the fourth conjugation). This is the meaning here, where the construction with b <sup>e</sup> yâdîy (בַּיָּדַי) is to be understood as a pregnant expression: " <a href="#">rejection and delivered into my hand</a> " (vid., Ges. Lex. s. v.). <sup>8</sup>			
The use of nâkar here is questioned. What could be meant here is nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced <i>naw-THAHN</i> ], which means <i>to give, to grant, to put</i> . However, the second and third consonants are not typically mistaken for one another, making this an unlikely copyist error.			
ʿêth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i> ]	untranslated mark of a direct object	affixed to a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #853 BDB #84
ʿêlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i> ]	gods or <i>God</i> ; transliterated <i>Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43
b <sup>e</sup> (בַּ) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
yâd (יָד) [pronounced <i>yawd</i> ]	generally translated <i>hand</i>	feminine singular noun with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #3027 BDB #388

**Translation:** So Saul said, "Elohim has given [Hebrew, *alienated*] him into my hand... Saul is disturbed and not entirely connected to reality. Being informed that David is in Keilah makes Saul believe that God has given David over into his hand. This is interesting for two reasons: (1) Saul is already aware that God has made David king in his place, although David has not yet assumed the throne. (2) It is interesting that we know Saul's thoughts here. Now, to explain: Saul may or may not believe what he has said here. Samuel has already informed him in no uncertain terms that David will be the new king in his stead; however, here it is, a year or two later, and Saul is still king and David is a fugitive. "Hmm," Saul may think, "maybe Samuel didn't get it right." However, what I think is more likely is, Saul has got to motivate his own men and they have just destroyed the entire priestly city of Nob. How does one spearhead such a dastardly deed, and then keep his men in line? After all, Saul has just taken his men to the absolute depths of depravity to kill innocent women and children. So Saul speaks to his men aloud (which is how we know what he said), saying, "[God has given David into my hand.](#)" Do you see the logic here? David is in a walled city; Saul can easily assault that city with his armed forces, who are listening to him, and David will be unable to escape. It must be God Who has given David into Saul's hand, so Saul muses aloud

<sup>8</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, Commentary on the Old Testament; from e-Sword; 23:7-9.



to his men. This gives some legitimacy to their power. God is still on their side; God has trapped David for them. Saul can more easily guide his men to attack David and to take down anyone who stands in the way.

1Samuel 23:7c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כי) [pronounced <i>kee</i> ]	<i>when, that, for, because</i>	conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
çâgar (סָגַר) [pronounced <i>saw-GAHR</i> ]	<i>to be shut up, to be enclosed; to shut oneself up.</i> This verb is often applied to doors or gates	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #5462 BDB #688
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <i>l</i> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
bôw' (בּוֹא) [pronounced <i>boh</i> ]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #935 BDB #97
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
'îyr (עִיר) [pronounced <i>geer</i> ]	<i>encampment, city, town</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #5892 BDB #746
deleth (דֶּלֶת) [pronounced <i>DEH-leth</i> ]	<i>doors, gates of a city</i>	feminine dual noun	Strong's #1817 BDB #195
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
b <sup>e</sup> rîyach (בַּר יַחַד) [pronounced <i>b<sup>ee</sup>ree-AHKH</i> ]	<i>bar, a wood bar</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #1280 BDB #138

**Translation:** ...for he has enclosed [himself] by entering into a city of gates and a [wood] bar.” The reason that Saul feels that David is trapped is that Keilah is a gated city; there are walls around the city and there are a pair of doors at the front which are fastened with a large wooden bar. This gates are just as effective at keeping someone inside as they are in keeping someone outside. While in the woods or in caves, David has a number of secure escapes routes that he can take; and, furthermore, Saul may not even know where to find him in the first place. However, in with David in Keilah, all Saul needs to do is to take a large army to the city, surround it, and then demand that its citizens deliver up David. For all intents and purposes, his plan is flawless, from the vantage of human viewpoint. He has said the right words to motivate his men; David is trapped in a walled city; and now Saul simply needs to take his men down to Keilah and demand David dead or alive.

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## David Escapes Saul and Leaves Keilah

And so calls Saul all the people to the war to go down [to] Keilah to besiege David and his men.

1Samuel  
23:8

So Saul summoned all of the people for war to go down [to] Keilah to besiege David and his men.

So Saul summoned all of the people for war to go down to Keilah to attack David and his men.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text                      And so calls Saul all the people to the war to go down [to] Keilah to besiege David and his men.

Septuagint                              And Saul charged all the people to go down to war to Keila, to besiege David and his men.

Significant differences              .

#### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

NLT    So Saul mobilized his entire army to march to Keilah and attack David and his men.  
REB    He called out all the army to march on Keilah and besiege David and his men.

#### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™                              So Saul called together all the troops to go to war and blockade Keilah, where David and his men were.

JPS (Tanakh)                              Saul summoned all the troops for war, to go down to Keilah and besiege David and his men.

#### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB    So Saul summoned all the people for war, to go down to Keilah to besiege David and his men.

Young's Updated LT                      And Saul summons the whole of the people to battle, to go down to Keilah, to lay siege unto David and unto his men.

**What is the gist of this verse?** Saul gathers his forces and heads down to Keilah to attack it, in order to capture and/or kill David.

### 1Samuel 23:8a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shâma' (שָׁמָעַ) [pronounced <i>shaw-MAHÇ</i> ]	<i>to cause to hear, to call, to summon</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Piel imperfect	Strong's #8085 BDB #1033
ʾêth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i> ]	generally untranslated	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84

## 1Samuel 23:8a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kôl (כָּל) [pronounced kohl]	<i>the whole, all of, the entirety of, all; can also be rendered any of</i>	masculine singular construct followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
ʿam (עַם) [pronounced ġahm]	<i>people</i>	masculine singular collective noun with the definite article	Strong's #5971 BDB #766
lâmed (ל) (pronounced ʿ)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
mil <sup>e</sup> châmâh (מִלְחָמָה) [pronounced mil-khaw-MAW]	<i>battle, war</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4421 BDB #536
lâmed (ל) (pronounced ʿ)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
yârad (יָרַד) [pronounced yaw-RAHD]	<i>to descend, to go down</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #3381 BDB #432
q <sup>e</sup> ʾîylâh (קֵּיִלָּה) [pronounced k <sup>e</sup> -ġee-LAW]	<i>an inclosing, a citadel (this is uncertain); transliterated Keilah</i>	Masculine proper noun	Strong's #7084 BDB #890

**Translation:** *So Saul summoned all of the people for war to go down [to] Keilah... Gill tells us: Or "caused them to hear"; summoned them by an herald, whom he sent into all parts of the kingdom to proclaim war, and require them in his name to attend him; which was the prerogative of a king to do.<sup>9</sup> Note the tragic irony here: David has just done what Saul should have done, and yet, Saul here summons the people for war to go down to Keilah to attack David. What Saul should have originally done is, he should have gathered his soldiers and gone down to Keilah to fight the Philistines. He should have delivered the city of Keilah. However, Saul is so far gone that he does not have a clue.*

Now, in most of the looser translations, we have the Saul is gathering the troops or his army to go down to Keilah. However, in the Hebrew, Saul gathers the *people*. Saul gets together whoever he can. He is not interested in the quality of man; he wants quantity. He wants as many men as possible. The idea is, he wants to intimidate the city of Keilah. He would assume that they would be reticent to hand over to him the man that just saved them; however, if their city is surrounded by even a larger force than the Philistines, then they would have no choice but to give David up—this is Saul's thinking.

## 1Samuel 23:8b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (ל) (pronounced ʿ)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510

<sup>9</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, 1Sam. 23:8.

## 1Samuel 23:8b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
tsûwr (צוּר) [pronounced tzoor]	<i>to bind together; to press [with a siege], to besiege [a city]; to urge, to press upon [anyone in pursuit]; to cut, to divide; to form</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #6696 BDB #848
ʿel (עַל) [pronounced el/]	<i>unto, in, into, toward, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
Dâvid (דָּוִד); also Dâvîyd (דָּוִיִּד) [pronounced daw-VEED]	<i>beloved and is transliterated David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʿîysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced eesh]	<i>men; inhabitants, citizens; companions, soldiers, companions</i>	masculine plural noun with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #376 BDB #35

**Translation:** ...to besiege David and his men. Here is Saul's nefarious purpose: to attack David and his men. David has just done what Saul should have done; however, Saul is so torn up with hatred, jealousy and anger, that he no longer functions as a king.

**Application:** This is simple: when you function in a position of authority, mental attitude sins neutralize you. You cannot be effective as a leader if you are filled with mental attitude sins.

And so knows David that upon him Saul was fabricating the evil. And so he says unto Abiathar the priest, "Bring here the ephod."

1Samuel  
23:9

David knew that Saul was devising evil [plans] against him, so he said to Abiathar the priest, "Bring the ephod here."

David figured out that Saul would be plotting evil against him, so he said to Abiathar the priest, bring the ephod here."

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

##### Masoretic Text

And so knows David that upon him Saul was fabricating the evil. And so he says unto Abiathar the priest, "Bring here the ephod."

##### Septuagint

And David knew that Saul spoke openly of [Greek: *is not silent concerning*] mischief against him; and David said to Abiathar the priest, "Bring the ephod of the Lord."

##### Significant differences

#### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

##### CEV

David heard about Saul's plan to capture him, and he told Abiathar, "Let's ask God what we should do."

**NAB** When David found out that Saul was planning to harm him, he said to the priest Abiathar, "Bring forward the ephod."  
**NLT** But David learned of Saul's plan and told Abiathar the priest to bring the ephod and ask the LORD what he should do.

**Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

*God's Word™* When David learned that Saul was planning to harm him, he told the priest Abiathar, "Bring the ephod."  
**JPS (Tanakh)** When David learned that Saul was planning [Hebrew, uncertain] to harm him, he told the priest Abiathar to bring the ephod forward.

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

*The Amplified Bible* David knew that Saul was plotting evil against him; and he said to Abiathar the priest, Bring the ephod here.  
*Updated Emphasized Bible* And David ascertain that Saul was contriving [or, fabricating] mischief || against him||,— so he said to Abiathar the priest, Bring the ephod here.  
**NASB** Now David knew that Saul was plotting evil against him; so he said to Abiathar the priest, "Bring the ephod here."  
*Young's Updated LT* And David knows that against him Saul is devising the evil, and says unto Abiathar the priest, "Bring near the ephod."

**What is the gist of this verse?** David is fully aware that Saul is about to attack him, and he calls for Abiathar to come to him with the ephod.

1Samuel 23:9a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	and so, then	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâda' (יָדָעַ) [pronounced yaw-DAHG]	to see; to know, to perceive, to acquire knowledge, to become acquainted, to know by experience, to have a knowledge of something	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3045 BDB #393
Dâvid (דָּוִד); also Dâvîyd (דָּוִיִּד) [pronounced daw-VEED]	beloved and is transliterated David	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	when, that, for, because	conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
'al (עַל) [pronounced gahl]	upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside	preposition of proximity with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
Shâ'ûwl (שָׂאֻל) [pronounced shaw-OOL]	which is transliterated Saul; it means asked for	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982

## 1Samuel 23:9a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
chârash (חָרַשׁ) [pronounced <i>chaw-RAHASH</i> ]	properly: <i>to fabricate [out of wood or metal]</i> ; metaphorically: <i>to fabricate, devise or plot [evil]</i>	Hiphil participle	Strong's #2790 BDB #360
The poetic usage of this verb is very different.			
ra' (רָע) [pronounced <i>rahg'</i> ]	<i>evil, bad, wicked; evil in appearance, deformed; disagreeable, displeasing; unhappy, unfortunate; sad</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #7451 BDB #948

**Translation:** [David knew that Saul was devising evil \[plans\] against him,...](#) We are not told how David knew this. It could have been simple logic; what David did would be known throughout Israel. Therefore, Saul would know that he had delivered Keilah and Saul would be plotting against him. David may have had those who were sympathetic to him who got this information to him. However, even though I prefer to think that this was a matter of simple deduction, we will find out in v. 10 that David actually *hears* this. Recall in the previous verse that Saul is gathering not *soldiers* but *people*; this would indicate that he sent messengers throughout the land to gather anyone that he could.

David did have a good reputation at one time; the people loved him. Therefore, there are going to be many people out there who are sympathetic toward his problems with Saul. Since Saul's call for a citizen army is probably very public, there is probably very little time between Saul's initial proclamation and David's hearing of same.

## 1Samuel 23:9b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MARH</i> ]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
el (אֶל) [pronounced <i>el</i> ]	<i>unto, in, into, toward, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
eb'yâthâr (אֲבִי־תָר) [pronounced <i>eb<sup>e</sup>-yâw-THAWR</i> ]	<i>the Great One is father; my father is great; transliterated Abiathar</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #54 BDB #5
kôhên (כֹּהֵן) [pronounced <i>koh-HANE</i> ]	<i>priest</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #3548 BDB #463
nâgash (נָגַשׁ) [pronounced <i>naw-GASH</i> ]	<i>bring near, bring here</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil imperative (with a voluntative hê)	Strong's #5066 BDB #620



### 1Samuel 23:9b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿêphôwd (עֶפְדָּ) [pronounced ay-FÖHD]	is transliterated <i>ephod</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #646 BDB #65

**Translation:** ...so he said to Abiathar the priest, “Bring the ephod here.” David needs guidance; he needs to know just what to do at this point. He’s become a very public figure, along with his rag-tag army, and he now needs to devise a plan or a way of escape. By himself, David could move quickly and easily throughout Israel with little fear of being caught. However, he is now with a large band of men who would therefore be much more visible and slower to move. That Saul is gathering a huge army is probably known to David. David also knew that Saul would bring this army against Keilah.

As I have mentioned before, I don’t believe that God ever directly speaks to David. David is inspired to write by God the Holy Spirit, which is not a matter of dictation (as much of Moses’ writing is). And in his writings, David does not forsake his personality, vocabulary or cultural and personal experiences. When God wishes to speak to David, He often sends a prophet to David (e.g., Nathan or Gad). When David desires to know the will of God, he calls for the ephod of God. Recall that the ephod has two stones on its shoulders—the Urim and Thummim—and it has 12 stones on the breastplate, to indicate the 12 tribes of Israel. It is through this ephod that David through a priest can determine God’s will.

Abiathar is possibly a very young man at this point. However, he is probably at least 18 or 19, if not older. He was not included with the priests who were summoned by Saul. He was probably left behind in the Tabernacle to watch over things when the 85 priests made their way to Gibeah, like sheep to the slaughter. However, regardless of his age, he was now the High Priest (a term, recall, which is never used in the book of Samuel).

<p><b>And so says David, “Y<sup>e</sup>howah, Elohim of Israel, a hearing has heard Your servant that is seeking Saul to come unto Keilah to lay waste to the city because of me.</b></p>	1Samuel 23:10	<p><b>Then David said, “Y<sup>e</sup>howah, Elohim of Israel, Your servant has definitely heard that Saul desires to come to Keilah to destroy the city because of me.</b></p>
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**Then David said, “Jehovah, God of Israel—Your servant has definitely heard that Saul desires to come to Keilah to destroy this city because of me.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

**Ancient texts:**

Masoretic Text	And so says David, “Y <sup>e</sup> howah, Elohim of Israel, a hearing has heard Your servant that is seeking Saul to come unto Keilah to lay waste to the city because of me.
Septuagint	And David said, “Lord God of Israel, your servant has indeed heard that Saul seeks to come against Keila to destroy the city on my account.

Significant differences .

**Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:**

CEV	David prayed, “LORD God of Israel, I was told that Saul is planning to come here. What should I do? Suppose he threatens to destroy the town because of me.
NLT	And David prayed, “LORD, God of Israel, I have heard that Saul is planning to come and destroy Keilah because I am here.



**Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

<i>God's Word™</i>	Then David said, "LORD God of Israel, I have actually heard that Saul is going to come to Keilah and destroy the city on account of me.
JPS (Tanakh)	And David said, "O LORD, God of Israel, Your servant has heard that Saul intends to come to Keilah and destroy the town because of me.

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

NASB	Then David said, "O LORD God of Israel, Thy servant has heard for certain that Saul is seeking to come to Keilah to destroy the city on my account.
<i>Young's Updated LT</i>	And David says, "Jehovah, God of Israel, Your servant hath certainly heard that Saul is seeking to come in unto Keilah, to destroy the city on mine account.

**What is the gist of this verse?** Before David is Abiathar with the ephod. David prays to God, first saying that he knows that Saul is going to come to Keilah with the intention of destroying the city on his account.

**1Samuel 23:10a**

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MARH</i> ]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
Dâvid (דָּוִד); also Dâvîyd (דָּוִיִּד) [pronounced <i>daw-VEED</i> ]	<i>beloved and is transliterated David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187
YHWH (יְהוָה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i> ]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
ʾēlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i> ]	<i>gods or God; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #430 BDB #43
Yisʾrâʾel (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced <i>yis-raw-ALE</i> ]	transliterated <i>Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 BDB #975
shâmaʿ (שָׁמַע) [pronounced <i>shaw-MAHQ</i> ]	<i>to listen, to hear, to listen intently, to listen and obey, to listen and act upon, to listen and give heed to, to hearken to, to be attentive to, to listen and take note of, to listen and be cognizant of</i>	Qal infinitive absolute	Strong's #8085 BDB #1033

## 1Samuel 23:10a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shâma' (שָׁמַע) [pronounced shaw-MAHG]	<i>to listen, to hear, to listen intently, to listen and obey, to listen and act upon, to listen and give heed to, to hearken to, to be attentive to, to listen and take note of, to listen and be cognizant of</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #8085 BDB #1033
'ebed (עֶבֶד) [pronounced ĠE <sup>B</sup> -ved]	<i>slave, servant</i>	masculine singular noun with a 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5650 BDB #713

**Translation:** Then David said, “Y<sup>e</sup>howah, Elohim of Israel, Your servant has definitely heard... First of all, David addresses God directly. Abiathar is standing there with the ephod on. What David says tells us more about what he actually knows. Although he may have reasoned out that Saul would hear about Keilah and attack him, David has simply heard something—and the doubling of the verb means that this is not simply a rumor, but it is certain that what David is about to say is true.

## 1Samuel 23:10b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>when, that, for, because</i>	conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
bâqash (בָּקַשׁ) [pronounced baw-KAHSH]	<i>to seek, to search, to desire, to strive after, to attempt to get, to require, to demand, to ask, to seek with desire and diligence</i>	Piel participle	Strong's #1245 BDB #134
Shâ'ûwl (שׂוּאֵל) [pronounced shaw-OOL]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982
lâmed (ל) (pronounced l <sup>e</sup> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
bôw' (בּוֹא) [pronounced boh]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #935 BDB #97
'el (עַל) [pronounced e/]	<i>unto, in, into, toward, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
q <sup>e</sup> iyâlâh (קִיְיָלָה) [pronounced k <sup>e</sup> -ġee-LAW]	<i>an inclosing, a citadel</i> (this is uncertain); transliterated <i>Keilah</i>	Masculine proper noun	Strong's #7084 BDB #890
lâmed (ל) (pronounced l <sup>e</sup> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510

**1Samuel 23:10b**

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shâchath (שָׁחַת) [pronounced shaw-KHAHTH]	to destroy, to ruin, to lay waste [to]; to act wickedly	Piel infinitive construct	Strong's #7843 BDB #1007
lâmed (ל) (pronounced ʿ)	to, for, towards, in regards to	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
ʿîyr (עִיר) [pronounced ʿeer]	encampment, city, town	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #5892 BDB #746
baġăbûwr (בְּעַבְוּר) [pronounced bah-ġu <sup>b</sup> -VOOR]	because of, for, that, for the sake of, on account of, in order that	a preposition combined with a conjunction that Strong gave its own number; with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #5668 BDB #721

Actually a combination of the bêyth preposition (*in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before*) and ʿêber (עָבַר) [pronounced ĠAY-ber] which means *region across, beyond, side*. Strong's #5676 BDB #719.

**Translation:** ...that Saul desires to come to Keilah to destroy the city because of me. This gives us the content of what David actually hears—he hears that Saul is coming to Keilah, but not to necessarily attack David; his purpose is to destroy this city because David delivered it. Saul, with each passing moment, is further and further gone. Keilah is an Israelite city that Saul should have delivered out of the hands of the Philistines, but he chose not to, being too obsessed with David. However, since David did deliver this city, now Saul wants to destroy it himself. Can you imagine anything more confused and evil?

Now, to be absolutely fair and objective here: David, in speaking to God, is telling God what he has heard. The doubling of the verb means that David has heard this same story from at least two independent sources; therefore, this is more than just a rumor. What David is doing is going to God to find out what Saul's actual intentions are, as well as what the people of Keilah will do.

**Will deliver me lords of Keilah in his hand? Will come down Saul as which has heard Your servant? Y<sup>e</sup>howah, Elohim of Israel, make known, please, to Your servant."**

1Samuel 23:11

**Will the lords of Keilah deliver me into his hand? Will Saul come down, just as You servant has heard? Y<sup>e</sup>howah, Elohim of Israel, please make [this] known to Your servant."**

**And so says Y<sup>e</sup>howah, "He comes down."**

**Y<sup>e</sup>howah answered, "He will come down."**

**Will the government officials of Keilah hand me over to Saul? Will Saul come down as I have heard? Jehovah, God of Israel, please make this known to me, Your servant."**

**And Jehovah answered David, "Saul will come down."**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

**Ancient texts:**

Masoretic Text

And so says Y<sup>e</sup>howah, "He comes down."

Septuagint Will Keilah be shut up [i.e., *besieged*]? And now will Saul come down, as Your servant has heard? Lord God of Israel, tell Your servant.” And the Lord said, “It will be shut up.”

Significant differences .

**Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:**

CEV Would the leaders of Keilah turn me over to Saul? Or is he really coming? Please tell me, LORD.” “Yes, he will come,” the LORD answered.

NLT Will the men of Keilah surrender me to him? [Some manuscripts lack the first sentence of 23:11] And will Saul actually come as I have heard? O LORD, God of Israel, please tell me.”  
And the LORD said, “He will come.”

**Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

God’s Word™ Will the citizens of Keilah hand me over to him? Will Saul come here as I have heard? LORD God of Israel, please tell me.” “He will come,” the LORD answered.

JPS (Tanakh) Will the citizens of Keilah deliver me into his hands? Will Saul come down, as Your servant has heard? O LORD, God of Israel, tell Your servant!” And the LORD said, “He will.”

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

NASB “Will the men of Keilah surrender me into his hand? Will Saul come down just as Thy servant has heard? O LORD God of Israel, I pray, tell Thy servant.” And the LORD said, “He will come down.”

NRSV And now, will Saul come down as your servant has heard? O LORD, the God of Israel, I beseech you, tell your servant.” The LORD said, “He will come down.”

Young’s Updated LT Do the possessors of Keilah shut me up into his hand? Will Saul come down as Your servant has heard? Jehovah, God of Israel, declare, I pray You, to Your servant.” And Jehovah says, “He will come down.”

