

not the city of that same name in the tribe of Issachar (Joshua 19:18). The place in Issachar is so far north that it would seem improbable that David would have been in that area.

20. *What had happened to Michal? 25:44*

Michal was David's first wife. She had lied about his threat to her when David fled from their home as Saul came to kill him. Saul had then given Michal to Phalti, the son of Laish of Gallim. Phalti is called Paltiel in II Samuel 3:15. Gallim was a place between Gibeah of Saul and Jerusalem. David later persuaded Ish-bosheth and Abner to bring Michal back to him (II Samuel 3:14).

## CHAPTER 25 IN REVIEW

1. Where was Samuel buried? \_\_\_\_\_
2. In what wilderness was David hiding? \_\_\_\_\_
3. To what man did David send for supplies at the time of shearing? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Where was the man's home? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What was his wife's name? \_\_\_\_\_
6. How many men did David take to fight Nabal? \_\_\_\_\_
7. By what title did Nabal's servant refer to him? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What is the meaning of Nabal's name? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What other woman did David marry? \_\_\_\_\_
10. To what man had Saul given Michal? \_\_\_\_\_

## A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 26

Vv. 1- 5 *Saul pursues David again.* Saul had once said that he would leave David alone, but he could not resist the temptation to try to kill the man who threatened his position as king. The Ziphites came to Saul in Gibeah and told him that David was hiding in the hill of Hachilah. Saul then pursued David again.

## FIRST SAMUEL

Vv. 6-20 *David again spares Saul.* Once more David had an opportunity to kill Saul as Saul lay sleeping. Some of David's men wanted him to slay the king, but David was unwilling to lift up his hand personally against God's anointed, the ruler of Israel. He did take his spear and cruse of water. He then awakened Saul and showed him that he could have killed him when he stole into his camp and took his spear.

Vv. 21-25 *Saul again repents.* Saul knew that he had done wrong in breaking his oath. He also knew that David was more righteous than he himself. When he was confronted with this truth, he repented again. Once more he said that he would not try to kill David. He blessed David and returned to his place.

## LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *Man should respect the things of God.* David demonstrated over and over again that he respected God's anointed leader. Saul was quite unrighteous but David knew that he was still God's anointed king. He was unwilling himself to take Saul's life even though he did have the opportunity more than once.
2. *Men today do well to respect God's appointments.* "How oft shall my brother sin against me"? (Matthew 18:21). Peter once asked Jesus how often his brother should sin against him and yet be forgiven by him. Peter thought that seven times were sufficient, but Jesus taught Peter that we should forgive a repentant brother an unlimited number of times. David demonstrated this very well in his life. Over and over again he forgave Saul and tried to live peaceably with him.

*Saul Pursues David Again. 26:1-5*

And the Ziphites came unto Saul to Gibeah, saying Doth not David hide himself in the hill of Hachilah, *which is* before Jeshimon?

2 Then Saul arose, and went down to the wilderness of Ziph, having three thousand chosen men of Israel with him, to seek David in the wilderness of Ziph.

3 And Saul pitched in the hill of Hachilah, *which is* before Jeshimon, by the way. But David abode in the wilderness, and he saw that Saul came after him into the wilderness.

4 David therefore sent out spies, and understood that Saul was come in very deed.

5 And David arose, and came to the place where Saul had pitched: and David beheld the place where Saul lay, and Abner the son of Ner, the captain of his host: and Saul lay in the trench, and the people pitched round about him.

1. *Did the Ziphites betray David again? 26:1*

The repetition not only of the treachery of the Ziphites, but also of the sparing of Saul by David, furnished no proof in itself that the account contained in chapter twenty-six is only another legend of the occurrences already related in chapter twenty-four. As the pursuit of David by Saul lasted for several years, in so small a district as the desert of Judah, there is nothing strange in the repetition of these similar scenes. The agreement between the two accounts reduces it entirely to outward and unessential things. On the other hand, all the details, as well as the final results of the two occurrences, differ entirely from one another. These decided differences prove clearly enough that the incident described in the second instance is not the same as the similar one mentioned earlier.

2. *Why did Saul have only 3,000 men with him? 26:2*

The men of Israel numbered 300,000 and the men of Judah were 30,000 in number when the combined armies

went out to fight Nahash, the Ammonite, in (11:8). Later there were only 2,000 men with Saul and 1,000 men with Jonathan (13:1) when Saul and Jonathan were fighting the Philistine garrisons. The fact that there were 3,000 men with Saul when he went out against David would indicate that this was the size of the standing army which Saul kept. Israel could have mustered 1,300,000 men in the closing days of David's reign (II Samuel 24:9). Saul must have felt that he did not need a huge army to fight David's small band of 600 men.

3. *Where were the two armies?* 26:3

Saul was in the hill of Hachilah in the center of the territory of Judah. This hill is described as being "before Jeshimon." It was on the edge of the hill country which rose out of the Arabah, the deep valley which ran along the eastern border of Palestine. David was "in the wilderness." Whether he was in the wilderness of Ziph near the center of Judah or in the wilderness of Paran (25:1) cannot be determined. Since Saul had come to seek him in the wilderness of Ziph, it seems better to think of him as being located there at the time of this battle.

4. *Why did David send out spies?* 26:4

Ordinary precautions would dictate that a band of soldiers the size of David's army have some men serving as scouts. They would need to determine the location and strength of the enemy. Although this is the first time we find David using spies, it must have been Saul's usual practice for he seemed to be able to keep close watch on David's movements.