**What is the gist of this verse?** David asks two questions of God: will the citizens of Keilah deliver David over to Saul and will Saul come down to Keilah. God first tells David that Saul will come down to Keilah.

1Samuel 23:11a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
hă ( הָ ) [pronounced <i>heh</i> ]	interrogative particle which acts almost like a piece of punctuation, like the upside-down question mark which begins a Spanish sentence. The verb <i>to be</i> may be implied.		Strong’s #none BDB #209
çâgar ( חָגַר ) [pronounced <i>saw-GAHR</i> ]	<i>to deliver over, to deliver over for imprisonment, to deliver up</i> (when followed by `el)	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong’s #5462 BDB #688
ba`al ( בָּעַל ) [pronounced <i>BAH-ğah</i> ]	<i>owner, lord, husband;</i> transliterated <i>Baal</i> when referencing the heathen god	masculine plural construct	Strong’s #1167 BDB #127

## 1Samuel 23:11a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
q <sup>er</sup> îylâh (קִּיעֵי לָהּ) [pronounced k <sup>e</sup> -ġee-LAW]	<i>an inclosing, a citadel</i> (this is uncertain); transliterated <i>Keilah</i>	Masculine proper noun	Strong's #7084 BDB #890
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
yâd (יָד) [pronounced yawd]	generally translated <i>hand</i>	feminine singular noun with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3027 BDB #388

My first thought, partially based upon the comment found in the NLT, that the first portion of this verse was accidentally transferred from v. 12a in a very early copy. However, there are several significant differences between v. 11a and v. 12a; enough to suggest that this did not occur. This would indicate that v. 11a gives both of David's questions; God answers the second question; then David repeats the first question (in v. 12) and God answers that question.

On the other hand, the footnote in the NRSV tells us that this phrase is missing from the Qumran manuscripts (and we are instructed to compare the Greek translation as well).<sup>10</sup> Whether it is here or not is not a major problem, as we have the same question (although not exactly the same morphology) in the next verse.

**Translation:** *Will the lords of Keilah deliver me into his hand?* Now that Abiathar is there and stands before David with the ephod, David poses a number of questions to God. David has just saved this city from the Philistines. Had he not come to their rescue, they could be a part of the Philistine empire at this very moment. However, David is a realistic man. What if the *lords* (or, *officials*) of the cities decide that it is more expedient to hand David over to Saul than to celebrate him as a hero. After all, David was, not but a few months previous, celebrated as a hero over all Israel, and after probably a decade of faithful service. Now he is a fugitive and he feels that everyone with whom he comes into contact is contaminated by him. At least, this would be his thinking after the fiasco in Nob. So, David asks, *what will the officials of Keilah do?*

Notice how different this is from 1Sam. 23:4. David is asking *yes or no* answers from Abiathar, because that is how the Ephod functions. However, back in v. 4, David received answers which were complete sentences, suggesting that there was a prophet telling David these things. We do not know why David changed from asking a prophet of God to asking a priest of God what to do—perhaps the prophet was left behind with the other non-military types when David went to fight the Philistines in Keilah and perhaps Abiathar came to David after David had defeated the Philistines. Whatever the situation, David is now asking God through Abiathar and the Ephod of God.

## 1Samuel 23:11b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hă (ה) [pronounced <i>heh</i> ]	interrogative particle which acts almost like a piece of punctuation, like the upside-down question mark which begins a Spanish sentence. The verb <i>to be</i> may be implied.		Strong's #none BDB #209

<sup>10</sup> *The Complete Parallel Bible*; NRSV, REB, NAB, NJB; Oxford University Press; ©1993; p. 620.

## 1 Samuel 23:11b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
yârad (יָרַד) [pronounced yaw-RAHD]	<i>to descend, to go down</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3381 BDB #432
Shâ'ûwl (שָׁאוּל) [pronounced shaw-OOL]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982
kaph or k <sup>e</sup> (כּ) [pronounced k <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>like, as, according to; about, approximately</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #453
'ăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	<i>that, which, when, who</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
Together, ka'ăsher (כִּאֲשֶׁר) [pronounced kah-uh-SHER] means <i>as which, as one who, as, like as, just according to what manner; because</i> .			
shâma' (שָׁמַע) [pronounced shaw-MAHG]	<i>to listen, to hear, to listen intently, to listen and obey, to listen and act upon, to listen and give heed to, to hearken to, to be attentive to, to listen and take note of, to listen and be cognizant of</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #8085 BDB #1033
'ebed (עֶבֶד) [pronounced ĠE <sup>b</sup> -ved]	<i>slave, servant</i>	masculine singular noun with a 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5650 BDB #713

**Translation:** Will Saul come down, just as You servant has heard? David's second question. David knows that Saul has sent out a request throughout Israel for all citizen soldiers to join him. David also knows that his victory over the Philistines at Keilah must be known throughout Israel. He therefore asks God if Saul will come down to Keilah, which is the rumor that he has heard. The implication, given the previous verse, is that Saul will come down and attack the inhabitants of Keilah. This could force them into handing David over.

Notice once more that this is a *yes or no* question.

## 1 Samuel 23:11c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yhoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
'ēlōhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	<i>gods or God; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #430 BDB #43
Yis <sup>o</sup> râ'êl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced yis-raw-ALE]	transliterated <i>Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 BDB #975



## 1Samuel 23:11c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
nâgad (נָגַד) [pronounced naw-GAHD]	<i>to make conspicuous, to make known, to expound, to explain, to declare, to inform, to confess, to make it pitifully obvious that</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil imperative	Strong's #5046 BDB #616
nâ' (נָא) [pronounced naw]	<i>please, I pray you, I respectfully implore (ask, or request of) you, I urge you</i>	particle of entreaty	Strong's #4994 BDB #609
lâmed (ל) (pronounced l <sup>e</sup> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
'ebed (עֶבֶד) [pronounced E <sup>b</sup> -ved]	<i>slave, servant</i>	masculine singular noun with a 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5650 BDB #713

**Translation:** *Y<sup>e</sup>howah, Elohim of Israel, please make [this] known to Your servant.* David then pleads with God to make this information known to him. What David is really looking for is guidance; what should he do now. God led him to Keilah to defend the citizenry of Keilah; now David is hanging out in Keilah, trying to determine what his next move should be.

It is important to bear in mind that David finds himself in uncharted waters. There is nothing in the Scriptures to tell him how he should behave as Israel's next king who is being pursued by the present king. Samuel has already issued a list of regulations for a king's behavior; Moses also wrote down information about a king centuries earlier. However, there is no way for David to know what he should be doing. So he inquires of God what his every move should be.

## 1Samuel 23:11d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'amar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MARH]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
yârad (יָרַד) [pronounced yaw-RAHD]	<i>to descend, to go down</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3381 BDB #432

**Translation:** *Y<sup>e</sup>howah answered, "He will come down."* God answers David's second question—He tells David that Saul will come down to Keilah. Very likely, David poses *yes or no* questions to Abiathar and the left or right shoulder stone would light up (or, whatever) to answer either positively or negatively. Wesley suggests that the

answer came to the priest bearing the ephod. No matter what the method, it is apparent that God would answer but one question at a time.

**Application:** One thing which stands out in the Old Testament, is that the actual mechanics of this sort of guidance from God are never given to us. When Joshua *cast lots* in order to determine which tribe inherited which cities; when David asks guidance here of Abiathar—we are simply left in the dark with regards to exactly what was used and/or how it was used. The reason for this is quite simple: God does not intend for us to get guidance from Him through dreams, casting lots, opening to a random page in the Bible, or going to a priest who is wearing an ephod. Our guidance is to come from the filling of the Holy Spirit and from knowledge of Bible doctrine. If we trust God, if we obey His mandates, if we remain filled with the Spirit, if we continue to take in doctrine, one of the easiest things in the Christian life is guidance.

God answers these two questions of David's in their logical order. First of all, is Saul coming down to Keilah. If Saul does not come down to Keilah, then the second question is moot. So God first tells David that Saul is going to come down to Keilah.

There is another interesting situation which occurs here. David is essentially posing a conditional question, which condition is implied but not stated. David is really asking, "If I stay here in Keilah, will Saul come down; and if he comes down, will the people of Keilah deliver me over to him?" The writer did not leave off the hypothesis of David's conditional question; but God is omniscient and He knows exactly what David is asking, even if David does not phrase it fully. God informs David that Saul will come down to Keilah; however, this is really predicated on David remaining in Keilah. Because of God's answer, David will leave Keilah; therefore, Saul will not have a reason to come to Keilah.<sup>11</sup> A better question that David should have asked is, *do I stay or do I go?* However, David is certainly shook up, and the answer that God gives him will properly guide him.

**Application:** God knows exactly what it is that we pray for; and He knows exactly what it is that we want and what it is that we need. Therefore, we may not get that promotion that we prayed for; we may not get the salary bump; we may not win the lottery; that girl that caught our eye may turn up her nose at us; more seriously, a disease that we or a loved one has may progress dramatically. And these things may happen even if we know doctrine and we pray and are filled with the Holy Spirit as we pray. You have to trust that God knows what you want and He knows what you need. You have to trust him for the answers to your prayers; and you have to trust Him even when these answers are not what you prayed for.

We pray for a lot of things. I recall a friend of mine who was not necessarily a believer, but she would ask me (and I suppose several others of varied faiths) to pray for this or that. I suspect that she didn't necessarily believe in the things which I subscribed to; however, there is nothing wrong with stacking the deck in one's favor, is what I am sure her thinking was. After all, if she knew a Buddhist, a Baptist, a 7<sup>th</sup> Day Adventist, and an Hasidic Jew, then why not ask them all to pray for her? After all, one of these might get through to God and she would thereby get what she wanted. It is possible that this worked; as she often got what it was that she asked me to pray for, even though it seemed to be awfully trivial to me.

And so says David, "Will deliver lords of Keilah me and my men into a hand of Saul?"

And so says Y<sup>e</sup>howah, "They will deliver [you]."

Then David asked, "Will the government officials of Keilah surrender my men and me into Saul's hand?"

And Y<sup>e</sup>howah answered David, "They will surrender you."

1 Samuel  
23:12

Then David said, "Will the officials of Keilah deliver me and my men into Saul's hand?"

And Y<sup>e</sup>howah answered, "They will deliver [you]."

Here is how others have translated this verse:

<sup>11</sup> It was Clarke who actually pointed out this little conundrum. Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, 1Sam. 23:11. Gill also mentions this.

**Ancient texts:**

Masoretic Text                      And so says Y<sup>e</sup>howah, “They will deliver [you].”  
 Septuagint                            [Omitted]

Significant differences           .

**Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:**

CEV                                     David asked, “Would the leaders of Keilah hand me and my soldiers over to Saul?”  
   “*Yes, they would,*” the LORD answered.

NLT                                     And again David asked, “Will these men of Keilah really betray me and my men  
 to Saul?”

  And the LORD replied, “Yes, they will betray you.”

**Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

God’s Word™                         “Will the citizens of Keilah hand me and my men over to Saul?” David asked. “They  
 will hand you over,” the LORD answered.

JPS (Tanakh)                         David continued, “Will the citizens fo Keilah deliver me and my men into Saul’s  
 hands?” And the LORD answered, “They will.”

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

Updated Emphasized Bible   Then said David,  
   Will the owners of Keilah surrender me and my men into the hand of Saul?  
 And Yahweh said—  
   They will surrender.

NASB                                     Then David said, “Will the men of Keilah surrender me and my men into the hand  
 of Saul?” And the LORD said, “They will surrender you.”

Young’s Updated LT                 And David says, “Do the possessors of Keilah shut me up, and my men, into the  
 hand of Saul?” And Jehovah says, “They shut you up.”

**What is the gist of this verse?** David apparently repeats his first question. Now, since he knows Saul will come down to Keilah, he asks God if the leaders of Keilah will hand him over to Saul. God tells David that they will.

**1Samuel 23:12a**

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253
ʾâmar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MARH</i> ]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong’s #559 BDB #55
Dâvid (דָּוִד); also Dâvîyd (דָּוִיִּד) [pronounced <i>daw-VEED</i> ]	<i>beloved</i> and is transliterated <i>David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong’s #1732 BDB #187
hă (הֲ) [pronounced <i>heh</i> ]	interrogative particle which acts almost like a piece of punctuation, like the upside-down question mark which begins a Spanish sentence. The verb <i>to be</i> may be implied.		Strong’s #none BDB #209

## 1Samuel 23:12a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
çâgar (גָּרַח) [pronounced saw-GAHR]	<i>to deliver over, to deliver over for imprisonment, to deliver up (when followed by `el)</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #5462 BDB #688
ba'al (בַּעַל) [pronounced BAH-gah]	<i>owner, lord, husband; transliterated Baal when referencing the heathen god</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #1167 BDB #127
qê'îylâh (קַעֲיִלָּה) [pronounced kê-gee-LAW]	<i>an inclosing, a citadel (this is uncertain); transliterated Keilah</i>	Masculine proper noun	Strong's #7084 BDB #890
`êth (אֵת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated mark of a direct object	affixed to the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #853 BDB #84
wê (or vê) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
`êth (אֵת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
`îysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced eesh]	<i>men; inhabitants, citizens; companions, soldiers, companions</i>	masculine plural noun with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #376 BDB #35
bê (בְּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
yâd (יָד) [pronounced yawd]	generally translated <i>hand</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #3027 BDB #388
Shâ'ûwl (שׂוּאֵל) [pronounced shaw-OOL]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982

**Translation:** Then David said, “Will the officials of Keilah deliver me and my men into Saul’s hand?” David returns to his original question. Since Saul is coming down to Keilah, David next needs to know the hearts of the officials of Keilah—despite what David did on their behalf, will they take the expedient way out and surrender him over to Saul.

I should emphasize that David was not talking about the citizens or inhabitants of Keilah in general; he was talking about those who ran the city; the city fathers, the city officials. These are the ones with whom David would have dealt with directly and the ones who apparently would have been willing to give him up. These are the men whose power David preserved. We don’t know that the Philistines would have decimated this city, as that would be like killing the goose that lays the golden eggs; however, the people in general would have been upset that all of their hard work had gone for naught, and their city officials were powerless to prevent it. The people would have flat out rejected this leadership had nothing been done.

## 1Samuel 23:12b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MARH</i> ]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
YHWH (יְהוָה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i> ]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
çagar (סָגַר) [pronounced <i>saw-GAHR</i> ]	<i>to deliver over, to deliver over for imprisonment, to deliver up (when followed by ʿel)</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #5462 BDB #688

**Translation:** *And Y<sup>e</sup>howah answered, "They will deliver [you]."* God answers David in the affirmative: the men of Keilah will hand David over to Saul. Now, again recall that these two questions are really based upon the unstated hypothesis of, "If I remain in Keilah, will...?" Although one may argue that Saul did come down to Keilah, there is no way someone could argue that the men of Keilah hand David over to Saul, as there will be no David to hand over. So, God, recognizing that David's question is an hypothetical one, based upon remaining in Keilah, He answers accordingly. This is not unlike the time that the people of Judah handed Samson over to the Philistines (Judges 15:10–13).

Another important characteristic of a true leader is given here: David does this on behalf of the people of Keilah, even though they would later turn around and turn David in to Saul. They lack any true appreciation for what David has done. However, what we do not find here is a psalm entitled, *Those Sorry-Ass Bastards of Keilah*. David does not ruminate on their lack of appreciation.<sup>12</sup>

It would be easy to pour shame upon the people of Keilah for their lack of gratitude; however, recall that Saul completely obliterated the city of Nob—every man, woman and child, along with even their cattle. And this was a *holy city*, if you will pardon the expression. Very few communities are willing to risk their entire populations for just one man.

**And so stands David and his men about six hundred a man and so they go out from Keilah. And so they go about in which they go about and to Saul he was informed that was delivered David from Keilah. And so he ceases to go out.**

1Samuel  
23:13

**Then David and his men (about 600 men) got up and departed [lit., *went out*] from Keilah. They went about wherever they chose to go [lit., *wherever they went*]. When [lit., *and*] Saul was told that David had escaped from Keilah, he abandoned his pursuit [of David] [lit., *ceased going out*].**

**Then David and his army of 600 men go up and departed from Keilah, going wherever they chose to go. When Saul was told that David had escaped from Keilah, he abandoned his expedition to Keilah.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

<sup>12</sup> I may judge too harshly here, as we don't know really what sort of pressure Saul would have put upon the people of Keilah. He may have taken their women or children out and begun to slaughter them one by one until the city gave up David. We already know that he is capable of ordering the deaths of innocent women and children.

Masoretic Text	And so stands David and his men about six hundred a man and so they go out from Keilah. And so they go about in which they go about and to Saul he was informed that was delivered David from Keilah. And so he ceases to go out.
Septuagint	And David arose, and the men with him, in number about four hundred, and they went forth from Keila, and they went wherever they could go; and it was told to Saul that David had escaped from Keila, and he ceased to go out.

Significant differences .

#### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	David and his six hundred men got out of there fast and started moving from place to place. Saul heard that David had left Keilah, and he decided not to go after him.
NLT	So David and his men—about six hundred of them now—left Keilah and began roaming the countryside. Word soon reached Saul that David had escaped, so he didn't go to Keilah after all.

#### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

<i>God's Word™</i>	So David and his men, about six hundred in all, left Keilah. They went wherever they could go. Then Saul was told, "David has escaped from Keilah!" So he gave up the campaign.
JPS (Tanakh)	So David and his men, about six hundred in number, left Keilah at once and moved about wherever they could. And when Saul was told that David had got away from Keilah, he did not set out.

#### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB	Then David and his men, about six hundred, arose and departed from Keilah, and they went wherever they could go. When it was told Saul that David had escaped from Keilah, he gave up the pursuit [lit., <i>ceased going out</i> ].
NRSV	Then David and his men, who were about six hundred, set out and left Keilah; they wandered wherever they could go. When Saul was told that David had escaped from Keilah, he gave up the expedition.
<i>Young's Updated LT</i>	And David rises—and his men—about six hundred men, and they go out from Keilah, and go up and down where they go up and down. And to Saul it has been declared that David has escaped from Keilah, and he ceases to go out.

**What is the gist of this verse?** Given that his presence was well-known and that the men of Keilah would have handed David over to Saul, David and his men left, going wherever they chose to go. When Saul heard that David had escaped Keilah, he chose not to go down there.

One of the questions that may have nagged you is, *was there really any other way that David could have played his cards in Nob?* This verse will tell us exactly what David should have done.

### 1 Samuel 23:13a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (1) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wāw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253



## 1Samuel 23:13a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
qûwm (קוּם) [pronounced <i>koom</i> ]	<i>to stand, to rise up, to establish, to establish a vow, to cause a vow to stand, to confirm or to fulfill a vow</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6965 BDB #877
Dâvid (דָּוִד); also Dâvîyd (דָּוִיִּד) [pronounced <i>daw-VEED</i> ]	<i>beloved and is transliterated David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʿîysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced <i>eesh</i> ]	<i>men; inhabitants, citizens; companions, soldiers, companions</i>	masculine plural noun with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #376 BDB #35
kaph or k <sup>e</sup> (כּ) [pronounced <i>k<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>like, as, according to; about, approximately</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #453
shêsh (שֵׁשׁ) [pronounced <i>shaysh</i> ]	<i>six</i>	masculine form of numeral	Strong's #8337 BDB #995
mê'âh (מֵאָה) [pronounced <i>may-AW</i> ]	<i>one hundred</i>	feminine plural numeral	Strong's #3967 BDB #547
ʿîysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced <i>eesh</i> ]	<i>a man, a husband; anyone; a certain one; each, each one, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #376 BDB #35

**Translation:** *Then David and his men (about 600 men) got up...* If David remains in Keilah, he is a sitting duck. Saul is gathering up his men to go down there and David is aware that the men of Keilah will sell him out, even though he just delivered them from the Philistines.

With regards to the number of men listed here: we have about 600 men numbered here and about 400 in 1Sam. 22:2. Is this a contradiction? Is the reading of the Septuagint more accurate (it reads 400)? David, as he continues as an outlaw (in Saul's eyes) also continues to gather men. Certainly, the officials of Keilah are willing to hand David over to Saul, despite what he has done on their behalf. However, David also would have received some appreciation from the people of Keilah and some men might have joined up with him. Given his more public stance at Keilah, many men probably came to David.

Next question: *why would anyone join up with David, who is, in Saul's eyes, a fugitive?* Barring the romantic notion of the outlaw (which would have had less appeal in those days), recall that some of the Philistines referred to David as the king or ruler of Israel (1Sam. 21:11). There are some men who just seem to exude leadership. This is David—although not necessarily to his own family (they appeared to come around in 1Sam. 22:1). Those who met him found him to be charismatic and a man you immediately liked and respected (recall Jonathan's initial reaction in 1Sam. 18:1). We don't have many parallels today even the entourage of a celebrity or a rock star is not quite the same (because, if the money and popularity of this celebrity waned, then their entourage would also fall by the wayside). When David came into Keilah, he risked his life to save them and he further risked letting Saul know where he was. Some men recognized that as the actions of a true leader and many additional men saw their destiny as being attached to David. This will pay off for many of them, as David's *mighty men* will be later listed in Scripture.

There is an additional factor which causes others to follow David. There is only one priest remaining in all of Israel who is in the line of the High Priest, and this priest is traveling with David. Those who have a spiritual side, who desire to know God's will—where better to be guided than with David, who is guided by the High Priest (again, recall that this title is not used in the book of Samuel)?

### 1Samuel 23:13b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâtsâ' (יָצָא) [pronounced <i>yaw-TZAWH</i> ]	<i>to go out, to come out, to come forth</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3318 BDB #422
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i> ]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, above, beyond, more than, greater than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
q <sup>er</sup> iyâlâh (קֵיִלָּה) [pronounced <i>k<sup>e</sup>-gee-LAW</i> ]	<i>an inclosing, a citadel (this is uncertain); transliterated Keilah</i>	Masculine proper noun	Strong's #7084 BDB #890

**Translation:** ...and departed [lit., *went out*] from Keilah. David has thought this through. There is no expression of bitterness here. He simply has the information that, if push comes to shove, then the city officials will hand him over to Saul. Therefore, David has no earthly reason to remain in Keilah. He gathers up his 600 men, an increase over the previous chapter, and they move out. A lesser man under the same circumstances might have torched the city.

### 1Samuel 23:13c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâlak <sup>e</sup> (הָלַךְ) [pronounced <i>haw-LAHK<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>properly: to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to go for oneself, to walk up and down, to go about, to walk about; to live [walk] [in truth]; to flow</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Hithpael imperfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's # none BDB #88
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>ash-ER</i> ]	<i>that, which, when, who</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81

The bēyth preposition and ʾăsher together mean *where, wherever, wheresoever*.

## 1Samuel 23:13c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hâlak <sup>e</sup> (הָלַךְ) [pronounced haw-LAHK <sup>e</sup> ]	properly: <i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to go for oneself, to walk up and down, to go about, to walk about; to live [walk] [in truth]; to flow</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Hithpael imperfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229

**Translation:** They went about wherever they chose to go [lit., wherever they went]. This is an unusual phrase. There is no specific direction or destination given. It simply reads that they went about wherever they went, indicating that they moved as per David's volition.<sup>13</sup> However, David did not just arbitrarily move these men about. He had with him Abiathar the priest and the Ephod of God; so he allowed God to guide him.

**Application:** There is a time for you to move on; and there is no time to ruminate with bitterness. At no time does David go to the elders of Keilah and chew them out, adding, "After all I have done for you." He takes his men and he goes; he does not stand around waiting for a pat on the back; and he is not angry over this situation. God told him to go there and to deliver Keilah. Now, it is apparently time for him to get out of town.

At this point, v. 13 should have been split into two verses:

## 1Samuel 23:13d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lâmed (ל) (pronounced l <sup>e</sup> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
Shâ'ûwl (שׂוּאֵל) [pronounced shaw-OOL]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982
nâgad (נִגַּד) [pronounced naw-GAHD]	<i>to be made conspicuous, to be made known, to be expounded, to be explained, to be declared, to be informed</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hophal perfect	Strong's #5046 BDB #616
The Hophal is the passive of the Hiphil (causative stem). Most grammar books call it simply the causative passive stem.			
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>when, that, for, because</i>	conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471

<sup>13</sup> McGee tells us that these men scattered (J. Vernon McGee; *I & II Samuel*; Thru the Bible Books; ©El Camino Press, 1976, La Verne, CA; p. 122), but I don't find any confirmation of this. David seems to be with his men as a group in subsequent times (1Sam. 23:26-24:3).

## 1Samuel 23:13d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
mâlaṭ (מָלַט) [pronounced <i>maw-LAHHT</i> ]	<i>to be delivered; to deliver oneself, to escape, to slip away, to slip through [or past]; to go away in haste</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular [often a reflexive meaning in the] Niphal perfect	Strong's #4422 BDB #572
Dâvid (דָּוִד); also Dâvîyd (דָּוִיִּד) [pronounced <i>daw-VEED</i> ]	<i>beloved and is transliterated David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i> ]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, above, beyond, more than, greater than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
q <sup>e</sup> rîylâh (קִרְעֵי לָהּ) [pronounced <i>k<sup>e</sup>-gee-LAW</i> ]	<i>an inclosing, a citadel (this is uncertain); transliterated Keilah</i>	Masculine proper noun	Strong's #7084 BDB #890

**Translation:** *When* [lit., *and*] *Saul was told that David had escaped from Keilah,...* The impression given is that there are some hasty communications between Saul and the officials of Keilah. No doubt, the officials of Keilah sent word to Saul of the impending disaster of the advancing Philistines. Then they wrote and said, "Not to worry, David has come to our rescue." This time, Saul responds, asking them to keep David there, as he is an enemy of the palace. The officials decide to obey Saul's request, but then, suddenly, David and his men saddle up and leave. So they send one more message to Saul, "We tried to keep him here, but he suddenly saddled up and moved out. He defeated the Philistines, who had overpowered us. There was no way that we could have stood in opposition to his forces."

The use of the word *escape* in v. 13d and *ceasing going out* in v. 13e suggests that Saul was either already on his way to Keilah, or he was about to head that direction when he hears that David is no longer in Keilah.

## 1Samuel 23:13e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
châdal (חָדַל) [pronounced <i>khaw-DAHL</i> ]	<i>to cease and desist, to leave off, to cease, to leave, to forsake</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #2308 BDB #292
lâmed (לְ) (pronounced <i>l<sup>e</sup></i> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
yâtsâ' (יָצָא) [pronounced <i>yaw-TZAWH</i> ]	<i>to go out, to come out, to come forth</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #3318 BDB #422

**Translation:** ...he abandoned his pursuit [of David] [lit., *ceased going out*]. Saul apparently does not even go to Keilah, although it is possible that he is on route to get there. He finds out from a messenger that David is no longer in Keilah, so Saul backs off. Although he knew for certain that David was temporarily staying in Keilah, now that David has left, he could be anywhere. To properly understand this verse, Saul does not abandon his search for David altogether. He *abandons his going out* to Keilah. Saul is a very disturbed man and he desires the life of David.

Recall David and Nob? Had the priests of Nob been given the chance to communicate with Saul concerning David, Saul may not have come down and killed them all. Had they sent a messenger to Saul saying, "David's here and he's demanded food and weapons." The second message will be, "David left suddenly." We know Saul's response from this passage. He would not have even come to Nob in the first place. However, it appeared to him that the priests in Nob were in league with David, which explains why they never contacted him in the first place.

Our next verse will make it clear that Saul continued to search for David; he simply did not go to Keilah, as he had first planned.

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### David in Ziph/David and Jonathan Renew Their Covenant

And so remains David in the wilderness in the summits [of mountains]; and so he remains in the mountain in a wilderness of Ziph. And so seeks him Saul all the days and has not given him God into his hand.

1Samuel  
23:14

David remained in the wilderness in [secure] hiding places and he remained in the mountain in the wilderness of Ziph. Saul [continued to] seek [for] him daily [lit., *all the days*], but God has not given him into his hand.

David hid out in the wilderness in secure hiding places as well as in the mountain of the wilderness of Ziph. Saul continued seeking for David daily, but God did not allow Saul to find him.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

##### Masoretic Text

And so remains David in the wilderness in the summits [of mountains]; and so he remains in the mountain in a wilderness of Ziph. And so seeks him Saul all the days and has not given him God into his hand.

##### Septuagint

And he dwelt in Maserem in the wilderness, in the narrow [passes]; and he dwelt in the wilderness in mount Ziph, in the dry country. And Saul sought him continually, but the Lord delivered him not into his hands.

##### Significant differences

Most of the differences are simply a matter of translation; there are some additional words in the Greek (*in the dry country*).

#### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

##### CEV

David stayed in hideouts in the hill country of Ziph Desert. Saul kept searching, but God never let Saul catch him.

##### NLT

David now stayed in the strongholds of the wilderness and in the hill country of Ziph. Saul hunted him day after day, but God didn't let him be found.

#### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™

David lived in fortified camps in the desert, and he lived in fortified camps in the mountains of the desert of Ziph. Saul was always searching for him, but God didn't let him capture David.

JPS (Tanakh)

David was staying in the strongholds of the wilderness [of Judah]; he stayed in the hill country, in the wilderness of Ziph. Saul searched for him constantly, but God did not deliver him into his hands.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB

And David stayed in the wilderness in the strongholds, and remained in the hill country in the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul sought him every day, but God did not deliver him into his hand. .

NRSV

David remained in the strongholds in the wilderness, in the hill country of the wilderness of Ziph. Saul sought him every day, but the LORD did not give him into his hand.

Young's Updated LT

And David abides in the wilderness, in fortresses, and abides in the hill-country, in the wilderness of Ziph; and Saul seeks him all the days, and God has not given him into his hand.

**What is the gist of this verse?** David did hide out from Saul and God did not allow Saul to find him.

1Samuel 23:14a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâshab (יָשָׁב) [pronounced yaw-SHAH <sup>b</sup> V]	<i>to remain, to stay, to inhabit, to sit, to dwell</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3427 BDB #442
Dâvid (דָּוִד); also Dâvîyd (דָּוִיִּד) [pronounced daw-VEED]	<i>beloved and is transliterated David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
mid <sup>e</sup> bâr (מִדְּבָר) [pronounced mid <sup>e</sup> -BAWR]	<i>wilderness, unpopulated wilderness, desert wilderness</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4057 BDB #184
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
m <sup>e</sup> tsâd (מַצְדָּ) [pronounced m <sup>e</sup> -TSAWD]	<i>the top or summit [of a mountain]; a fortress, a mountain castle; a stronghold; [secure] hiding place</i>	feminine plural noun	Strong's #4679 BDB #844



This can refer both to *where* hunters to go to seek their prey and to *where* prey might flee to as a safe retreat from those hunting them. The latter understanding is very apropos for this context.

The NIV Study Bible footnotes here *inaccessible places*.<sup>14</sup>

**Translation:** *David remained in the wilderness in [secure] hiding places...* Just because David had become convinced that God was with him and that he had guidance from God, this did not make him behave stupidly. David hid out from Saul in places where he did not believe that Saul could find him. There were times when David was in the wilderness (this would be the wooded areas of Judah). In this wilderness, David hid in secure hiding places, as the word found here is used of the places prey would hide out from being hunted. My impression of this passage is that David actually made his way to a particular destination and what we find in this line is generally where he hid until he came to that destination.

1Samuel 23:14b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâshab (יָשָׁב) [pronounced <i>yaw-SHAH<sup>h</sup>V</i> ]	<i>to remain, to stay, to inhabit, to sit, to dwell</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3427 BDB #442
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
har (הַר) [pronounced <i>har</i> ]	<i>hill, mountain, hill-country</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #2042 (and #2022) BDB #249
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
mid <sup>e</sup> bâr (מִדְּבָר) [pronounced <i>mid<sup>e</sup>-BAWR</i> ]	<i>wilderness, unpopulated wilderness, desert wilderness</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #4057 BDB #184
Zîyph (צִיֵּף) [pronounced <i>ziff</i> ]	transliterated <i>Ziph</i>	proper noun; location	Strong's #2128 BDB #268

**Translation:** *...and he remained in the mountain in the wilderness of Ziph.* We only have one mountain named in this phrase, which leads us to believe that this is a specific mountain that David went to. In the previous phrase, we had *hiding places* (in the plural). Here, *mountain* is in the singular. So, David probably hid at a series of hiding places in the wilderness of Judah as he advanced toward this mountain in the wilderness of Ziph. This particular place is again mentioned in the inscription of Psalm 54, which we will cover at the end of v. 19.

<sup>14</sup> The NIV Study Bible; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 406.

There are actually two Ziph's in Scripture, both of which are found in Judah. The first is a town in the Negev (the southern portion of Judah, which is flat and dry), which is mentioned in Joshua 15:24 1Chron. 2:42 4:16. This is the Ziph which is associated with the family of Caleb. The second Ziph is located in the hill country of Judah, and is mentioned in Joshua 15:55. This is the Ziph to which this passage refers (and we will run into this city again in 1Sam. 26).<sup>15</sup> This is apparently a place with which David is familiar and a place where he feels safe (and it is possible that God brought him there).

In the first half of this verse, we find out what David did. In the second half, we find out what Saul does.

1Samuel 23:14c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
bâqash (בָּקַשׁ) [pronounced <i>baw-KAHSH</i> ]	<i>to seek, to search, to desire, to strive after, to attempt to get, to require, to demand, to ask, to seek with desire and diligence</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Piel imperfect with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1245 BDB #134
Shâ'ûwl (שׂוּאֵל) [pronounced <i>shaw-OOL</i> ]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i> ]	with a plural noun, it is rendered <i>all of; any of</i>	masculine singular construct with a masculine plural noun	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
yâmîym (יָמִים) [pronounced <i>yaw-MEEM</i> ]	<i>days, time of life, lifetime; a specific time period, a year</i>	masculine plural noun with a definite article	Strong's #3117 BDB #398

**Translation:** Saul [continued to] seek [for] him daily [lit., *all the days*],... Saul did not abandon his search for David. He continued to seek for David every day. As we will see in the next verse, it appears that Saul is not sitting at home, having sent spies out to locate David; he is apparently saddled up with his army and he is actively out looking for David.

Recall how differently Saul treated Nob and Keilah. Saul ordered the priests from Nob to come to him and he had them all executed (save one). However, when he finds out that David is no longer in Keilah, he does nothing with regards to this city. Apparently, they made it clear to him that they would hand David over, if it were in their power to do so. So, since David is not there and since these people are clearly still loyal to him, Saul has no interest in this city. David's honesty and selflessness with regards to Keilah saved them from Saul's psychotic destruction.

1Samuel 23:14d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וְ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

<sup>15</sup> The bulk of this information came from *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; Merrill Tenney, ed., Zondervan Publishing House, ©1976; Vol. 5, p. 1067.

1Samuel 23:14d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lô' (לו' or לא') [pronounced low']	not, no	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
nâthan (נתן) [pronounced naw-THAHN]	to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
'ēlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	gods or God; transliterated Elohim	masculine plural construct	Strong's #430 BDB #43
The footnote in the NRSV reads <i>Compare Qumran manuscript [as well as the] Greek: Massoretic Text God.</i> <sup>16</sup>			
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
yâd (יָד) [pronounced yawd]	generally translated hand	feminine singular noun with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3027 BDB #388

**Translation:** ...but God has not given him into his hand. It was up to God as to whether David would be given up to Saul or not, and God made certain that David was always one step ahead of Saul. What is important is, this suggests that Saul would have found David, had not God intervened.

What we have here is an intentional literary contrast; Saul had presumed that, “God has given David into my hand” (back in v. 7); but here we are told in no uncertain terms that God has not given him into his hand.

Keil and Delitzsch: “*And Saul sought him all the days, but God delivered him not into his hand.*” This is a general remark, intended to introduce the accounts which follow, of the various attempts made by Saul to get David into his power. “*All the days,*” i.e., as long as Saul lived.<sup>17</sup>

The Open Bible also has a comment at this point: *The hill country of Ziph...east and southeast of Hebron, is a jumble of arid hills where there is little rainfall and almost no habitation. There are no roads and few vantage points. Thus, Saul's difficult in tracking down David is easily understood.*<sup>18</sup>

We will now take a short break from 1Sam. 23 and take a look at **Psalm 63**, which David wrote during this time period.

**And so sees David that had come out Saul to seek his soul. And David in a wilderness of Ziph in the wood.** 1Samuel 23:15 **David saw that Saul had come out to seek his life while [lit., and] he [lit., David] [was] in the wilderness of Ziph in the woods.**

**David observed that Saul had come out to seek his life while he was hidden in the wilderness of Ziph in the woods.**

<sup>16</sup> *The Complete Parallel Bible*; NRSV, REB, NAB, NJB; Oxford University Press; ©1993; p. 622.  
<sup>17</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; 1Sam. 23:14.  
<sup>18</sup> *The Open Bible*; the New Living Translation; Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, TN; ©1996, p. 395.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	And so sees David that had come out Saul to seek his soul. And David in a wilderness of Ziph in the wood.
Septuagint	And David perceived that Saul went forth to seek David; and David was in the dry
Significant differences	. mountain in the New Ziph.

### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	One time, David was at Horesh in Ziph Desert. He was afraid because Saul had come to the area to kill him.
NJB	David was aware that Saul had mounted an expedition to take his life. David was then at Horesh in the desert of Ziph.
NLT	One day near Horesh, David received the news that Saul was on the way to Ziph to search for him and kill him.
TEV	David saw that Saul was out to kill him. David was at Horesh, in the wilderness near Ziph.

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™	David was afraid because Saul had come to kill him at Horesh in the desert of Ziph.™
JPS (Tanakh)	David was once at Horesh in the wilderness of Ziph, when David learned that Saul had come out to seek his life.

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB	Now David became aware that Saul had come out to seek his life while David was in the wilderness of Ziph at Horesh.
Young's Updated LT	And David sees that Saul had come out to seek his life, and David is in the wilderness of Ziph, in a forest.

**What is the gist of this verse?** David realizes that Saul is still out searching for him, so he goes into the wilderness of Ziph.

1 Samuel 23:15a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
râ`âh (רָאָה) [pronounced <i>raw-AWH</i> ]	<i>to see, to look, to look at, to view, to behold; to perceive, to understand, to learn, to know</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7200 BDB #906
Dâvid (דָּוִד); also Dâvîyd (דָּוִיִּד) [pronounced <i>daw-VEED</i> ]	<i>beloved and is transliterated David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187

## 1Samuel 23:15a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced <i>kee</i> ]	<i>when, that, for, because</i>	conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
yâtsâ' (יָצָא) [pronounced <i>yaw-TZAWH</i> ]	<i>to go out, to come out, to come forth</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #3318 BDB #422
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <i>l</i> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
bâqash (בָּקַשׁ) [pronounced <i>baw-KAHSH</i> ]	<i>to seek, to search, to desire, to strive after, to attempt to get, to require, to demand, to ask, to seek with desire and diligence</i>	Piel infinitive construct	Strong's #1245 BDB #134
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i> ]	generally untranslated	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
nephesh (נֶפֶשׁ) [pronounced <i>NEH-fesh</i> ]	<i>soul, life, living being, desire</i>	feminine singular noun with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #5315 BDB #659

**Translation:** David saw that Saul had come out to seek his life... We have the verb *to see*. The would indicate that David and his men were hidden out in the wilderness and they could see Saul approaching that area, although Saul could not see them. Although it is possible that David himself observed Saul coming out to find him, often we find the subject David used when it is actually a member (or members) of his fighting force which are doing the action of the verb. This is known as a metonymy and is used a lot in reference to an army and its leader.

David and his men, even though there are 600 of them, are well hidden. There is a perimeter force/lookout stationed at points where approaching groups could be observed.

What appears to be the case, given the verses that follow, is that Saul and his army; or, smaller groups from Saul's army, search the countryside for David. The use of the verb *to see* means that this is something which was actually observed, as opposed to information which David received about Saul going out to find him.

## 1Samuel 23:15b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
Dâvid (דָּוִד); also Dâvîyd (דָּוִיִּד) [pronounced <i>daw-VEED</i> ]	<i>beloved and is transliterated David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187

## 1 Samuel 23:15b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
mid <sup>e</sup> bâr (מִדְּבָר) [pronounced mid <sup>e</sup> -BAWR]	<i>wilderness, unpopulated wilderness, desert wilderness</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #4057 BDB #184
Zīyph (צִיִּף) [pronounced ziff]	transliterated <i>Ziph</i>	proper noun; location	Strong's #2128 BDB #268
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
chôresh (חֹרֶשׁ) [pronounced KHOH-resh]	<i>wood, wooded, a thick wood, a thicket of trees; sometimes transliterated Horesh</i>	masculine singular noun (sometimes taken for a proper noun); with the definite article	Strong's #2793 BDB #361

**Translation:** ...while [lit., and] he [lit., David] [was] in the wilderness of Ziph in the woods. We already know that David is with his men in the hill country of Judah. It is not altogether clear whether *chôresh* is a proper noun or whether it simply describes the area in which David is found (i.e., David is out in the woods or in a heavily wooded area). What seems likely is that this is simply a description of where David is. Even if *Choresh* or *Horesh* is a proper noun, the end result is the same—David is hiding out in a heavily forested area.

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown describe this area for us: *A mountainous and sequestered region was generally called a wilderness, and took its name from some large town in the district. Two miles southeast of Hebron, and in the midst of a level plain, is Tell-ziph, an isolated and conical hillock, about a hundred feet high, probably the acropolis [Van De Velde], or the ruins [Robinson] of the ancient city of Ziph, from which the surrounding wilderness was called. It seems, anciently, to have been covered by an extensive woods. The country has for centuries lost its woods and forests, owing to the devastations caused by man.*<sup>19</sup> Van De Velde tells us: *There is no trace of this wood now. The land lost its ornament of trees centuries ago through the desolating hand of man.*<sup>20</sup> Edersheim tells us about this area: *South of Ziph is a solitary mountain-top, rising about one hundred feet and commanding a full prospect of the surrounding country...anything that passed there could also easily be observed from below. It seems that this was “the mountain” (v. 14)...more particularly described in v. 19 as “the hill of Hachilah, south of the wilderness” where David had his principal station, or rather, to be more accurate, in “the thicket” or “brushwood” which covered its sides (vv. 15–16). It was there in that very height of these first persecutions, Jonathan came once more to see his friend.*<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; from e-sword, 1Sam. 23:14–15.

<sup>20</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; 1Sam. 23:15–17.

<sup>21</sup> Alfred Edersheim, *Bible History Old Testament*; ©1995 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; pp. 491–492. I slightly changed the text in several places.



Since there are no verbs that indicate that David, knowing that Saul is after him, goes to Ziph proper, we may reasonably infer that David was in the woods outside of Ziph when he sees that Saul is pursuing him. Either David or David's lookouts observe Saul going by with his army. The implication is that they are very close.

**And so arises Jonathan son of Saul and so he goes unto David wood-ward and so he strengthens his hand in Elohim.**

1Samuel  
23:16

**Then Jonathan ben Saul took a stand and went to David in the woods [or, *in Horesh*] and he strengthened his hand in Elohim.**

**Then Jonathan, Saul's son, took a stand and went to David in the woods and strengthened his hand in God.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	And so arises Jonathan son of Saul and so he goes unto David wood-ward and so he strengthens his hand in Elohim.
Septuagint	And Jonathan son of Saul arose and went to David to Cæne, and strengthened his hands in the Lord.

Significant differences .

#### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	But Jonathan went to see David, and God helped him encourage David.
NAB	Saul's son, Jonathan, came down there to David and strengthened his resolve in the LORD.
NLT	Jonathan went to find David and encouraged him to stay strong in his faith in God.
REB	Saul's son Jonathan came to David at Horesh and gave him fresh courage in God's name: ...
TEV	Jonathan went to him there and encouraged him with assurances of God's protection,...

#### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

<i>God's Word™</i>	Saul's son Jonathan came to David at Horesh. He strengthened David's faith in the LORD.
JPS (Tanakh)	And Saul's son Jonathan came to David at Horesh and encouraged him in [the name of] God.

#### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	And Jonathan Saul's son rose, and went into the wood, to David [at Horesh, and strengthened his hand in God.
NASB	And Jonathan, Saul's son, arose and went to David at Horesh, and encouraged him in God.
<i>Young's Updated LT</i>	And Jonathan son of Saul rises, and goes unto David to the forest, and strengthens his hand in God,...

**What is the gist of this verse?** Jonathan is able to locate David in the woods, and he goes to him and encourages him.

## 1Samuel 23:16a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
qûwm (קוּם) [pronounced <i>koom</i> ]	<i>to stand, to rise up, to establish, to establish a vow, to cause a vow to stand, to confirm or to fulfill a vow</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6965 BDB #877
Y <sup>e</sup> hōwnâthân (יְהוֹנָתָן) [pronounced <i>y<sup>e</sup>-hoh-naw-THAWN</i> ]	alternate spelling; transliterated <i>Jonathan</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3083 (& #3129) BDB #220
bên (בֶּן) [pronounced <i>bane</i> ]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
Shâ'ûwl (שׂוּאֵל) [pronounced <i>shaw-OOL</i> ]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982

**Translation:** [Then Jonathan ben Saul took a stand...](#) The verb found here means both *to stand* and *to take a stand*. Jonathan did not announce to everyone that he supported David and that he was off to meet and show David his support; however, he did get up with the intention of finding David, and that was metaphorically taking a stand. Jonathan is called *the son of Saul* in contrast to his pro-David position.

## 1Samuel 23:16b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâlak <sup>e</sup> (הָלַךְ) [pronounced <i>haw-LAHK<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
'el (אֶל) [pronounced <i>el</i> ]	<i>unto, in, into, toward, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
Dâvid (דָּוִד); also Dâvîyd (דָּוִיִּד) [pronounced <i>daw-VEED</i> ]	<i>beloved and is transliterated David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187
chôresh (חֹרֶשׁ) [pronounced <i>KHOH-resh</i> ]	<i>wood, wooded, a thick wood, a thicket of trees; sometimes transliterated Horesh</i>	masculine singular noun (sometimes taken for a proper noun); with the directional hê	Strong's #2793 BDB #361

We find the directional hê with nouns, proper nouns and adverbs.

**Translation:** ...and went to David in the woods [or, in Horesh]... Jonathan, like his father, is brilliant. It is apparent that his father was informed that David was staying in that general area. Bear in mind that Saul was slightly psychotic and his emotions shifted periodically. So, despite his stand off against Jonathan when David did not show up to the New Moon Feast (1Sam. 20:24–34), this did not mean that he would remain forever estranged from Jonathan. It was not in David's interest for Jonathan to be completely on the outs with Saul either. Therefore, it is very likely that Saul and Jonathan had patched their somewhat shaky relationship and now traveled together to this area, based upon information that had been brought to Saul.

We would assume that while Saul and his forces are in this general area, that Jonathan takes a few hours and goes to where he believes David could be found. Another possibility is that Jonathan was approached by one of David's men. In any case, Jonathan is able to go to David. Whereas Saul and his men could comb these woods for David and not find him, Jonathan can venture into the woods and within an hour, find David's lookouts and be taken right to David. No doubt, David had left specific instructions concerning Jonathan, hoping that he would come as a part of Saul's search and destroy mission.

David has complete trust in Jonathan. David does not think that, because Jonathan is with Saul, that this is a quick and easy way for Jonathan to notify Saul of David's exact position. They have a bond and a trust which allows Jonathan to come into David's camp unafraid and allows David to trust Jonathan's word. Each man trusts the other with his life, a great testimony to their honor.

### 1Samuel 23:16c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
châzaq (חָזַק) [pronounced khaw-ZAHK]	<i>to bind someone with a girdle; to make strong, to strengthen; to fortify [a city]; to heal; to harden, to make obstinate</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Piel imperfect	Strong's #2388 BDB #304
ʿêth (אֵת) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
yâd (יָד) [pronounced yawd]	generally translated <i>hand</i>	feminine singular noun with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3027 BDB #388
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
ʿêlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	<i>gods or God; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43

**Translation:** ...and he strengthened his hand in Elohim. Both David and Jonathan shared a very strong faith in God. What Jonathan did here was to encourage David, and therefore strengthen him in God. David has no idea if this situation with Saul will ever be worked out and he does not know if he is going to remain a fugitive for the rest of his life. Jonathan, on the other hand, is apparently much more objective about this. He knows that David is Israel's next king; he knows that God does not lie; and therefore, it is clear that David will live through Saul's psychotic ventures and eventually David will become king over all Israel. Here, when it says that Jonathan

strengthens David's hand in God (or, *by means of God*), the idea is that Jonathan assures David that God promised him that he would become king and therefore David could trust God to both preserve him and to make him king.

The Targum reads *he strengthened him in the Word of the Lord*,<sup>22</sup> which rendering I like, but we have no evidence of that being correct either in the Hebrew or in the Greek.

What follows in the next verse is a small portion of Jonathan's encouragement to David in God.

**And so says unto him, "You will not fear for will not find you a hand of Saul my father and you are king over Israel and I am to you to a second; and also Saul my father knows so."**

1 Samuel  
23:17

**"Do not fear [lit., *you will not fear*]," he said to him, "for the hand of Saul my father will not find you. You will become king over Israel and I will be second to you; even my father knows [it is] so."**

**"Do not fear," he said to him, "for the hand of my father will not find you. You will become king over Israel and I will be your second-in-command; even my father knows this."**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### **Ancient texts:**

Masoretic Text	And so says unto him, "You will not fear for will not find you a hand of Saul my father and you are king over Israel and I am to you to a second; and also Saul my father knows so."
Septuagint	And he said to him, "Do not fear, for the hand of Saul my father will not find you; and you will be king over Israel, and I will be second to you; and Saul my father knows it."
Significant differences	None.

#### **Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:**

CEV	"Don't be afraid," Jonathan said. "My father Saul will never get his hands on you. In fact, you're going to be the next king of Israel, and I'll be your highest official. Even my father knows it's true."
NAB	He said to him: "Have no fear, my father Saul shall not lay a hand to you. You shall be king of Israel and I shall be second to you. Even my father Saul knows this."
NLT	"Don't be afraid," Jonathan reassured him. "My father will never find you! You are going to be the king of Israel, and I will be next to you, as my father is well aware."
TEV	...saying to him, "Don't be afraid. My father Saul won't be able to harm you. He knows very well that you are the one who will be the king of Israel and that I will be next in rank to you."

#### **Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

<i>God's Word</i> <sup>TM</sup>	"Don't be afraid," he told David, "my father Saul won't find you. You will rule Israel, and I will be your second-in-command. Even my father Saul knows this."
JPS (Tanakh)	He said to him, "Do not be afraid: the hand of my father Saul will never touch you. You are going to be king over Israel and I shall be second to you; and even my father Saul knows this is so."

<sup>22</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, 1Sam. 16.

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

NASB

Thus he said to him, "Do not be afraid, because the hand of Saul my father shall not find you, and you will be king over Israel and I will be next to you; and Saul my father knows that also."

Young's Updated LT

...and says unto him, "Fear not, for the hand of Saul my father does not find you, and you do reign over Israel, and I am to you for second, and also so knows Saul my father."

**What is the gist of this verse?** Jonathan tells David that there is no reason to fear, as (1) Saul will not find him and (2) David is destined to become the next king over Israel. Jonathan also expects to become second to David, and he testifies that his father is fully aware of all this.

1Samuel 23:17a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾâmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MARH]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
ʾel (אֶל) [pronounced el]	<i>unto, in, into, toward, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39
ʾal (אֲלֵ) [pronounced al]	<i>not; nothing; none</i>	adverb of negation; conjunction of prohibiting, dehorting, deprecating, desire that something <i>not</i> be done	Strong's #408 BDB #39.
yârêʾ (יָרַע) [pronounced yaw-RAY]	<i>to fear, to fear-respect, to reverence, to have a reverential respect</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3372 BDB #431

**Translation:** "Do not fear [lit., you will not fear]," he said to him,... Jonathan is brought up to see David and he first tells David that he has no reason to fear. David is with a rag tag army of misfits who surprisingly defeated a group of Philistines; however, even the people he rescued were willing to sell him out. Since David is on the run and since he does not have with him a well-trained army, he is a little nervous. Jonathan begins by trying to allay David's fears.

**Application:** God knows the right time to comfort His own. David was possibly afraid, and his men were definitely afraid from time to time (v. 3). Jonathan comes and reassures David in his flight from Saul. We may assume that David needed this comforting, and God comforted David through Jonathan. There will be times that are difficult for us. That is a given. God will see that we are comforted during those times.

## 1Samuel 23:17b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כי) [pronounced <i>kee</i> ]	<i>when, that, for, because</i>	conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
lô' (לא or לו) [pronounced <i>low</i> ]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
mâtsâ' (מצא) [pronounced <i>maw-TSAW</i> ]	<i>to attain to, to find, to detect, to happen upon, to come upon, to find unexpectedly, to discover</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect with a 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #4672 BDB #592
yâd (יד) [pronounced <i>yawd</i> ]	generally translated <i>hand</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #3027 BDB #388
Shâ'ûwl (שואל) [pronounced <i>shaw-OOL</i> ]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982
âb (אב) [pronounced <i>awb</i> ]	<i>father</i> , both as the head of a household or clan	masculine singular noun with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #1 BDB #3

**Translation:** ... “for the hand of Saul my father will not find you. Now Jonathan gives David two persuasive reasons why he should not be upset about his present state. First of all, Saul will not be able to find him. Jonathan obviously found David, but that was probably because David allowed himself to be found by Jonathan. When Jonathan was spotted by David’s lookouts, they probably went to him and brought him to David. However, Jonathan assures David that Saul will not find him. When it reads *the hand of Saul my father*, this is a metonymy for Saul and/or Saul’s army and/or Saul’s spies.

Jonathan also knows David much more intimately than does his father Saul. So Jonathan has the notion of where to go and look for David. Saul does not have a clue. If Saul hears a rumor, then he will saddle up his men and out they will go in hot pursuit. However, given the time period between hearing a rumor and acting upon it, David will be long gone. Knowing this, and recognizing how well David is hidden, Jonathan can assure David that his father will not find him.

## 1Samuel 23:17c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
attâh (אתה) [pronounced <i>ahT-TAW</i> ]	<i>you</i> (often, the verb <i>to be</i> is implied)	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #859 BDB #61
mâlak <sup>e</sup> (מלך) [pronounced <i>maw-LAHK<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>to reign, to become king or queen</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #4427 BDB #573



1Samuel 23:17c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced <i>gahl</i> ]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
Yis <sup>ra</sup> ʾêl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced <i>yis-raw-ALE</i> ]	transliterated <i>Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 BDB #975

**Translation:** *You will become king over Israel...* Here is the second reason that David is going to live through all of this. God has promised him that he will become king over all Israel. God does not lie; therefore, David has nothing to worry about. God will place him over Israel. Positionally, David has already been placed; in actuality, that will occur in the future. Jonathan is aware of this and David is aware of this. Jonathan essentially comforts David with Bible doctrine. The fact that David will become king over Israel is God's promise; the fact that Saul will not capture him is a matter of logical deduction from God's promise.

David is often a shadow of Christ to come, and his position here parallel's our Lord's royalty. Jesus Christ has been made King over this world; however, He has not assumed the throne yet—this will not occur until the Millennium, which is the 1000 year reign of Christ. David's army represent those men who have been called out of darkness into His light; they will rule with David just as we will rule with Christ.

You will remember that, back in 1Sam. 16, Samuel anointed David as king over all Israel. However, this would have been a private ceremony, and those in attendance would have been principally members of David's immediate family. However, Jonathan has amassed enough knowledge by this time, to recognize David as Israel's future king, and here, he says it aloud for the first time.

It is interesting that this had become common knowledge, that God told David, "*You will shepherd My people, Israel.*"

Public Awareness that God had Chosen David	
Incident	Text/
Samuel told King Saul directly that God had rejected him from being king over Israel because he disobeyed God.	1Sam. 15:10–29
David's family knew that David had been anointed king over all Israel. This would have been Jesse and 3 sons at the very least who knew of this.	1Sam. 16:1–13
People publically admired David as a soldier more than Saul, and Saul mused, " <i>What more can he have but the kingdom?</i> " (recall that at least Saul knew that God took his kingship from him).	1Sam. 18:5–9
After this, Saul began to try to kill David, which, no doubt, became known to some.	1Sam. 18:10–12
Because of David's wisdom and restraint, he became well-known among the people.	1Sam. 18:30

## Public Awareness that God had Chosen David

Incident	Text/
King Saul had a point in time when he was going to go after David, when the Spirit overtook Saul and he began to prophesy. We do not know the content of what he said, but the most logical thing would have been, prophecies about David coming to power. Such an interpretation would also help to explain why Saul stripped off all of his clothes. His clothes differentiate Saul from all other men, inasmuch as, they reveal that he is king. So for him to remove his clothes would go along with the message, "And God will remove the kingship from my dynasty and give it to David, just as I have removed my clothes."	1Sam. 19:23–24
David and Jonathan, Saul's son, made a pact in 1Sam. 20. Jonathan seems to understand that God would cut off all of David's enemies from before him, which is typically how a king dies and holds power. Jonathan asks that David spare his life. The only reason Jonathan's life would be in danger is, David takes the throne of Israel, and he removes all of his enemies, which would be the rival dynasty (Saul's). In the end, after Jonathan and David are able to see each other one more time, Jonathan makes certain that it is clear, that their covenant is to stand between David and Jonathan and between their descendants forever. If David is made king, then such an agreement between dynasties makes perfect sense.	1Sam. 20:12–17, 42
In the very last meeting between David and Jonathan, Jonathan clearly recognizes that David will be made king over all Israel. He will say, " <a href="#">Do not be afraid, because the hand of Saul my father will not find you and you will be king over Israel and I will be next to you, and Saul my fathers knows that as well.</a> "	1Sam. 23:16–18
David had a band of men with him. Early on, this numbered 600. This indicates natural leadership ability. We non-leaders have an ability to recognize a leader (or we think that we do); and at least 600 men recognized that David was a leader of men.	1Sam. 23:13
The most public pronouncement that David would become king was made by King Saul. Saul had gone off to a cave to relieve himself and to sleep. David was also in this cave, and David could have killed him, but he did not. After Saul left and was on another hill, far enough away where David was safe, David called out to Saul. When Saul realized that David could have killed him, but did not, Saul yelled back, in front of all of his soldiers and in front of all David's soldiers, " <a href="#">You are more righteous than I, for you have repaid me good, whereas I have repaid you evil. And you have declared this day how you have dealt well with me, in that you did not kill me when the LORD put me into your hands. For if a man finds his enemy, will he let him go away safe? So may the LORD reward you with good for what you have done to me this day. And now, behold, I know that you shall surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in your hand. Swear to me therefore by the LORD that you will not cut off my offspring after me, and that you will not destroy my name out of my father's house.</a> " (1Sam. 24:17b–21). It does not get much more public or clear than this.	1Sam. 24:1–22
Saul and David will once more meet up, while Saul is again pursuing David, and David not only does not kill Saul, but Saul publically recognizes that David will prevail in the end. Although Saul's statement here is not quite as clear as in 1Sam. 24, it is still a public statement where Saul recognizes that, in the end, David will prevail.	1Sam. 26:3–25
It ought to be clear that, if the King in the opposing dynasty publically recognizes that David will become king; and that the King's son, Jonathan, recognizes that same thing, then this thing is clearly public knowledge.	
This doctrine is also found in <a href="#">1Chron. 11:2</a> .	

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

1Samuel 23:17d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʾânôkîy (אֲנִי) [pronounced <i>awn-oh-KEE</i> ]	<i>I, me</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular personal pronoun (sometimes a verb is implied)	Strong's #595 BDB #59
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i> ]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <sup>e</sup> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	preposition with a 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <sup>e</sup> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
mish <sup>e</sup> neh (שֵׁנִי) [pronounced <i>mish<sup>e</sup>-NEH</i> ]	<i>double, copy, second</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #4932 BDB #1041

**Translation:** ...and I will be second to you;... You must recognize that this is a quotation from Jonathan. He expected to become Vice President of Israel. This does not mean that he will become second-in-command. The Bible simply assures us that this is what Jonathan said. God has never made a promise to Jonathan about this; it is something which Jonathan assumed would come to pass. You will note that Jonathan, even though he is in line to become king now, as his father is king, has no problem with being second-in-command. This is a mark of greatness on the part of Jonathan. There are only so many chiefs and so many vice-chiefs, but there are a lot more Indians. Not every mature believer will become a chief or assistant chief. Jonathan assumes that will be his position and he is fine with that. That shows true grace orientation. Another son might be doing everything possible to assist Saul in killing David, in order to assure that he would become top dog one day.

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown comment on Jonathan's words: *To talk with calm and assured confidence of himself and family being superseded by the man who was his friend by the bonds of a holy and solemn covenant, could only have been done by one who, superior to all views of worldly policy, looked at the course of things in the spirit and through the principles of that theocracy which acknowledged God as the only and supreme Sovereign of Israel. Neither history nor fiction depicts the movements of a friendship purer, nobler, and more self-denying than Jonathan's!*<sup>23</sup>

McGee remarks on the parallels between Jonathan and John the Baptizer. Neither man felt that they should be pre-eminent; John in fact, remarks, "He must increase and I must decrease." (John 3:30). Jonathan also recognized how David would eclipse him as well. However, neither man had a problem with it.

<sup>23</sup> Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; from e-sword, 1Sam. 23:16–17.

**Application:** There are people who will come up with you or even come up behind you and, at some point, they will surpass you financially or in authority. There were teachers which I began teaching with who eventually became administrators and principals. At no time did I feel jealous of their success, nor did I try to take advantage of our previous relationship. I have a younger brother who began a small company and achieved phenomenal success (at least, comparatively speaking). This does not bother me, nor am I jealous; nor am I doing everything possible to equalize our financial states. I am impressed and proud that he has achieved what he has achieved, and thankful to God that God has blessed him as much as He has.

**Application:** In your life, there will always be those who have more authority, more money, a larger house, a nicer car. There are also people who have less authority, less money, less of a house, and a crappier car. You don't look down on the latter group and you should not be jealous of the former group.

**Application:** God blesses you apart from your particular vocation in life. When you decide upon a vocation, you move in the direction that God leads you; where your interests and talents lie. If God is nudging you to become a teacher, a pastor, a missionary, a civil servant; don't think that God's blessings to you will be limited because you are not a lawyer or a doctor or a CEO. God is able to bless us in spite of us and in spite of our profession.

### 1 Samuel 23:17e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
gam (גַּם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i> ]	<i>also, furthermore, in addition to, even, moreover</i>	adverb	Strong's #1571 BDB #168
Shâ'ûwl (שׂוּאֵל) [pronounced <i>shaw-OOL</i> ]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982
â <sup>b</sup> v (אָבִי) [pronounced <i>aw<sup>b</sup>v</i> ]	<i>father</i> , both as the head of a household or clan	masculine singular noun with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #1 BDB #3
yâda <sup>c</sup> (יָדָעַ) [pronounced <i>yaw-DAHQ</i> ]	<i>to see; to know, to perceive, to acquire knowledge, to become acquainted, to know by experience, to have a knowledge of something</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #3045 BDB #393
kên (כֵּן) [pronounced <i>kane</i> ]	<i>so, thus; upright, honest; rightly, well; [it is] so, such, so constituted;</i>	properly, an active participle; used primarily as an adverb	Strong's #3651 BDB #485

**Translation:** ...[even my father knows \[it is\] so.](#)" This last statement is also very important. Saul knows that David is lined up to become king of Israel. He has been told that God has taken the crown from him and he has rightly deduced that David will become the next king. So, Saul, in his deepest heart, knows that his kingship is under a time-gun, and that David will succeed him.

McGee: *In essence, Jonathan is telling David that Saul knows what is going to happen but is fighting it. Saul is, of course, going against God's will. He is in complete rebellion against God. Jonathan, however, is willing to execute God's will. Jonathan's actions reveal that he is a great man.*<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> J. Vernon McGee; *I & II Samuel*; Thru the Bible Books; ©El Camino Press, 1976, La Verne, CA; p. 122.

**Application:** You cannot stop the progression of God's plan. You cannot make right wrong, or wrong right. At best, resistance will end in frustration; at worse, the sin leading to death. You cannot jump in front of an 80 mile an hour freight train and stop it; you might as well climb aboard, because you cannot change its direction. Even more than David, Jonathan recognizes God's will with regards to the kingship of Israel; he spends not one iota of energy trying to oppose that which he cannot.

I am certain that there are areas in your life which are not in line with God's mandates; and you want your way of thinking to be right, or your actions to be acceptable to God; however, deep inside, you know what you are doing is wrong; you know that your thinking is wrong. We often fight against that which we know is inevitable. One of the interesting phenomenons today is the obsession by some practicing homosexuals to clear themselves of being declared sinful by the Bible. They have infiltrated churches and denominations with the intent of seeing to it that their lifestyle receives Scriptural approval. Now, deep down, they know that God has condemned their lifestyle. However, they fight, just like Saul, a fight wherein they have already lost. Now, will homosexuals get a greater foothold in our society and in our churches? Probably, because we are a nation which is going down. But will they ever clear themselves of being declared guilty by God's Word? Never. That is an unwinnable battle, just like Saul here, who thinks at times that he might be able to find and kill David.

Allow me another tangent here: the fact that there are a large number of homosexuals who bend Scripture every possible way that they can to allow for their sinful behavior. Let's say that I chew gum with a fervor and the Koran declares that chewing gum is wrong and sinful. Do you know what? I couldn't care less. I wouldn't spend one iota of energy trying to show that the Koran had been misinterpreted and that it approves of chewing gum. This is because the Koran is not the Word of God. Homosexuals don't worry about the other so-called *holy* books; that is because these other books are not God's Word. There is only one book which they would like to bend and distort, and that is the Bible. In their deepest of hearts, they know that homosexual behavior is wrong and they know that the Bible is the Word of God and they know that it maintains that their actions are sinful.

**Application:** If you are continually or compulsively committing acts which are designated as sins in Scripture, you cannot win—you cannot distort Scripture to allow for these sins, you cannot sidestep God's discipline for committing these sins, and you cannot get out of the way of the natural fall out from these sins. If you are a drug addict and you continue to use drugs, then there are going to be a whole host of negative consequences which will result, no matter how well off you are to begin with (several celebrities have shown that to be true). This could result in permanent physical and mental damage, and even jail time, even if, at some point, you quit. On top of that, if you are a believer, you will be under divine discipline as well. There is nothing you can do which will neutralize that negative effects of continued usage, apart from rebounding occasionally (and rebound may not neutralize any of the physical and mental damage).<sup>25</sup> Now, take this same train of thought and apply it to any sin: homosexuality, gossiping, hatred, jealousy. We all have areas of weakness; there is no benefit in trying to flaunt our areas of weakness as not sinful or not as bad as someone else's area of weakness. Sin is sin, and sin will result in negative consequences.

**And so cut two of them a covenant to faces of Y<sup>e</sup>howah. And so remains David in the wood and Jonathan went to his house.**

1Samuel  
23:18

**The two of them made a pact before Y<sup>e</sup>howah. Then David remained in the woods [or, at Horesh] and Jonathan went to his home.**

**After the two of them made a pact before Jehovah, David remained where he was and Jonathan returned home.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### **Ancient texts:**

##### **Masoretic Text**

**And so cut two of them a covenant to faces of Y<sup>e</sup>howah. And so remains David in the wood and Jonathan went to his house.**

<sup>25</sup> Personal confession of sin directly to God.



Septuagint So they both made a covenant before the Lord. And David lived in Cæne, and Jonathan went to his house.

Significant differences .

**Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:**

CEV They both promised the LORD that they would always be loyal to each other. Then Jonathan went home, but David stayed at Horesh.  
 NAB They made a joint agreement before the LORD in Horesh, where David remained, while Jonathan returned to his home.  
 NLT So the two of them renewed their covenant of friendship before the LORD. Then Jonathan returned home, while David stayed at Horesh.

**Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

God's Word™ Both of them made a pledge in the LORD's presence. David stayed in Horesh, and Jonathan went home.  
 JPS (Tanakh) And the two of them entered into a pact before the LORD. David remained in Horesh, and Jonathan went home.

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

NASB So the two of them made a covenant before the LORD; and David stayed at Horesh while Jonathan went to his house.  
 Young's Updated LT And they make a covenant both of them before Jehovah; and David abides in the forest, and Jonathan has gone to his house.

**What is the gist of this verse?** David and Jonathan renew their pact with one another and then go their separate ways.

1Samuel 23:18a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
kârath (כָּרַת) [pronounced <i>kaw-RAHTH</i> ]	<i>to cut off, to cut down; to kill, to destroy; to make a covenant</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3772 BDB #503
sh <sup>e</sup> nayim (שְׁנַיִם) [pronounced <i>sh<sup>e</sup>NAH-yim</i> ]	<i>two of, a pair of, a duo of</i>	masculine plural numeral with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #8147 BDB #1040
b <sup>e</sup> rîyth (בְּרִית) [pronounced <i>b<sup>e</sup>reeth</i> ]	<i>pact, alliance, treaty, alliance, covenant</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #1285 BDB #136

In two printed editions, this is followed by the phrase *in the thicket* or *in the wilderness*.<sup>26</sup> The addition of this phrase is probably a copyist error, repeating the noun and preposition from below.

<sup>26</sup> Joseph Bryant Rotherham's *The Emphasized Bible*; ©1971 by Kregel Publications; p. 313.



## 1Samuel 23:18a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <sup>l</sup> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
pânîym (פָּנִים) [pronounced paw-NEEM]	<i>face, faces; presence</i>	masculine plural construct (plural acts like English singular)	Strong's #6440 BDB #815
Together, they mean <i>upon the face of, before, before the face of, in the presence of, in the sight of, in front of</i> . When used with God, it can take on the more figurative meaning <i>in the judgment of</i> .			
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i> ]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217

**Translation:** *The two of them made a pact before Y<sup>e</sup>howah.* Jonathan and David have, on previous occasions, made pacts with one another and have confessed their love for one another. However, what is different is that now, Saul is focused on an open attack upon David. He is doing everything that he can in order to kill David. It is not hidden from Jonathan and the various cities are aware of Saul's intent. So, at this point, David is a fugitive from the law.

The pact, although it comes from love, does result in a mutual benefit. Jonathan will not reveal to his father where David is (nor would he participate in an attack upon David) and David promises that Jonathan will be second-in-command. Although none of that is stated explicitly, we may infer that from what has already been said (vv. 16–17).

Now, you may wonder, *haven't these two made a bunch of pacts already?* And certainly they have; however, Abiathar the priest is in attendance; Gad the prophet may be there. So what we probably have is a very public covenant being made, before David's men and before God. Let's just quickly review the covenants which have been made between Jonathan and David:

### A List of the Covenants Between Jonathan and David

1. Saul called David in to speak to him after David had killed Goliath. Apparently, Jonathan was there and what David said caused Jonathan to love David (they were both men of great faith). Jonathan made a covenant with David and gave David his robe, armor, sword, bow and belt. If nothing else, this was symbolic of Jonathan passing his royal place to David. This was probably a fairly public display, with Saul and his cabinet looking on. At this point in time, Saul was not eaten up with bitterness toward David. Therefore, even though what Jonathan did was quite dramatic, Saul probably passed it off as youthful enthusiasm. 1Sam. 17:57–18:5
2. David and Jonathan met up in Ramah later, after David had let himself out his home window to escape Saul's soldiers. Jonathan at this time was not aware of Saul's plot to kill David; in fact, he thought that he had solved this problem back in 1Sam. 19:1–6. However, Jonathan did take David's concerns to heart, and planned to determine his father's intent at the New Moon festival. Jonathan vows to report back to David Saul's exact mood and intent and he asks David to remember him, when God removes all of David's enemies. 1Sam. 20:1–17
3. Jonathan reports back to David that his life is in danger, and they make another pact before God which would not only apply to them, but to their descendants. 1Sam. 20:41–42

## A List of the Covenants Between Jonathan and David

4. In our present passage, Jonathan finds David in the wilderness outside of Ziph and encourages him in God. They make another covenant before God, which is witnessed (probably) by Abiathar, who is the new High Priest. This will be the last time that David and Jonathan see one another. 1Sam. 23:15–18

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### 1Samuel 23:18b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâshab (בַּשָּׁב) [pronounced yaw-SHAH <sup>b</sup> V]	<i>to remain, to stay, to inhabit, to sit, to dwell</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3427 BDB #442
Dâvid (דָּוִד); also Dâvîyd (דָּוִיִּד) [pronounced daw-VEED]	<i>beloved and is transliterated David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
chôresh (בְּחֹרֶשׁ) [pronounced KHOH-resh]	<i>wood, wooded, a thick wood, a thicket of trees; sometimes transliterated Horesh</i>	masculine singular noun (sometimes taken for a proper noun); with the definite article	Strong's #2793 BDB #361

**Translation:** [Then David remained in the woods](#) [or, *at Horesh*]... David is comfortable with this particular place. It affords him a place from which he can observe those approaching, and the bulk of his men can remain hidden in the deeper woods. David is not aware that the Ziphites will give him up to Saul.

### 1Samuel 23:18c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וְ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
Y <sup>e</sup> hōwnâthân (יְהוֹנָתָן) [pronounced y <sup>e</sup> -hoh-naw-THAWN]	alternate spelling; transliterated <i>Jonathan</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3083 (& #3129) BDB #220
hâlak <sup>e</sup> (הָלַךְ) [pronounced haw-LAHK <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229

1Samuel 23:18c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <sup>l</sup> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
bayith (בַּיִת) [pronounced BAH-yith]	<i>house, household, habitation as well as inward</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1004 BDB #108

**Translation:** ...and Jonathan went to his home. Jonathan cannot join up with David, as he is, for all intents and purposes, David’s mole in Saul’s organization. He can both influence his father (although the influence has to be subtle and not anything that could be construed as a favor to David) and Jonathan can learn Saul’s plans and moves. In this position, he is potentially a great help to David.

What appears to be the case, given the verse to follow, is Saul and Jonathan and their army all return to Gibeah. It is possible that they went through Ziph or by Ziph, but they did not spend much time there (although, as we saw, Jonathan managed to find David). However, when the Ziphites realize that David is among them, they send a delegation to Saul to inform him of that (although it is possible that vv. 15–18 and vv. 19–29 have some overlap, that would be rather difficult to piece together and make sense of it).

We have two basic options to pursue here: Either Jonathan came with Saul or he did not. If he came with Saul, then he managed to slip away for a few hours to meet with David, as they were fairly close. Then Jonathan returns to his own home (he probably returned to Saul first and then took his leave). The purpose in doing this would be to throw Saul off; in this situation, Jonathan knew that Saul would send men to follow him and that Saul might even follow Jonathan himself. The only reason that I question this scenario is that it is not presented to us in that way. I would think that if this were Jonathan’s plan, then Scripture would have made us aware of it.

If Saul and Jonathan came together, then it is possible that Saul simply gave up the search. Jonathan returns to his home, as per our verse; and Saul is next to be found at his home in Gibeah, which is the next verse.

On the other hand, if Saul was out searching for David and Jonathan went out separately, then we apparently have all three men in the same general area at the same time (recall that in v. 15, David sees that Saul had come out to find him). Jonathan visits with David and then returns to his home. There would be no contact between Saul and David or Saul and Jonathan. In either case, there are no contradictions; we simply lack a complete diagram of these men’s movements.

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### The Ziphites Betray David to Saul

And so goes up Ziphites unto Saul the Gibeahward to say, “Is not David hiding himself with us in the strongholds in the wood in a hill of the Hachilah which [is] from a right of the wasteland?”

1Samuel  
23:19

The Ziphites then went up to Saul at Gibeah, [and] they said, “Isn’t David hiding himself near us in the [secure] hiding places of the woods [or, in Horesh] on the hill of Hachilah which [is] south of the desert region [or, Jeshimon]?”

The Ziphites then went to Saul at Gibeah and said to him, “David has hidden himself near us in specific hiding places in the woods on the hill of Hachilah, south of the desert region.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	And so goes up Ziphites unto Saul the Gibeah-ward to say, "Is not David hiding himself with us in the strongholds in the wood in a hill of the Hachilah which [is] from a right of the wasteland?"
Septuagint	And the Ziphites came up out of the dry country to Saul to the hill, saying, "Behold, is not David hidden with us in Messara, in the narrows of Cæne in the hill of Chela, which is on the right of Jessæmon?"

Significant differences .

### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	Some people from the town of Ziph went to Saul at Gibeah and said, "Your Majesty, David has a hideout not far from us! It's near Horesh, somewhere on Mount Hachilah south of Jeshimon.
NAB	Some of the Ziphites went up to Saul in Gibeah and said, "David is hiding among us, now in the refuges, and again at Horesh, or on the hill of Hachilah, south of the wasteland.
NLT	But now the men of Ziph went to Saul in Gibeah and betrayed David to him. "We know where David is hiding," they said. "He is in the strongholds of Horesh on the hill of Hakilah, which is in the southern part of Jeshimon.
TEV	Some people from Ziph went to Saul at Gibeah and said, "David is hiding out in our territory at Horesh on Mount Hachilah, in the southern part of the Judean wilderness.

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

<i>God's Word</i> <sup>TM</sup>	Then the men of Ziph went to Saul in Gibeah. They said, "David is hiding with us in fortified camps at Horesh on the hills of Hachilah, south of Jeshimon.
JPS (Tanakh)	Some Ziphites went up to Saul in Gibeah and said, "David is hiding among us in the strongholds of Horesh, at the hill of Hachilah south of Jeshimon. JPS footnote: <i>The meaning of many parts of 23.19 ff. is uncertain. The events described in 23.19–24.22 are partly paralleled in chapter 26, with variations.</i> <sup>27</sup>

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB	Then Ziphites came up to Saul at Gibeah, saying, "Is David not hiding with us in the strongholds at Horesh, on the hill of Hachilah, which is on the south [lit., <i>right side</i> ] of Jeshimon [or, <i>the desert</i> ]?"
<i>Young's Updated LT</i>	And the Ziphites go up to Saul to Gibeah, saying, "Is not David hiding himself with us in fortresses, in the forest, in the height of Hachilah, which is on the south of the desolate place?"

**What is the gist of this verse?** Some Ziphites blow David's cover by coming to Saul and telling him exactly where David was.

Because v. 19 is almost identical to 1Sam. 26:1, some assert that these are two different accounts of the same incident. However, the other details are so different that the most logical explanation is that these are different incidents which began similarly.

<sup>27</sup> *Tanakh, the Jewish Bible* by the Jewish Publication Society; ©1985; p. 456.

This verse is antithetical with v. 18. In v. 18, we have the expression of Jonathan's love and loyalty. In v. 19, we will see the treachery of the self-serving Ziphites. Since Saul had returned home, they could have easily turned a blind eye to David. After all, if Saul was unable to find David, then he should not fault them for not realizing that David was in their general vicinity.

1Samuel 23:19a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʿâlâh (עָלָה) [pronounced <i>gaw-LAWH</i> ]	<i>to go up, to ascend, to rise, to climb</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5927 BDB #748
zîphîym (זִיפְיִים) [pronounced <i>zee-FĒEM</i> ]	transliterated <i>Ziphites</i>	plural gentilic adjective	Strong's #2130 BDB #268
ʿel (עַל) [pronounced <i>el</i> ]	<i>unto, in, into, toward, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39
Shâ`ûwl (שָׂאֻל) [pronounced <i>shaw-OOL</i> ]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982
Gib <sup>er</sup> âh (גִּבְעָה) [pronounced <i>gĭv<sup>er</sup>-ĠAW</i> ]	transliterated <i>Gibeah</i> ; this same word means <i>hill</i>	proper feminine singular noun; with the definite article and directional hê	Strong's #1390 BDB #149

**Translation:** [The Ziphites then went up to Saul at Gibeah,...](#) Recall that Saul had been in the area of the Ziphites, as David saw that he was out seeking his life. I suspect that what Saul did at Nob convinced many people that the best thing for them to do was to give David up, no matter what the circumstance. The citizens of Keilah would have given David up, if faced with that decision; and here, the Ziphites give David up. They knew that David was in their general area because you cannot simply hide 600 men. No doubt, David or his men had to come into town for supplies and the people of Ziph knew what would happen if Saul later found this out. So they determined that their best course of action would be to go to Saul directly.

The fact that Saul is in Gibeah indicates that, although David observed Saul searching for him (v. 15), Saul gave up this search and returned to his home, as did Jonathan.

1Samuel 23:19b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <i>l<sup>e</sup></i> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
ʿâmar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MARH</i> ]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #559 BDB #55

## 1Samuel 23:19b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hă (הַ) [pronounced <i>heh</i> ]		interrogative particle which acts almost like a piece of punctuation, like the upside-down question mark which begins a Spanish sentence. The verb <i>to be</i> may be implied.	Strong's #none BDB #209
lô' (לוֹא or לֹא) [pronounced <i>low</i> ]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
Dâvid (דָּוִד); also Dâvîyd (דָּוִיִד) [pronounced <i>daw-VEED</i> ]	<i>beloved</i> and is transliterated <i>David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187
çâthar (סָתַר) [pronounced <i>saw-THAR</i> ]	<i>to hide oneself</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Hithpael imperfect	Strong's #5641 BDB #711
ʿîm (עִם) [pronounced <i>geem</i> ]	<i>with, at, by, near</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity with a 1 <sup>st</sup> person plural suffix	Strong's #5973 BDB #767

**Translation:** ...[and] they said, “Isn’t David hiding himself near us... They inform Saul by using a question. Possibly, the idea here is to acknowledge that Saul knows also where David is. It is as if they go to Saul and ask, “Of course, you know that David is hidden out in the hills near Ziph, right?” In this way, they do not insult Saul, and they do not appear to give David away, as they ask with the assumption that Saul knows the answer to this question. You may ask, *why do they frame this information in question form? Is this the origin of Jeopardy?* The idea is, Saul was there in that general vicinity; he and his army went through there not but a week previous, and suddenly, they picked up and returned to Gibeah. The people of Ziph are nonplused. Saul is searching for David in the Ziph area; David was in the Ziph area; and now Saul is at home. “You know, O King, that David is hiding in Ziph, don’t you?” is the gist of this question.

## 1Samuel 23:19c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
m <sup>e</sup> tsâd (מִצְדָּ) [pronounced <i>m<sup>e</sup>-TSAWD</i> ]	<i>the top or summit [of a mountain]; a fortress, a mountain castle; a stronghold; [secure] hiding place</i>	feminine plural noun	Strong's #4679 BDB #844

This can refer both to *where* hunters to go to seek their prey and to *where* prey might flee to as a safe retreat from those hunting them. The latter understanding is very apropos for this context.



## 1Samuel 23:19c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
chôresh (חֹרֶשׁ) [pronounced KHOH-resh]	<i>wood, wooded, a thick wood, a thicket of trees; sometimes transliterated Horesh</i>	masculine singular noun (sometimes taken for a proper noun); with the definite article	Strong's #2793 BDB #361

**Translation:** ...in the [secure] hiding places of the woods [or, in Horesh]... This is a very general description of where David is. Ziph is probably surrounded by woods in that day, many of which have secure hiding places. So, the first portion of the description simply tells Saul that David and his men are in the area of Ziph, in the woods, in various secure hiding places.

## 1Samuel 23:19d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
gib <sup>e</sup> âh (גִּבְעָה) [pronounced gib <sup>eh</sup> -GAW]	<i>hill; this same word is transliterated Gibeah</i>	feminine singular noun construct	Strong's #1389 BDB #148
Chăkiylâh (חֲכִילָה) [pronounced khuh-kee-LAW]	<i>dark, gloomy; and is transliterated Hachilah</i>	Proper noun location with the definite article	Strong's #2444 BDB #314

Two or three early printed editions read *Habilah* instead.<sup>28</sup> Since I cannot find a Hebrew word which corresponds with that, we can reasonably assume that *Habilah* is a mistake (it would resemble *Hachilah* very much in the Hebrew).

ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	<i>that, which, when, who</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
min (מִן) [pronounced min]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, above, beyond, more than, greater than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
yâmîyn (יְמִינִי) [pronounced yaw-MEEN]	<i>the right hand, the right side, on the right, at the right; the south</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #3225 BDB #411

<sup>28</sup> Joseph Bryant Rotherham's *The Emphasized Bible*; ©1971 by Kregel Publications; p. 313.

## 1 Samuel 23:19d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
y <sup>e</sup> shîymôwn (יְשִׁימוֹן) [pronounced y <sup>e</sup> -shee-MOAN]	desert, wasteland, waste-place	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #3452 BDB #445

Some translations occasionally render this *Jeshimon*, as a proper noun. Given the meaning of y<sup>e</sup>shîymôwn, this is probably a moot point.

**Translation:** ...on the hill of Hachilah which [is] south of the desert region [or, *Jeshimon*]? Here is where they become much more specific. There is a specific hill where David is, and it is south of a barren or desert region.

By itself, *jeshimon* simply refers to a desert area or waste-place. However, with the definite article, it appears to refer to one of two specific places: a specific wilderness area in southern Judah, southeast of Hebron and in the general observable vicinity of Ziph (1Sam. 23:19, 24 26:1, 3). The second is a barren area, northeast of the Dead Sea, in the region of Pisgah in Moab (Num. 21:20 23:28).<sup>29</sup> Given that this is the Mideast, there is no reason to think that only one specific area got called *Jeshimon*.

Gill gives us a very good idea as to the general area where David is: *Hachilah is by Jerome<sup>30</sup> called Echela; and he speaks of a village of that name seven miles from Eleutheropolis, and of Jeshimon as ten miles from Jericho to the south, near the dead sea; on the top of this hill, which was an ascent of thirty furlongs or about four miles, Jonathan the high priest built a castle, and called it Masada, often spoken of by Josephus; who says, that Herod built a wall around it of seven furlongs or about a mile, twelve cubits high, and eight broad, and thirty seven towers of fifty cubits stood in it.*<sup>31</sup>

Surprisingly enough, the MacMillan Bible Atlas has no listing for Hachilah or for Jeshimon; however according to this Bible Atlas, Masada is about 15 miles southwest of the wilderness of Ziph (which is apparently southeast of Ziph proper). For Jeshimon to be only 10 miles south of Jericho (as per Jerome) would not be at all in keeping with the MacMillan Bible Atlas (this would place it about 20 miles outside of this general area).<sup>32</sup> Either the mileage given above is off, or Jerome is simply wrong.

Keil and Delitzsch explain to us just exactly how these men know where David is hiding: *The hill of Ziph is a flattened hill standing by itself, of about a hundred feet in height. "There is no spot from which you can obtain a better view of David's wanderings backwards and forwards in the desert than from the hill of Ziph, which affords a true panorama. The Ziphites could see David and his men moving to and fro in the mountains of the desert of Ziph, and could also perceive how he showed himself in the distance upon the hill Hachilah on the south side of Ziph (which lies to the right by the desert); whereupon they sent as quickly as possible to Saul, and betrayed to him the hiding-place of his enemy" (v. de Velde, ii. pp. 104-5).*<sup>33</sup>

<sup>29</sup> This information was paraphrased from *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; Merrill Tenney, ed., Zondervan Publishing House, ©1976; Vol. 3, p. 495.

<sup>30</sup> Gill has *Jerom* instead.

<sup>31</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, 1Sam. 23:19. The Jerome's quote is from De loc. Heb. fol. 91. C. and the quote from Josephus is from De Bello Jud. I. 7. c. 8. sect. 3. Vid. Adrichom. Theatrum T. S. p. 38. 2. & 39. 1.

<sup>32</sup> See *The MacMillan Bible Atlas*; 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition; Aharoni, Avi-Yonah, Rainey, and Safrai; MacMillan; ©1993 by Carta; p. 73 and 91 (maps 92 and 119).

<sup>33</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; 1Sam. 23:18–20. The bulk of the quotation is obviously Van de Velde's. Jamieson, Fausset and Brown give us essentially the same information: Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; from e-sword, 1Sam. 23:19–23.

Although it is certainly possible that this verse occurred prior to v. 15, and that vv. 25–29 immediately follow v. 15 (that is, Saul does not return home, but goes directly to Ziph based upon the information of these Ziphites); that certainly provides us with a much less natural and more convoluted read.<sup>34</sup>

And now to all of a desire of your soul, the king, to come down, come down. And to us, ‘Deliver him into a hand of the king.’ ”

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23:20

Therefore, regarding all the desire of your soul, O King, to come down, come down [to Ziph], and [say] to us, ‘Deliver him into the hand of the king!’ ”

Therefore, come down to Ziph, as is the desire of your heart, O King, and order us to surrender David to your hand.”

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	And now to all of a desire of your soul, the king, to come down, come down. And to us, ‘Deliver him into a hand of the king.’ ”
Septuagint	And now according to] all the king’s desire to come down, let him come down to us; they have shut him up into the hands of the king.”

Significant differences .

#### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	If you come, we will help you catch him.”
NJB	Now whenever you wish to go down, my lord king, do so; we shall make it our task to hand him over to the king.’
NLT	Come down whenever you’re ready, O king, and we will catch him and hand him over to you!”
TEV	We know, Your Majesty, how much you want to capture him; so come to our territory, and we will make sure that you catch him.”

#### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God’s Word™	Come, Your Majesty, whenever you want. We will hand him over to you.”
JPS (Tanakh)	So if Your Majesty has the desire to come down, come down, and it will be our task to deliver him into Your Majesty’s hands.”

#### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Keil and Delitzsch (revised)	“And now, according to all the desire of your soul, O king, to come down [from Gibeah, which stood upon higher ground], come down, and it is in us to deliver him [David] into the hand of the king.”
NASB	“Now then, O king, come down according to all the desire of your soul to do [lit., to come down] so; and our part shall be to surrender him into the king’s hand.”
NRSV	Now, O king, whenever you wish to come down, do so; and our part will be to surrender him into the king’s hand.”
Young’s Updated LT	And, now, by all the desire of your soul, O king, to come down, come down, and ours is to shut him up into the hand of the king.”

<sup>34</sup> I mention some of these alternatives in case there is a detail or two which later proves to be a better fit to the alternate understanding.

**What is the gist of this verse?** The Ziphites recognize the sovereignty of King Saul, telling him that if he wishes, then come down to Ziph and they will surrender David to him.

<b>1Samuel 23:20a</b>			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʿattâh (עַתָּה) [pronounced <i>gahT-TAWH</i> ]	<i>now, at this time, already</i>	adverb of time	Strong's #6258 BDB #773
When followed by an imperative or an interrogative, w <sup>e</sup> + the adverb ʿattâh mean <i>and so, thus, things being so, therefore</i> . Sometimes, the concept of time is lost when this combination is used to incite another.			
lâmed (ל) (pronounced l <sup>e</sup> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	preposition with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person plural suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i> ]	<i>every, each, all of, all; any of</i>	masculine singular construct not followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
ʿavvâh (אַוְוָה) [pronounced <i>ahv-VAW</i> ]	<i>desire, lust; pleasure, will</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #185 BDB #16
nephesh (נֶפֶשׁ) [pronounced <i>NEH-fesh</i> ]	<i>soul, life, living being, desire</i>	feminine singular noun with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5315 BDB #659
melek <sup>e</sup> (מֶלֶךְ) [pronounced <i>MEH-lek</i> ]	<i>king, ruler, prince</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4428 BDB #572
lâmed (ל) (pronounced l <sup>e</sup> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
yârad (יָרַד) [pronounced <i>yaw-RAHD</i> ]	<i>to descend, to go down</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #3381 BDB #432
yârad (יָרַד) [pronounced <i>yaw-RAHD</i> ]	<i>to descend, to go down</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperative	Strong's #3381 BDB #432

**Translation:** *Therefore, regarding all the desire of your soul, O King, to come down, come down [to Ziph],...* What the Ziphites do here is recognize the authority of King Saul, saying, essentially, "If it is your desire to come down, then, by all means, come down to Ziph." Even though the imperative is used, it is prefaced with a phrase which recognizes the king's sovereignty in this matter. Obviously, little thought whatsoever is given to what is right or wrong in this matter. At best, these Ziphites may have determined that it was better for David to die rather than all of Ziph (which rationalization is not actually given to us).

## 1Samuel 23:20b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lâmed (ל) (pronounced l <sup>e</sup> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	preposition with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person plural suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
çâgar (גַּרַּח) [pronounced <i>saw-GAHR</i> ]	<i>to deliver over, to deliver over for imprisonment, to deliver up (when followed by `el)</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Hiphil imperative with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5462 BDB #688
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
yâd (יָד) [pronounced <i>yawd</i> ]	generally translated <i>hand</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #3027 BDB #388
melek <sup>e</sup> (מֶלֶךְ) [pronounced <i>MĒH-lek</i> ]	<i>king, ruler, prince</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4428 BDB #572

**Translation:** ...and [say] to us, 'Deliver him into the hand of the king!' " When I first glanced at the morphology of the verb here, I wondered, *how is this supposed to work?* However, the idea is that this is to be spoken by Saul to the men of Ziph: "You deliver over David into the hand of the King!" Saul was already there, and he did not capture David (he could not even find David). These Ziphites tell him, "Just say the word; we will deliver him into your hand."

I hope you recognize the parallel which we find here (although it is not very exact). David here is a Christ figure, as he will be several times in the future. He is surrounded with a relatively small band of men, pursued by religious authorities. Certain influential members of the general population are only too glad to give him up, despite the good that he has done for the Jews. David has been promised the throne by God, but does not possess it, just as Jesus is promised to rule over the earth, but, in His first advent, He functioned more like an outcast.

**And so says Saul, "Blessing [to] you to Y<sup>e</sup>howah for you have had compassion upon me.**

1Samuel  
23:21

**Then Saul said, "Blessings [upon] you with reference to Y<sup>e</sup>howah for you have had compassion on me.**

**Then Saul said, "Blessings from Y<sup>e</sup>howah to all of you for you have been compassionate towards me.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text

And so says Saul, "Blessing [to] you to Y<sup>e</sup>howah for you have had compassion upon me.

Septuagint

And Saul said to them, "Blessed [are] you of the Lord, for you have been grieved on my account.

Significant differences

**Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:**

CEV Saul told them: You've done me a big favor, and I pray that the LORD will bless you.  
 NLT "The LORD bless you," Saul said. "At last someone is concerned about me!  
 REB Saul replied, 'The LORD's blessing on you; you have rendered me a service.  
 TEV Saul answered, "May the LORD bless you for being so kind to me!"

**Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

God's Word™ Saul responded, "The LORD bless you for feeling sorry for me!  
 JPS (Tanakh) And Saul replied, "May you be blessed of the LORD for the compassion you have shown me!"

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

NASB And Saul said, "May you be blessed of the LORD; for you have had compassion on me.  
 Young's Updated LT And Saul says, "Blessed are you of Jehovah, for you have pity on me;...

**What is the gist of this verse?** Because these men have come and told Saul where David is to be found, he wishes God's blessings to them.

1Samuel 23:21a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MARH</i> ]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
Shâ'ûwl (שׂאוּל) [pronounced <i>shaw-OOL</i> ]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982
bârak <sup>e</sup> (בָּרַךְ) [pronounced <i>baw-RAHK<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>to kneel down, to bend there knees, and therefore to invoke God, to ask for a blessing, to bless</i>	masculine plural, Qal passive participle	Strong's #1288 BDB #138
ʾattem (אַתֶּם) [pronounced <i>ahT-TEM</i> ]	<i>you all, you guys, you (often, the verb to be is implied)</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural, personal pronoun	Strong's #859 BDB #61
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <i>l<sup>e</sup></i> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
YHWH (יְהוָה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i> ]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y<sup>e</sup>howah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217

**Translation:** Then Saul said, "Blessings [upon] you with reference to Y<sup>e</sup>howah... Saul wishes blessings and prosperity to them in all things related to God (which is all things). Recall the parallel which I drew between David



being persecuted by Saul and Jesus being persecuted by the religious hierarchy; here is another parallel: Saul acts as though this betrayal of David is an act of compassion and an act worthy of being blessed by God. The religious hierarchy were also this confused, believing that they did to Jesus what God required.

1Samuel 23:21b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	when, that, for, because	conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
châmal (חַמַּל) [pronounced khaw-MAHL]	to spare, to have compassion, to show mercy	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #2550 BDB #328
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced gahl]	upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside	preposition of proximity with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person plural suffix	Strong's #5921 BDB #752

**Translation:** ...for you have had compassion on me. Saul continues. These men are blessed because they have shown Saul compassion—something which he does not show, unless it is clearly outside the will of God. Quite obviously, the Ziphites do not come to Saul out of compassion. They do not want to be slaughtered like the people of Nob; therefore, they are willing to give up David. You see, no one, apart from David (and perhaps Abiathar and Doeg) really know the true circumstances of Nob; that David deceived Ahimelech, the High Priest, in order to get food and a weapon. What the general population does know is that, Ahimelech, in conjunction with the other priests, provided David with sustenance, a weapon and divine guidance. For all intents and purposes, the priestly city allied themselves to David, and Saul annihilated the entire city for this. Whether the population actually views David as a revolutionary or not, which is how Saul paints him, is uncertain. However, there is no compassion here; just a desire for self-preservation.

Edersheim comments: *It is pitiable to hear Saul in the madness of his passion invoking on such men “the blessing of Jehovah,” and characterizing their deed as one of “compassion on himself.”*<sup>35</sup>

**Go, please; establish again and know and see which are his feet; who has seen him there for he said unto me, ‘Being crafty, he is crafty—[even] he.’** 1Samuel 23:22

**Go, please, [and] establish [this information] again. Know and see the place where his feet are, [and] who has seen him there, for one has said to me, ‘He—[even] he—is extremely crafty [and shrewd].’**

**Return and again reestablish this information that you have brought to me. Know and see for certain where David is and tell me who has actually seen him there, for I have been told that David is exceptionally crafty and shrewd.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

**Ancient texts:**

Masoretic Text

Go, please; establish again and know and see which are his feet; who has seen him there for he said unto me, ‘Being crafty, he is crafty—[even] he.’

Septuagint

Go, I pray you, and make preparation yet, and notice his place where his foot will be, quickly, in that place which you spoke of, lest by any means he should deal craftily.

<sup>35</sup> Alfred Edersheim, *Bible History Old Testament*; ©1995 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; p. 492.

## Significant differences

**Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:**

CEV	Now please do just a little more for me. Find out exactly where David is, as well as where he goes, and who has seen him there. I've been told that he's very tricky.
NAB	Go now and make sure once your more! Take note of the place where he sets foot" (for he thought, perhaps they are playing some trick on me).
NJB	Go and make doubly sure, find out exactly what place he requests, for I have been told that he is very cunning.
NLT	Go and check again to be sure of where he is staying and who has seen him there, for I know that he is very crafty.

**Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

<i>God's Word™</i>	Please make more plans, and watch where he goes. Who has seen him there? I'm told he's very clever.
JPS (Tanakh)	Go now and prepare further. Look around and learn what places he sets foot on [and] who has seen him there, for I have been told he is a very cunning fellow.

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

NASB	"Go now, make more sure, and investigate and see his place where his haunt [lit., <i>foot</i> ] is, <i>and</i> who has seen him there; for I am told that he is very cunning.
NRSV	Go and make sure once more; find out exactly where he is, and who has seen him there; for I am told that he is very cunning.
<i>Young's Updated LT</i>	Go, I pray you, prepare yet, and know and see his place where his foot is; who has seen him there? For one has said unto me, He is very subtle."

**What is the gist of this verse?** Saul asks these men to confirm their sighting of David and to determine just exactly where David is.

**1 Samuel 23:22a**

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hâlak <sup>e</sup> (הָלַךְ) [pronounced <i>haw-LAHK<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>go, come, depart, walk; advance</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperative	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
nâ` (נָא) [pronounced <i>naw</i> ]	<i>please, I pray you, I respectfully implore (ask, or request of) you, I urge you</i>	particle of entreaty	Strong's #4994 BDB #609
Although two early printed editions, the Septuagint and the Vulgate all insert the conjunction <i>and</i> here, <sup>36</sup> it is very common in the Hebrew to have two imperatives together without an intervening conjunction (whereas, in the English, we would nearly always have the intervening conjunction).			
kûwn (כּוּן) [pronounced <i>koon</i> ]	<i>to erect (to stand up perpendicular), to establish, to prepare, to be stabilized</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural, Hiphil imperative	Strong's #3559 BDB #465

<sup>36</sup> Joseph Bryant Rotherham's *The Emphasized Bible*; ©1971 by Kregel Publications; p. 313.

## 1Samuel 23:22a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿôwd (עוּד) [pronounced <i>gohd</i> ]	<i>still, yet, again, besides, in addition to, even yet</i>	adverb	Strong's #5750 BDB #728

**Translation:** [Go, please, \[and\] establish \[this information\] again.](#) This may strike you as odd that Saul is told just exactly where David is and he tells these men, “Go back and make sure of this.” After all, if this is such an obsession with him, why doesn't he simply saddle up and go after David? There are probably two reasons why Saul does not immediately pursue David: (1) After the incident at Nob, we don't know how many tips have been brought to the palace. Even though this is a legitimate sighting, we are never told how many others came to Saul with similar information. (2) Saul just recently returned from an unfruitful search for David. Certainly, the places that he went were motivated by tips and reasonable guess work; however, Saul was unable to actually find David (although Jonathan was able to). So Saul was no doubt tired, frustrated, and fairly certain that he could not simply saddle up and go find David. So, he therefore wants this tip to be confirmed and therefore reliable.

## 1Samuel 23:22b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
yâda <sup>c</sup> (יָדָע) [pronounced <i>yaw-DAHG</i> ]	<i>to see; to know, to perceive, to acquire knowledge, to become acquainted, to know by experience, to have a knowledge of something</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperative	Strong's #3045 BDB #393
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
râ`âh (רָאָה) [pronounced <i>raw-AWH</i> ]	<i>to see, to look, to look at, to view, to behold; to perceive, to understand, to learn, to know</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperative	Strong's #7200 BDB #906
ʿêth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i> ]	generally untranslated	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
mâqôwm (מָקוֹם) [pronounced <i>maw-KOHM</i> ]	<i>place, situated; for a soldier, it may mean where he is stationed; for people in general, it would be their place of abode (which could be their house or their town)</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #4725 BDB #879
ʿăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>ash-ER</i> ]	<i>that, which, when, who</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i> ]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224

## 1Samuel 23:22b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
regel (רֶגֶל) [pronounced <i>REH-gel</i> ]	<i>foot, feet</i>	feminine dual noun with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7272 BDB #919

**Translation:** *Know and see the place where his feet are,...* Saul asks that these men confirm exactly where David is right now at this time. They are *to know* where his is and *to see* where David is. Saul does not want this to be simply some person who saw someone else who appeared to look like David. He doesn't want the word of one man who heard that another man saw David. Recall, there are no newspapers; there are no photographs; therefore, a relatively small number of people actually know what David looks like. The only reason that he can be found at all is that David is short, red-haired, and a leader of men. And, again, we do not know how many delegations have come to Saul claiming that they know where David is. When police ask for help from the public on tip lines, some of the more dramatic stories might receive thousands of tips, very few of which might be helpful.

## 1Samuel 23:22c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
mîy (מִי) [pronounced <i>mee</i> ]	<i>who; occasionally rendered how, in what way</i>	pronominal interrogative	Strong's #4310 BDB #566
râ`âh (רָאָה) [pronounced <i>raw-AWH</i> ]	<i>to see, to look, to look at, to view, to behold; to perceive, to understand, to learn, to know</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7200 BDB #906
shâm (שָׁם) [pronounced <i>shawm</i> ]	<i>there; at that time, then; therein, in that thing</i>	adverb	Strong's #8033 BDB #1027

**Translation:** *...[and] who has seen him there,...* Saul just doesn't want confirmation that David has been in such and such a place; he wants someone who has actually seen David there; he wants to know *who* claims to have seen David. Here, *mîy* is not used as an interrogative, but more like a pronoun. Saul does not want to hear that David has been seen, or that someone knows someone who has seen David. Saul wants a witness who is reliable and willing to say, "I personally saw David." Saul wants to interview an actual witness, which seems to imply that these men who have come to Saul have not themselves seen David.

## 1Samuel 23:22d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced <i>kee</i> ]	<i>when, that, for, because</i>	conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
`amar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MARH</i> ]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55

## 1Samuel 23:22d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
עַל (אֶל) [pronounced e/]	unto, in, into, toward, to, regarding, against	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39
עָרֹם (עָרַם) [pronounced aw-ROHM]	to be shrewd, to be crafty, to be naked, to uncover	Qal infinitive absolute	Strong's #6191 BDB #791
עָרֹם (עָרַם) [pronounced aw-ROHM]	to be shrewd, to be crafty, to be naked, to uncover	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6191 BDB #791
הוּא (הוא) [pronounced hoo]	he, it	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #1931 BDB #214

**Translation:** ...for one has said to me, 'He—[even] he—is extremely crafty [and shrewd].' Or, more colloquially, "The dude is slick." Whether someone actually came up to Saul and told him that David was extremely crafty is up for debate. However, Saul certainly knew from personal experience that David was extremely intelligent and a formidable opponent, even though David has never directly opposed Saul.

And see and know from all the hiding places that he hides [himself] there and you have returned unto me unto a firmly established [thing] and I have gone with you. And he is if being in the land and I have searched out him in all [the] thousands of Judah."

1Samuel  
23:23

See and take note [lit., *know*] of all the hiding places where he hides [himself] and when you have returned to me with a firmly established [area], then I will go with you. And if it is [that] he is living [lit., *being*] in the land, then I will search him out among all the thousands in Judah."

See and take note of all his hiding places and when you have returned to me with a firmly established area, then I will go back with you. And if he is still living in the land, then I will search him out among all the thousands in Judah."

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

##### Masoretic Text

And see and know from all the hiding places that he hides [himself] there and you have returned unto me unto a firmly established [thing] and I have gone with you. And he is if being in the land and I have searched out him in all [the] thousands of Judah."

##### Septuagint

Take notice, then, and learn, and I will go with you. And it will come to pass that if he is in the land, I will search him out among all the thousands of Juda.

#### Significant differences

#### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

##### CEV

Find out where all his hiding places are and come back when you're sure. Then I'll go with you. If he is still in the area, or anywhere among the clans of Judah, I'll find him.

- NLT Discover his hiding places, and come back with a more definite report. Then I'll go with you. And if he is in the area at all, I'll track him down, even if I have to search every hiding place in Judah!"
- TEV Find out exactly the places where he hides, and be sure to bring back a report to me right away. Then I will go with you, and if he is still in the region, I will hunt him down even if I have to search the whole land of Judah."

**Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

- God's Word™ Watch and learn about all the hiding places where he may be hiding, and come back to me with the facts. Then I'll go with you, and if he's in the country, I'll search for him among all the families of Judah."
- JPS (Tanakh) Look around and learn in which of all his hiding laces he has been hiding, and return to me when you are certain. I will then go with you, and if he is in the region, I will search him out among all the clans of Judah."

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

- NASB "So look, and learn about all the hiding places where he hides himself, and return to me with certainty, and I will go with you; and it shall come about if he is in the land that I will search him out among all the thousands of Judah."
- Young's Updated LT And see and know of all the hiding-places where he hides himself, and you have turned back unto me prepared, and I have gone with you, and it has been, if he is in the land, that I have searched him out through all the thousands of Judah."

**What is the gist of this verse?** Saul knows that David moves around, so he wants a report of all his hiding places, so that if he can't be found in place A, Saul can then move to place B.

<b>1Samuel 23:23a</b>			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
râ`âh (רָאָה) [pronounced <i>raw-AWH</i> ]	<i>to see, to look, to look at, to view, to behold; to perceive, to understand, to learn, to know</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperative	Strong's #7200 BDB #906
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
yâda` (יָדָע) [pronounced <i>yaw-DAHQ</i> ]	<i>know; see; perceive, acquire knowledge, become acquainted, know by experience, have a knowledge of something</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperative	Strong's #3045 BDB #393
The verb order is reversed in 3 early printed editions and in the Vulgate and Septuagint. <sup>37</sup> However, I don't see how that would affect the overall meaning.			

<sup>37</sup> Joseph Bryant Rotherham's *The Emphasized Bible*; ©1971 by Kregel Publications; p. 313.



## 1Samuel 23:23a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i> ]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, above, beyond, more than, greater than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i> ]	with a plural noun, it is rendered <i>all of; any of</i>	masculine singular construct with a masculine plural noun	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
Literally, they mean <i>from all...</i> However, together, various literal translations give the following renderings: <i>about all, of all</i> . These are taken from over a half-dozen literal translations for 1Sam. 23:23.			
machăbê' (מַחְבֵּ'א) [pronounced <i>mah-khuh<sup>b</sup>-VAY</i> ]	<i>a hiding place, a hiding</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #4224 BDB #285
'ăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>ash-ER</i> ]	<i>that, which, when, who</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
châbâ' (חָבֵא) [pronounced <i>khaw<sup>b</sup>-VAW</i> ]	<i>to withdraw, to hide; to hide themselves (in the plural Hithpael)</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Hithpael imperfect	Strong's #2244 BDB #285
shâm (שָׁמָּה) [pronounced <i>shawm</i> ]	<i>there; at that time, then; therein, in that thing</i>	adverb	Strong's #8033 BDB #1027

**Translation:** See and take note [lit., know] of all the hiding places where he hides [himself]... My thinking is that Saul has spent a long time searching for David and has come up empty. It is also possible that many have reported to Saul various sightings of David as well, for fear that any silence could result in their deaths. Saul is a realist here. These men were willing to come all this way to tell him of where David was; he sends them back to do his footwork for him. He wants these men to actually observe where David is hiding and to take a mental note of these places.

## 1Samuel 23:23b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וְ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
shûwb (שׁוּב) [pronounced <i>shoo<sup>b</sup>v</i> ]	<i>to return, to turn, to turn back, to reminisce, to restore something, to bring back something, to revive, to recover something, to make restitution</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #7725 BDB #996
'el (אֶל) [pronounced <i>el</i> ]	<i>unto, in, into, toward, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39

## 1 Samuel 23:23b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿel (עַל) [pronounced e/]	<i>unto, in, into, toward, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
kûwn (כּוּן) [pronounced koon]	<i>to be firmly established, to be set up, to be established, to be prepared, to be ready; to confirm, to set up, to maintain, to found [a city]</i>	Niphal participle	Strong's #3559 BDB #465

**Translation:** ...and when you have returned to me with a firmly established [area],... This could be a *firmly established area* where David resides or *firmly established information*. In any case, Saul chooses to wait for this information to be brought to him. As mentioned before, he was probably tired of going out searching for David himself and continually coming up empty-handed.

## 1 Samuel 23:23c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hâlak <sup>e</sup> (הָלַךְ) [pronounced haw-LAHK <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
ʿêth (עִתְּךָ) [pronounced ayth]	<i>with, at, near, by, among, directly from</i>	preposition (which is identical to the sign of the direct object); with a 2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #854 BDB #85

**Translation:** ...then I will go with you. Knowing what Saul has done in the past, this would unnerve me to bring back confirmed information to him and then have him go out with me. Who knows whether he will throw a fit and kill anyone around him if this information does not pan out (which could be a result of David moving from where he is). However, when the Ziphites brought this information to Saul, it was a calculated risk, just ask not bringing him information would have been a calculated risk.

## 1 Samuel 23:23d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

## 1Samuel 23:23d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced haw-YAW]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
ʾîm (אִם) [pronounced eem]	<i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, since, though when (or, if followed by a perfect tense which refers to a past event)</i>	primarily an hypothetical particle, but also functions as an interrogative particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49
yêsh (יֵשׁ) [pronounced yaysh]	<i>being, substance, existence; used as a substitute for to be (without reference to number or tense); to be present, to be ready, to exist; the verb to be may be implied</i>	substantive with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3426 BDB #441
bê (בְּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
ʾerets (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced EH-rets]	<i>earth (all or a portion thereof), land</i>	feminine singular noun with a definite article	Strong's #776 BDB #75

**Translation:** And if it is [that] he is living [lit., being] in the land,... Saul says that, if it turns out that David is somewhere in the land of Judah, and that this is a completely confirmed report, that he will find him.

## 1Samuel 23:23e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wê (or vê) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
châphas (חָפַס) [pronounced khaw-FAHS]	<i>to search, to search for, to seek, to search through</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> person singular, Piel perfect	Strong's #2664 BDB #344
ʾêth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated mark of a direct object	affixed to the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #853 BDB #84
bê (בְּ) [pronounced b <sup>eh</sup> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced kohl]	with a plural noun, it is rendered <i>all of; any of</i>	masculine singular construct with a masculine plural noun	Strong's #3605 BDB #481

**1Samuel 23:23e**

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Literally, <i>in all</i> . Although I don't have this in the lexicons, it is rendered by the most literal translations as <i>among all, through all, throughout all</i> in 1Sam. 23:23.			
ʿălâphîym (אַלְפִיִּים) pronounced <i>uh-law- FEEM</i> ]	<i>thousands, families, [military] units</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #505 (and #504) BDB #48
Y <sup>e</sup> hûwdâh (יְהוּדָה) [pronounced <i>y<sup>e</sup>hoo- DAW</i> ]	possibly means <i>to praise, to be praised</i> ; and is transliterated <i>Judah</i>	masculine proper noun/location	Strong's #3063 BDB #397

**Translation:** ...then I will search him out among all the thousands in Judah.” The wâw conjunction can also act as the *then* part of an *if...then...* statement, which is twice how it behaves in this verse. Saul says that, based upon a carefully confirmed report, he will search out and find David, even among the thousands of people who live in Judah. This makes it now sound like Saul will go and do the work; however, he expects the Ziphites to do all of the legwork, and then he can come in and go wherever they have told him to.

**And so they rise and so they go Ziph-ward to faces of Saul. And David and his men [were] in a wilderness of Maon in the Arabah [or, plain] to a right of the Jeshimon.** 1Samuel 23:24 **Then they arose before Saul and went towards Ziph. Now David and his soldiers [were] in the wilderness of Maon in the plain, [just] south of Jeshimon.**

**Then the men arose before Saul and traveled back to Ziph. Meanwhile, David and his soldiers were in the wilderness of Maon in the dry plains area, just south of Jeshimon.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

**Ancient texts:**

Masoretic Text                      And so they rise and so they go Ziph-ward to faces of Saul. And David and his men [were] in a wilderness of Maon in the Arabah [or, plain] to a right of the Jeshimon.  
 Septuagint                              And the Ziphites arose, and went before Saul: and David and his men [were] in the wilderness of Maon, westward, to the right of Jessæmon.

Significant differences .

**Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:**

CEV                                      The people from Ziph went back ahead of Saul, and they found out that David and his men were still south of Jeshimon in the Maon Desert.  
 NLT                                      So the men of Ziph returned home ahead of Saul. Meanwhile, David and his men had moved into the wilderness of Maon in the Arabah Valley south of Jeshimon.  
 REB                                      They left for Ziph without delay, ahead of Saul.  
     David and his men were in the wilderness of Maon in the Arabah to the south of Jeshimon.

**Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

God's Word™

They left for Ziph ahead of Saul. David and his men were in the desert of Maon, in the plains south of Jeshimon.

JPS (Tanakh)

They left at once for Ziph, ahead of Saul; David and his men were then in the wilderness of Maon, in the Arabah, to the south of Jeshimon.

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

NASB

Then they arose and went to Ziph before Saul. Now David and his men were in the wilderness of Maon, in the Arabah to the south [lit., *right side*] of Jeshimon [or, *the desert*].

Young's Literal Translation

And they rise and go to Ziph before Saul, and David and his men are in the wilderness of Maon, in the plain, at the south of the desolate place.

**What is the gist of this verse?** The delegation of Ziphites return to find David. We are told that David is outside of Maon, south of Jeshimon.

### 1Samuel 23:24a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
qûwm (קוּמ) [pronounced <i>koom</i> ]	<i>to stand, to rise up, to establish, to establish a vow, to cause a vow to stand, to confirm or to fulfill a vow</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6965 BDB #877
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâlak <sup>e</sup> (הָלַךְ) [pronounced <i>haw-LAHK<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
Zîyph (צִיפ) [pronounced <i>ziff</i> ]	transliterated <i>Ziph</i>	proper noun; location; with a directional hê	Strong's #2128 BDB #268
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <i>l<sup>e</sup></i> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
pânîym (פָּנִים) [pronounced <i>paw-NEEM</i> ]	<i>face, faces; presence</i>	masculine plural construct (plural acts like English singular)	Strong's #6440 BDB #815

Together, they mean *upon the face of, before, before the face of, in the presence of, in the sight of, in front of*. When used with God, it can take on the more figurative meaning *in the judgment of*.

**Translation:** *Then they arose before Saul and went towards Ziph.* These are the delegation of men from Ziph who ratted on David. Saul had given them all of the work to do. They were to return to Ziph, locate David, and reconfirm not only his position but his common hiding places (Saul is assuming that David is moving around, which is a reasonable assumption).

When it says that they *arose before Saul*, it simply means that they were either kneeling or sitting before Saul and it was time for them to go. They did not *lead Saul* or *go out with Saul behind them*. Saul will remain in Gibeah, awaiting more information from them.

1 Samuel 23:24b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
Dâvid (דָּוִד); also Dâvîyd (דָּוִיִּד) [pronounced <i>daw-VEED</i> ]	<i>beloved</i> and is transliterated <i>David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
îysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced <i>eesh</i> ]	<i>men; inhabitants, citizens; companions, soldiers, companions</i>	masculine plural noun with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #376 BDB #35
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
mid <sup>e</sup> bâr (מִדְּבָר) [pronounced <i>mid<sup>e</sup>-BAWR</i> ]	<i>wilderness, unpopulated wilderness, desert wilderness</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #4057 BDB #184
Mâ <sup>c</sup> ôwn (מְעוֹן) [pronounced <i>maw-ŶOHN</i> ]	<i>dwelling, habitation; transliterated Maon</i>	feminine proper noun	Strong's #4584 BDB #733

**Translation:** [Now David and his soldiers \[were\] in the wilderness of Maon...](#) The narrator will give us David's exact location. Maon is about 5 miles south of Ziph, which is also in Judah. The wilderness area referred to is probably south or southeast of Maon proper. We will revisit Maon in 1Sam. 25. David is simply moving around in order to keep from being found.

1 Samuel 23:24c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
b <sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
ârabâh (עֲרָבָה) [pronounced <i>guh-raw-VAW</i> ]	<i>plain; arid, sterile region; a desert; transliterated Arabah with the definite article</i>	feminine singular noun; with the definite article	Strong's #6160 BDB #787



## 1Samuel 23:24c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿel (עַל) [pronounced el]	<i>unto, in, into, toward, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
yâmîyn (יָמִינִי) [pronounced yaw-MEEN]	<i>the right hand, the right side, on the right, at the right; the south</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #3225 BDB #411
y <sup>e</sup> shîymôwn (יְשִׁימוֹן) [pronounced y <sup>e</sup> -shee-MOAN]	<i>desert, wasteland, waste-place</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #3452 BDB #445

Some translations occasionally render this *Jeshimon*, as a proper noun. Given the meaning of y<sup>e</sup>shîymôwn, this is probably a moot point.

**Translation:** ...in the plain, [just] south of Jeshimon. Although we have the word *Arabah* here, it probably would not refer to the actual Arabah, which is a desert area south of the Dead Sea. Barnes, however, tells us: *The Arabah, the desert tract which extends along the valley of the Jordan from the Dead Sea to the Lake of Gennesareth, now called El-Ghor. The word is now given by the Arabs to the valley between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Aqaba.*<sup>38</sup> David is west of the Dead Sea, against the southern portion of the Dead Sea, but he is not as far south as the Arabah as we know it today. However, this word also refers to plains or to a desert region, which is apparently what some of the area near David is like. David is just south of Jeshimon, which is a desert wasteland in that same vicinity.

Van de Velde gives us a description: *"The table-land appears to terminate here; nevertheless the principal ridge of the southern mountains runs for a considerable distance towards the south-west, whereas towards the south-east the land falls off more and more into a lower table-land."* This is the Arabah or steppe on the right of the wilderness.<sup>39</sup>

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### David Escapes from Saul in the Wilderness of Maon

And so goes Saul and his men to seek [him]. And so they make known to David and so he goes down to the rock and so he dwells in a wilderness of Maon. And so hears Saul and so he pursues after David [in] a wilderness of Maon.

1Samuel  
23:25

Then Saul and his soldiers went to search [for David]. They make [this] known to David, so he goes down the cliff [or, *crag*] and stays in the wilderness of Maon. But Saul hears [this], so he follows after David [in] the wilderness of Maon.

Later, Saul and his soldiers go to search for David. However, David's spies make this known to him, so he went down to the gorge and stayed in the wilderness of Maon. However, when Saul heard of this move, he also went into the wilderness of Maon.

<sup>38</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, 1Sam. 23:24.

<sup>39</sup> From Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; 1Sam. 23:24, which cites Van de Velde, ii. pp. 107-8.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	And so goes Saul and his men to seek [him]. And so they make known to David and so he goes down to the rock and so he dwells in a wilderness of Maon. And so hears Saul and so he pursues after David [in] a wilderness of Maon.
Septuagint	And Saul and his men went to seek him; an they brought word to David, and he went down to the rock that was in the wilderness of Maon. And Saul heard and he followed after David to the wilderness of Maon.

Significant differences .

### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	Saul and his army set out to find David. But David heard that Saul was coming, and he went to a place called The Rock, one of his hideouts in Maon Desert. Saul found out where David was and started closing in on him.
NAB	When Saul and his men came looking for him, David got word of it and went down to the gorge in the desert below Maon. Saul heard of this and pursued David into the desert below Maon.
NLT	When David heard that Saul and his men were searching for him, he went even farther into the wilderness to the great rock, and he remained there in the wilderness of Maon. But Saul kept after him.
REB	Saul set off with his men to look for him; but David got word of it and went down to a refuge in the rocks, and there he stayed in the wilderness of Maon. On hearing this, Saul went into the wilderness after him;...

### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

<i>God's Word™</i>	When Saul and his men came to look for him, David was told the news. So he went to his mountain stronghold in the desert of Maon. Saul heard about it and pursued David into the desert of Maon.
JPS (Tanakh)	When Saul and his men came to search, David was told about it; and he went down to the rocky region and stayed in the wilderness of Maon. On hearing this, Saul pursued David in the wilderness of Maon.

### Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB	When Saul and his men went to seek <i>him</i> , they told David, and he came down to the rock and stayed in the wilderness of Maon. And when Saul heard <i>it</i> , he pursued David in the wilderness of Maon.
<i>Young's Updated LT</i>	And Saul and his men go to seek, and they declare to David, and he goes down the rock, and abides in the wilderness of Maon; and Saul hears, and pursues after David to the wilderness of Maon.

**What is the gist of this verse?** With this verse, we enter into a cat and mouse game. Saul knows about where David is, and he takes his soldiers there. David hears of Saul's advance and he moves his men from there. Saul also determines, in some way, David's general direction, and he goes in that direction as well.

## 1Samuel 23:25a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâlak <sup>e</sup> (הָלַךְ) [pronounced <i>haw-LAHK<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
Shâ'ûwl (שָׂאֹוֹל) [pronounced <i>shaw-OOL</i> ]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וְ) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʾîysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced <i>eesh</i> ]	<i>men; inhabitants, citizens; companions, soldiers, companions</i>	masculine plural noun with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #376 BDB #35
lâmed (לְ) (pronounced <i>l<sup>e</sup></i> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
bâqash (בָּקַשׁ) [pronounced <i>baw-KAHSH</i> ]	<i>to seek, to search, to desire, to strive after, to attempt to get, to require, to demand, to ask, to seek with desire and diligence</i>	Piel infinitive construct	Strong's #1245 BDB #134

Just as I have done in my translation, one early printed edition and the Syriac add *David*.<sup>40</sup>

**Translation:** [Then Saul and his soldiers went to search \[for David\]](#). In our narrative, it sounds as though Saul immediately saddled up and went to look for David. However, given what Saul asked of the Ziphites in vv. 22–23, we may imagine that some time has passed and the delegation of Ziphites had returned to Saul with confirmed sightings of David and of his general hiding places. Given this information, and probably now traveling with some Ziphites, who have a network of spies, Saul takes his soldiers out to find David. The other option is, after the Ziphites had gone, Saul sat there and stewed for awhile, decided that these Ziphites were probably right, and he gathered his army to go out. Saul just could not sit there and wait for the Ziphites to contact him. The Ziphites had already given Saul some pretty specific information (see v. 19), which was enough to put Saul in the right area.

Now, personally, I see Saul as a man who makes a lot of bad decisions and rulings; or he makes one decision and then changes his mind. So, when he tells these men to return to Ziph and bring him back more perfect information, he later decides, *Naw, I want to go after David now*. So he now saddles up his men and they go out. Recall that Saul is impulsive and ruled by his mental attitude sins. So, regardless of what he has told these men, that does not mean that he is going to sit back and wait for them to return to him. At first, that was his plan; but, after sitting and thinking about this for 30 minutes or so, he has probably changed his mind. This point of view would be in keeping with the context. Saul asked for the Ziphites to search out David and determine exactly where he was. Had Saul waited for the Ziphites to return with this information, then he would not have to *search out David*; he would already know where David is. So even the very language of this passage indicates that Saul just could not wait for the Ziphites to return.

<sup>40</sup> Joseph Bryant Rotherham's *The Emphasized Bible*; ©1971 by Kregel Publications; p. 313.

## 1 Samuel 23:25b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâgad (נָגַד) [pronounced <i>naw-GAHD</i> ]	<i>to make conspicuous, to make known, to expound, to explain, to declare, to inform, to confess, to make it pitifully obvious that</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #5046 BDB #616
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <i>l</i> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
Dâvid (דָּוִד); also Dâvîyd (דָּוִיִּד) [pronounced <i>daw-VEED</i> ]	<i>beloved and is transliterated David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187

**Translation:** *They make [this] known to David,...* We do not have a specific subject here, however, it is in the masculine plural. This would either mean that David has lookouts who report back that Saul has been sighted in this general area, or that there are some Ziphites, sympathetic to David, who go out of their way to inform David about what is occurring. The plural could refer not necessarily to a group of men, but to two or more witnesses. In any case, David knows that Saul is in his general vicinity. David will move because Saul would not come to that general area without having some knowledge of David's whereabouts.

Recall that Saul apparently had already been to that area and he left, empty-handed; being later followed by a delegation of Ziphites who tell him, "You know David is in our section of Judah, right?" So, for David to see that Saul has suddenly returned to this place makes him somewhat uneasy. Saul would not leave and then come back there specifically just to double-check the area; he's come back because he knows that David is there. So David has to quickly gather his men and leave that area.

## 1 Samuel 23:25c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yârad (יָרַד) [pronounced <i>yaw-RAHD</i> ]	<i>to descend, to go down</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3381 BDB #432
çela' (סֵלַע) [pronounced <i>SEH-lahg'</i> ]	<i>rock, cliff, jagged cliff, split, cleft, crag, stone</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #5553 BDB #700

**Translation:** *...so he goes down the cliff [or, crag]...* This is an odd thing; we do not know exactly where this is, but there is apparently a cliff area where David can stash 600 men, and from where he can probably see Saul coming from several miles away.

Keil and Delitzsch give us an idea as to David's movements: "*The rock*" is probably the conical mountain of Main (Maon), the top of which is now surrounded with ruins, probably remains of a tower (Robinson, *Pal. ii. p. 194*), as the rock from which David came down can only have been the mountain

(1Sam. 23:26), along one side of which David went with his men while Saul and his warriors went on the other, namely when Saul pursued him into the desert of Maon.<sup>41</sup>

What appears to be happening is, David first goes down one mountain and then, in the next verse, goes up along another mountain. In a mountainous region, this is how one travels. You certainly do not travel to the peak; however, to go from one mountain to the next, you have to enter into a valley and then go up again.

1Samuel 23:25d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâshab (יָשָׁב) [pronounced <i>yaw-SHAH<sup>h</sup>V</i> ]	<i>to remain, to stay, to inhabit, to sit, to dwell</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3427 BDB #442
b <sup>e</sup> (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b<sup>eh</sup></i> ]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, in the presence of, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
mid <sup>e</sup> bâr (מִדְּבָר) [pronounced <i>mid<sup>e</sup>-BAWR</i> ]	<i>wilderness, unpopulated wilderness, desert wilderness</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #4057 BDB #184
Mâ <sup>o</sup> wn (מְעוֹן) [pronounced <i>maw-GOHN</i> ]	<i>dwelling, habitation; transliterated Maon</i>	feminine proper noun	Strong's #4584 BDB #733

**Translation:** ...and stays in the wilderness of Maon. Originally, David and his men were a few miles further north, in the wilderness outside of Ziph. This caused the Ziphites to panic, and they told Saul where David was. David continued to move about, and in v. 24, he moved apparently south or southeast of the wilderness of Maon, which is a mountainous area.<sup>42</sup> Here, he moves back to the wilderness of Maon, which is about a 2 hour march southeast of Ziph. It is not clear in this verse whether this is a result of his staying at the cliff and seeing Saul or whether this cliff is located in the wilderness of Maon; however, it appears that David is at a cliff in the next verse. Therefore, the cliff that David travels to here is probably in the wilderness of Maon.

1Samuel 23:25e			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253

<sup>41</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, Commentary on the Old Testament; from e-Sword; 1Sam. 23:25.

<sup>42</sup> Adam Clarke, Commentary on the Bible; from e-Sword, 1Sam. 23:25.

## 1Samuel 23:25e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shâma' (שָׁמַע) [pronounced shaw-MAHG]	<i>to listen, to hear, to listen intently, to listen and obey, to listen and act upon, to listen and give heed to, to hearken to, to be attentive to, to listen and take note of, to listen and be cognizant of</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #8085 BDB #1033
Shâ'ûwl (שָׁאוּל) [pronounced shaw-OOL]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982

**Translation:** *But Saul hears [this],...* Saul also has his men out as spies; and he has the help of the aforementioned delegation of Ziphites. So he hears about David's move back north to the wilderness of Maon. How carefully he is able to track David is not known; however, recall that David is moving with 600 men, so it is pretty difficult to cover one's tracks with that many men. However, it is apparently not Saul who tracks David, as he *hears* about David's move.

You may recall earlier that I put Saul in Ziph because David sees that David has come out (v. 15; and *David* can be a metonym for *David's men*). Here, Saul *hears* about David's movements. This would even suggest that this information did not come from his own men, but from the Ziphites.

## 1Samuel 23:25f

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
râdaph (רָדַף) [pronounced raw-DAHf]	<i>to pursue, to follow after; to chase with hostile intent, to persecute</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7291 BDB #922
'achar (אַחַר) [pronounced ah-KHAHR]	<i>after, following, behind</i>	preposition	Strong's #310 BDB #29
Dâvid (דָּוִד); also Dâviyd (דָּוִיִד) [pronounced daw-VEED]	<i>beloved</i> and is transliterated <i>David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187
mid <sup>e</sup> bâr (מִדְבָּר) [pronounced mid <sup>e</sup> -BAWR]	<i>wilderness, unpopulated wilderness, desert wilderness</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #4057 BDB #184
Mâ'ôwn (מְעוֹן) [pronounced maw-GOHN]	<i>dwelling, habitation; transliterated Maon</i>	feminine proper noun	Strong's #4584 BDB #733

**Translation:** *...so he follows after David [in] the wilderness of Maon.* Saul has heard the direction that David has gone in, so he moves back up toward the wilderness of Maon. With David, we find a preposition with the



wilderness of Maon, which tells us that David is actually located in this wilderness. We lack that article here, so this merely tells us the direction in which Saul is moving.

And so goes Saul from a side of the mountain the this and David and his men from a side of the mountain the this. And so was David fleeing to go from faces of Saul. And Saul and his men were surrounding unto David and his men to seize them.

1Samuel  
23:26

Saul went on this side of the mountain while [lit., and] David and his men [were] on that side of the mountain. David was fleeing from Saul's presence. Saul and his men were surrounding David and his men, to seize them.

Saul went along one side of the mountain while David and his men were on the other side of the mountain. While David was attempting to flee from Saul, Saul and his men were attempting to surround David and his men in order to capture them.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text

And so goes Saul from a side of the mountain the this and David and his men from a side of the mountain the this. And so was David fleeing to go from faces of Saul. And Saul and his men were surrounding unto David and his men to seize them.

Septuagint

And Saul and his men go on one side of the mountain, and David and his men are on the other side of the mountain. And David was hiding himself to escape from Saul; and Saul and his men encamped against David and his men, in order to take them.

Significant differences

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#### Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV

Saul was going around a hill on one side, and David and his men were on the other side, trying to get away. Saul and his soldiers were just about to capture David and his men,...

NAB

As Saul moved along one rim of the gorge, David and his men took to the other. David was in anxious flight to escape Saul, and Saul and his men were attempting to outflank David and his men in order to capture them.

NJB

Saul and his men proceeded along one side of the mountain, David and his men along the other. David was hurrying to escape from Saul, while Saul and his men were trying to cross over to David and his men's side, to capture them.

NLT

He and David were now on opposite sides of mountain. Just as Saul and his men began to close in on David and his men,...

REB

...he was on one side of the hill, David and his men on the other. While David and his men were trying desperately to get away, Saul and his followers were closing in for the capture,...

TEV

Saul and his men were on one side of the hill, separated from David and his men, who were on the other side. They were hurrying to get away from Saul and his men, who were closing in on them and were about to capture them.

#### Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™

Saul went on one side of the mountain, and David and his men went on the other side of the mountain. David was hurrying to get away from Saul, and Saul and his men were going around the mountain toward David and his men, trying to capture them.

**Edersheim** David was anxiously endeavouring to go away from before Saul; and Saul and his men were surrounding David and his men to seize them. [only the second half of this verse is available].

**JPS (Tanakh)** Saul was making his way along one side of a hill, and David and his men were on the other side of the hill. David was trying hard to elude Saul, and Saul and his men were trying to encircle David and his men and capture them,...

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

**NASB** And Saul went on one side of the mountain, and David and his men on the other side of the mountain; and David was hurrying to get away from Saul, for Saul and his men were surrounding David and his men to seize them.

**Young's Updated LT** And Saul goes on this side of the mountain, and David and his men on that side of the mountain, and David hastens to go from the face of Saul, and Saul and his men are compassing David and his men, to catch them.

**What is the gist of this verse?** Saul and David find themselves on the same mountain, and both apparently have some measure of realization of this. David and his men attempt to flee, and Saul and his men apparently have picked up the trail and are following close behind.

<b>1Samuel 23:26a</b>			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâlak <sup>e</sup> (הָלַךְ) [pronounced <i>haw-LAHK<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
Shâ'ûwl (שָׂאֵוּל) [pronounced <i>shaw-OOL</i> ]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982
One early printed edition and the Septuagint add <i>and his men</i> at this juncture. <sup>43</sup>			
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i> ]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
tsad (צֶד) [pronounced <i>tzahd</i> ]	<i>side</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #6654 BDB #841
The phrase <i>from a side</i> means <i>at the side of, to the side of, beside</i> . In this context, it means <i>on this side of the mountain</i> or <i>from this side of the mountain</i> (with the following two words).			
har (הַר) [pronounced <i>har</i> ]	<i>hill, mountain, hill-country</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #2042 (and #2022) BDB #249
zeh (זֶה) [pronounced <i>zeh</i> ]	<i>here, this, thus</i>	demonstrative adjective with a definite article	Strong's #2088, 2090 (& 2063) BDB #260

<sup>43</sup> Joseph Bryant Rotherham's *The Emphasized Bible*; ©1971 by Kregel Publications; p. 313.

**Translation:** [Saul went on this side of the mountain...](#) Saul and his men knew that they were close to David. They apparently even had his exact location. The idea was to go along the side of the mountain where David was not. Notice that we have a verb in this phrase.

### 1Samuel 23:26b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
Dâvid (דָּוִד); also Dâvîyd (דָּוִיִּד) [pronounced <i>daw-VEED</i> ]	<i>beloved and is transliterated David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʿîysh (עִישׁ) [pronounced <i>eesh</i> ]	<i>men; inhabitants, citizens; companions, soldiers, companions</i>	masculine plural noun with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #376 BDB #35
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i> ]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
tsad (צַד) [pronounced <i>tzahd</i> ]	<i>side</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #6654 BDB #841
The phrase <i>from a side</i> means <i>at the side of, to the side of, beside</i> .			
har (הַר) [pronounced <i>har</i> ]	<i>hill, mountain, hill-country</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #2042 (and #2022) BDB #249
zeh (זֶה) [pronounced <i>zeh</i> ]	<i>here, this, thus</i>	demonstrative adjective with a definite article	Strong's #2088, 2090 (& 2063) BDB #260

Altogether, the previous four words mean *on that side of the mountain* or *from that side of the mountain*.

**Translation:** [...while](#) [lit., *and*] [David and his men](#) [were] [on that side of the mountain](#). Notice that there is no verb in this phrase. The idea is not that Saul goes up one side of a mountain and David goes up the other side; the idea is that David is already on the other side of the mountain. He's not going anywhere—he's there as Saul and his men advance.

### 1Samuel 23:26c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i> ]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224

## 1Samuel 23:26c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Dâvid (דָּוִד); also Dâvîyd (דָּוִיִּד) [pronounced daw-VEED]	<i>beloved</i> and is transliterated <i>David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187
châphaz (חָפַז) [pronounced khaw-fahz]	<i>to flee, to make haste</i>	Niphal participle	Strong's #2648 BDB #342
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <sup>e</sup> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
hâlak <sup>e</sup> (הָלַךְ) [pronounced haw-LAHK <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
min (מִן) [pronounced min]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, above, beyond, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
pânîym (פָּנִים) [pronounced paw-NEEM]	<i>face, faces; presence</i>	masculine plural construct (plural acts like English singular)	Strong's #6440 BDB #815
Together, mipânîym mean <i>from before your face, out from before your face, from one's presence</i> . However, together, they can also be a reference to the cause, whether near or remote, and can therefore be rendered <i>because of, because that</i> .			
Shâ'ûwl (שָׁאוּל) [pronounced shaw-OOL]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982

**Translation:** [David was fleeing from Saul's presence](#). David realizes that Saul is nearby and, as he has been doing, he continues to flee from Saul's presence. Being on opposite sides of the same mountain (which is apparently the case here) makes it difficult for David to decide what to do.

You may ask, *why doesn't David just turn around and fight Saul?* For at least two reasons: (1) first and foremost, Saul is God's anointed. He is the king of Israel and until God removes Saul, David cannot attack him. This David has realized from the beginning. (2) Saul may have had a very large force of men with him. Recall that he sent a shout out to all the people of Israel to gather an army (v. 8).

## 1Samuel 23:26d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
Shâ'ûwl (שָׁאוּל) [pronounced shaw-OOL]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982

1Samuel 23:26d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʿîysh (עִישׁ) [pronounced <i>eesh</i> ]	<i>men; inhabitants, citizens; companions, soldiers, companions</i>	masculine plural noun with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #376 BDB #35
ʿâṭar (אַטַּר) [pronounced <i>gaw-TAHR</i> ]	<i>to surround; to compass [about]</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #5849 BDB #742
ʿel (עַל) [pronounced <i>el</i> ]	<i>unto, in, into, toward, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
Dâvid (דָּוִד); also Dâvîyd (דָּוִיִּד) [pronounced <i>daw-VEED</i> ]	<i>beloved and is transliterated David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i> ]	<i>and, even, then; namely</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʿîysh (עִישׁ) [pronounced <i>eesh</i> ]	<i>men; inhabitants, citizens; companions, soldiers, companions</i>	masculine plural noun with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #376 BDB #35
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <i>l</i> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
tâphas (תַּפַּח) [pronounced <i>taw-FAHS</i> ]	<i>to lay a hold of, to manipulate, to seize</i>	Qal infinitive construct with a 3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #8610 BDB #1074

**Translation:** [Saul and his men were surrounding David and his men, to seize them.](#) This gives us Saul's strategy. First, his men go up one side of the mountain, opposite David; then they begin to close in on David, as they are able to track where David has been. Saul then sends some of his men around the other side so that they are coming around the mountain from both sides. A maneuver like this would only work if Saul has clearly superior numbers; therefore, we may assume that Saul is leading at least 1000 men at this time, and probably considerably more than double that.

[And a messenger came unto Saul, to say, "Hurry and come, for have plundered the Philistines upon the land."](#)

1Samuel  
23:27

[A messenger came to Saul, saying, "Hurry up and come \[with me\], for the Philistines have plundered \[or, \*stripped\*\] the land."](#)

[Suddenly, a desperate messenger came to Saul, saying, "Come with me quickly because the Philistines have made a vicious attack against our land!"](#)

Here is how others have translated this verse:

**Ancient texts:**

Masoretic Text                   And a messenger came unto Saul, to say, "Hurry and come, for have plundered the Philistines upon the land."  
 Septuagint                       And there came a messenger to Saul, saying, "Haste, you; and come here, for the Philistines have invaded the land."

Significant differences .

**Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:**

CEV                                 ...when a messenger came to Saul and said, "Come quickly! The Philistines are attacking Israel and taking everything."  
 NAB                                 ...when a messenger came to Saul, saying, "Com quickly, because the Philistines have invaded the land."  
 NLT                                 ...and urgent message reached Saul that the Philistines were raiding Israel again. Just then a messenger arrived and said to Saul, "Come back at once! The Philistines are invading the country!"  
 TEV                                 Just then a messenger arrived and said to Saul, "Come back at once! The Philistines are invading the country!"

**Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

God's Word™                   Then a messenger came to Saul and said, "Come quickly! The Philistines are raiding the country."  
 JPS (Tanakh)                   ...when a messenger came and told Saul, "Come quickly, for the Philistines have invaded the land."

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

The Amplified Bible           But a messenger came to Saul, saying, Make haste and come, for the Philistines have made a raid on the land.  
 NASB                               But a messenger came to Saul, saying, "Hurry and come, for the Philistines have made a raid on the land."  
 Young's Updated LT           And a messenger has come in unto Saul, saying, "Haste, and come, for the Philistines have pushed against the land."

**What is the gist of this verse?** Saul and his men were very close to closing in around David when a messenger urgently comes to Saul telling him of a serious Philistine invasion.

1Samuel 23:27a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (ו) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
mal <sup>e</sup> âk <sup>e</sup> (מַלְאָכִי) [pronounced mah <sup>e</sup> -AWCH <sup>e</sup> ]	messenger or angel; this word has been used for a prophet (Isa. 42:19) and priest (Mal. 2:7)	masculine singular noun	Strong's #4397 BDB #521
bôw <sup>7</sup> (בּוֹא) [pronounced boh]	to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
el (עַל) [pronounced el]	unto, in, into, toward, to, regarding, against	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39



## 1Samuel 23:27a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Shâ`ûwl (שׂוּל) [pronounced shaw-OOL]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <sup>l</sup> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MARH]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #559 BDB #55
mâhar (מָהַר) [pronounced maw-HAHR]	<i>to hasten, to hurry, to make haste; its transitive use is to prepare quickly, to bring quickly, to do quickly</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine singular, Piel imperative with the voluntative hê	Strong's #4116 BDB #554
w <sup>e</sup> (or v <sup>e</sup> ) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hâlak <sup>e</sup> (הָלַךְ) [pronounced haw-LAHK <sup>e</sup> ]	<i>go, come, depart, walk; advance</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperative	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229

**Translation:** A messenger came to Saul, saying, "Hurry up and come [with me],... Saul apparently left behind a location, just in case anyone needed to get in touch with him. His army was also large (as already alluded to), so that locating an army of that size was easy. Furthermore, Saul was not trying to hide from anyone; he did not need to be stealthy, except on his final approach to David. Therefore, it was easy for a messenger to find Saul. The messenger is frantic and Saul probably has every available soldier with him.

## 1Samuel 23:27b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>when, that, for, because</i>	conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
pâshaṭ (פָּשַׁט) [pronounced paw-SHAHT]	<i>to spread out; to strip, to plunder, to unclothe; to flay, to remove the skin; in war, it is used to indicate a vicious attack, along the lines of flaying the skin off an animal</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #6584 BDB #832
P <sup>e</sup> lish <sup>e</sup> tîy (פְּלִשְׁתִּי) [pronounced p <sup>e</sup> -lish-TEE]	transliterated <i>Philistines</i>	masculine plural gentilic adjective (acts like a proper noun) with the definite article	Strong's #6430 BDB #814
al (עַל) [pronounced gahl]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person plural suffix	Strong's #5921 BDB #752

## 1 Samuel 23:27b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿerets (עֵרֶץ) [pronounced EH-rets]	earth (all or a portion thereof), land	feminine singular noun with a definite article	Strong's #776 BDB #75

**Translation:** ...for the Philistines have plundered [or, stripped] the land.” The verb used here is one which indicates a vicious attack. The perfect tense means that this particular attack is over; however, the effects of the attack were devastating (otherwise, why bother Saul?). Obviously, repeated attacks are expected.

The first attack by the Philistines was David's fault. The king of Gath met with David, determined that he was no longer a risk (as did his cabinet and palace personnel) and even if he did not personally attack Keilah, other Philistine forces did. Their greatest threat was no longer a threat (or so they thought). However, this second raid appears to be more serious. The verb used here is a verb which is used to indicate that a land has been stripped bare. It can refer to a devastating and vicious attack, or simply to an attack whose affect upon the land is devastating (which is what appears to be the case). It is like the Philistines went into a one grocery store town, and took all of the food out of the grocery, and did not pay. They no doubt killed anyone who stood in their way. This is an alternative to personal farming in the ancient world. They simply raid the farms and vineyards of those who have already done all of the work. What was apparent to the Philistine populace was that there was a civil war going on in Judah, and all of Saul and David's forces were tied up in this war. Therefore, they reasonably supposed that they could strike with impunity.

From the information which we have, it is apparent that the Philistines have a fairly sophisticated spy network. When Saul gathers every last available man to go to chase after David, he leaves major cities without guards. The Philistines are aware of this and they probably make this attack on several border cities.

What has happened is, Saul and his men were close to surrounding and capturing David, and suddenly, this occurs. God controls history and God even works through heathen (in this case, the Philistines). Okay, *why doesn't God simply give David safe haven for a few years?* God's plan takes into consideration man's volition. Saul desires to kill David and God allows Saul to act on his desires. The Philistines want to take Israel's land, and God allows them to act on those desires. God's plan takes into consideration the sins and lusts of man. The key is timing, and God times it so that Saul's lust to kill David is trumped by his desire to remain king of Israel (if the Philistines conquer large portions of Israel, Saul's kingdom becomes smaller and less stable). David also needs to see first-hand that God is faithful and that God will deliver him.

**And so returns Saul from a pursuit after David and so he goes to meet the Philistines. Upon so, they called to the place the that a Rock of Division.**

1 Samuel  
23:28

**Saul then returned from pursuing after David and he went to meet the Philistines. Therefore, they call that place the *Rock of Division* [or, *portion*] [Hebrew: *Selamhamlekoth*].**

**Saul then returned from pursuing David and he went out to meet the Philistines. For that reason, that place is called the *Rock of Separation*.**

Here is how others have translated this verse:

#### Ancient texts:

##### Masoretic Text

And so returns Saul from a pursuit after David and so he goes to meet the Philistines. Upon so, they called to the place the that a Rock of Division.

##### Septuagint

So Saul returned from following after David, and went to meet the Philistines. Therefore, that place was called "The Divided Rock."

Significant differences

**Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:**

- CEV                     Saul stopped going after David and went back to fight the Philistines. That's why the place is called "Escape Rock."
- NAB                     Saul interrupted his pursuit of David and went to meet the Philistines. This is how that place came to be called the Gorge of Divisions. Both the NAB and the NJB end chapter 23 and begin chapter 24 with v. 29 (called v. 1). This is how it is found in the Hebrew.
- NLT                     So Saul quit the chase and returned to fight the Philistines. Ever since that time, the place where David was camped has been called the Rock of Escape [Hebrew, *Sela-hammahlekoth*].
- REB                     Saul called off the pursuit of David and turned back to face the Philistines. This is why that place is called the Dividing Rock.
- TEV                     So Saul stopped pursuing David and went to fight the Philistines. That is why that place is called Separation Hill.

**Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):**

- God's Word™*                     Saul gave up pursuing David and went to fight the Philistines. So that place was called Slippery Rock.
- JPS (Tanakh)                     Saul gave up his pursuit of David and went to meet the Philistines. That is why that place came to be called the Rock of Separation. Throughout much of this and the previous 9 verses, the JPS tells us that Hebrew meaning is often uncertain.<sup>44</sup>

**Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:**

- The Amplified Bible*                     So Saul returned from pursuing David, and went against the Philistines. So they called that place the Rock of Escape.
- NASB                     So Saul returned from pursuing David, and went to meet the Philistines; therefore they called that place the Rock of Escape [Hebrew, *Sela-hammahlekoth*].
- Young's Updated LT*                     And Saul turns back from pursuing after David, and goes to meet the Philistines, therefore they have called that place "The Rock of Division."

**What is the gist of this verse?** Saul has to stop pursuing David and go to fight the Philistines. This place where David's men were almost caught by Saul's men is named *the Rock of Division*.

<b>1Samuel 23:28a</b>			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shûwb (שׁוּב) [pronounced shoo <sup>b</sup> v]	<i>to return, to turn, to turn back, to reminisce, to restore something, to bring back something, to revive, to recover something, to make restitution</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7725 BDB #996

<sup>44</sup> On the other hand, I have found the simple understanding of the existing Hebrew to be fairly easy to understand and exegete.

## 1Samuel 23:28a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Shâ`ûwl (שׂוּאֵל) [pronounced <i>shaw-OOL</i> ]	which is transliterated <i>Saul</i> ; it means <i>asked for</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #7586 BDB #982
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i> ]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, above, beyond, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
râdaph (רָדַף) [pronounced <i>raw-DAHf</i> ]	<i>to pursue, to follow after; to chase with hostile intent, to persecute</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #7291 BDB #922
`achar (אַחַר) [pronounced <i>ah-KHAHR</i> ]	<i>after, following, behind</i>	preposition	Strong's #310 BDB #29
Dâvid (דָּוִד); also Dâvîyd (דָּוִיִּד) [pronounced <i>daw-VEED</i> ]	<i>beloved and is transliterated David</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1732 BDB #187

**Translation:** [Saul then returned from pursuing after David...](#) Saul is not completely evil nor is he completely off balance in his hatred toward David. Even from a very selfish standpoint, if he does not defend his country against the Philistines, then he will have no country over which he can rule. This sounded as though the Philistine attack was particularly vicious, and his messenger had the nerve to give his commanding officer two imperatives in order to get Saul to refocus. Saul returned to Gibeah—or, at least that is what we would assume by the use of the word *return*. He has to get all of his troops together and then go off to face the Philistines. We are not told where the Philistines struck; however, this would probably be northwestern Judah and the west and south portions of Benjamin as well as a full-on attack against Dan, which apparently had lost its power when many of the Danites moved north.

## 1Samuel 23:28b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced <i>wah</i> ]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâlak <sup>e</sup> (הָלַךְ) [pronounced <i>haw-LAHK<sup>e</sup></i> ]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <sup>e</sup> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
qârâ` (קָרָא) [pronounced <i>kaw-RAW</i> ]	<i>to encounter, to befall, to meet; to assemble [for the purpose of encountering God or exegeting His Word]; to come, to assemble</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #7122 & #7125 BDB #896

This is a homonym; the other qârâ` means *to call, to proclaim, to read, to assemble*.

## 1Samuel 23:28b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
P <sup>e</sup> lish <sup>e</sup> tîy (פְּלִשְׁתִּי) [pronounced p <sup>e</sup> -lish-TEE]	transliterated <i>Philistines</i>	masculine plural gentilic adjective (acts like a proper noun) with the definite article	Strong's #6430 BDB #814

**Translation:** ...and he went to meet the Philistines. We have an odd play on words in this verse, which is begun in this portion. The verb *qârâ'* can mean *to meet*, *to encounter* and it can also mean *to call*, *to name*. It will be used in both ways in this verse (which gives us powerful evidence for its dual usage). This tells us that there are two aspects to this one word, or two sides to this one word; that the meanings of this word can be divided in two. This is a nice literary device which is related to the name of this rock, which is called the *Rock of Division* (v. 28c).

Saul first returns to Gibeah (presumably) and fans all of his troops out from that position to go out and face down the Philistines in what will prove to be a successful venture.

## 1Samuel 23:28c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced ǵahl]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity with the 1 <sup>st</sup> person plural suffix	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
kên (כֵּן) [pronounced kane]	<i>so, thus; upright, honest; rightly, well; [it is] so, such, so constituted;</i>	properly, an active participle; used primarily as an adverb	Strong's #3651 BDB #485
Together, ʿal kên (עַל כֵּן) mean <i>so, upon the ground of such conditions, therefore, on this account, on account.</i>			
qârâ' (קָרָא) [pronounced kaw-RAW]	<i>to call, to proclaim, to read, to call to, to call out to, to assemble, to summon</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> person masculine plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #7121 BDB #894
lâmed (ל) (pronounced l <sup>e</sup> )	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
mâqôwm (מְקוֹמָם) [pronounced maw-KOHM]	<i>place, situated; for a soldier, it may mean where he is stationed; for people in general, it would be their place of abode (which could be their house or their town)</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #4725 BDB #879
hûw' (הוּא) [pronounced hoo]	<i>that</i>	masculine singular, demonstrative pronoun (with a definite article)	Strong's #1931 BDB #214
çela' (סֶלַע) [pronounced SEH-lahǵ]	<i>rock, cliff, jagged cliff, split, cleft, crag, stone</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #5553 BDB #700

## 1Samuel 23:28c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
machălôqeth (מַחְלֹקֶת) [pronounced mah-khuh-LOW-keth]	<i>division, allotment, course, portion</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #4256 BDB #324

**Translation:** *Therefore, they call that place the Rock of Division* [or, *portion*] [Hebrew: *Sela-hammahlekoth*]. David was almost surrounded by Saul and his men. They were coming toward him from both sides until Saul was suddenly called away. The idea is, David knew that he was toast. Saul apparently, did not, or he might have continued for another hour or so. However, the desperation of his messenger caused Saul to drop everything and to go after the Philistines.

The idea of naming this rock—this place where David and his men were, is based upon the fact that Saul had both sides of the mountain and was coming around to get to David, and David had his own allotment or the mountain, or his own portion, which was this particular rock. The implication from this situation is that David really did not have a direction that he could move to without running into Saul's army. However, God gave David this piece of mountain, this rock, and protected him in this rock. This rock was God's allotment to David, and in this place God kept David safe.

One could understand this name to refer to the rock which divided David from Saul. David was in the rock; David was protected by the rock, and Saul was not. Again, the metaphorical application is obvious: the rock is Jesus Christ, Jehovah Elohim of the Old Testament, and David and Saul were divided by Jehovah Elohim.

The Targums offers another explanation for the name of this rock: *the heart of the king was divided to go here and there. Here Saul was obliged to separate himself from David, in order to go and oppose the invading Philistines.*<sup>45</sup> Gill also quotes the Targum: *"therefore they called that place the rock of division, the place where the heart of the king was divided to go here and there."*<sup>46</sup>

Barnes tells us that this rock is *Identified by Conder with a narrow and impassable gorge between El Kolah and Maon, called Malaky.*<sup>47</sup>

The metaphorical understanding is clear: the *Rock*, of course, is Jesus Christ (Who is also Jehovah God of the Old Testament, Who is also called the Rock in the Old Testament). He is David's Rock of Portion. David was hid in the Rock, which is Christ, which gave him perfect protection even in the most hopeless situation. David was doomed, with Saul's men surrounding his men, a desperate situation which he recognized more than Saul did. And then God delivered David, making him realize that God controls history; Saul does not.

In the Greek and in most English Bibles, v. 29 is next. This is v. 1 of 1Sam. 24 in the Hebrew. Although I normally do not follow the Hebrew when it comes to verse numbering, I will include v. 29 with the study of the next chapter, as it more accurately fits in there. However, for purposes of completion, I will include the corrected below:

**And so goes up David from there and he lives in strongholds of Engedi.** 1Samuel 23:29 **Then David went up from there and lived in the strongholds [or, summits] of Engedi.**

**Then David went up from there and lived in the hiding places of Engedi.**

<sup>45</sup> Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, 1Sam. 23:28.

<sup>46</sup> Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, 1Sam. 23:28.

<sup>47</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, 1Sam. 23:28.



David determined that the Ziphites blew his cover, and he wrote a psalm about it; Psalm 54. We will now cover **Psalm 7** (which he wrote around this period of time; and these words possibly solidified his thoughts that he expressed to Saul in 1Sam. 24:8–12) as well as **Psalms 103 55 54 24 25 26** before moving into the next chapter.

We are all impatient with God. We want our right woman, our right man; we want that promotion at work; we want that lottery ticket to be good, we want that new car. David as a young man was told he would become king, and, for awhile, it appeared as though he was on the fast track to become king. He was married to the king's daughter and was a military hero. Now, he is on the run. But, David takes this time and writes quite a number of psalms, by which we are all benefitted. These psalms also mark his own spiritual growth, which was necessary in order for him to rule over Israel. More important than these things that you want is your capacity to enjoy those things. Without the capacity to enjoy a gift from God, that gift is wasted. It is like giving a baby a million dollars when he is hungry for milk. The baby has no appreciation for a million dollars; however, milk is something the infant can appreciate. I am hoping as you observe David, as he waits on God's deliverance and on God promoting him, and as David grows, we can appreciate this time that he spend on the run from Saul.

Finally, David's men will make reference to something which Jehovah says to David, about delivering his enemies into his hand (1Sam. 24:4). Although this is a misapplication of Scripture, my educated guess is that David's men are referring to **Psalm 110**, which really has no way of identifying when it was written. I am going to place it here, at the end of 1Sam. 23 and right before we begin 1Sam. 24. At this point, I am placing it here, based upon the theory that this is the psalm to which David's men refer. This will be discussed in much greater detail in 1Sam. 24:4.

Now, I know that, for some of you, it seems weird to jump back and forth between the psalms and the book of Samuel, and there are times that you would prefer just to stay with one or the other. In fact, you may go directly to 1Sam. 24 from here and bypass those psalms; however, you lose a lot of the application, the texture, and the growth of David when you bypass the psalms that he has written. God the Holy Spirit has seen to it that we will be able to place many of the Davidic psalms within the book of Samuel as a part of a seamless narrative, based upon the inscriptions and titles of the psalms. We should therefore make use of this information and place these psalms where they belong. Furthermore, David's experiences illustrate the principles found in the psalms and the psalms add a depth to David's life not necessarily discernable in the narrative of the books of Samuel.

Let me suggest another detour as well: while David is one of these strongholds (*hiding places?*), as is mentioned in vv. 14, 19, 29, men from Israel are coming to him, to stay with him, to show their allegiance to him. Therefore, we may also want to stop and check out **1Chron. 12:8–18**, where specific men from Gad, Benjamin and Judah come to David while he is in the *stronghold* (1Chron. 12:16) or in the *wilderness stronghold* (1Chron. 12:8). In Chronicles, this is in the singular; throughout 1Sam. 23, the word is found in the plural. David had several hiding places in this chapter; the men from Gad, Benjamin and Judah all came to David when he was in a specific hiding place. Therefore, we may reasonably assume that 1Sam. 23:14–29 parallel 1Chron. 12:8–18.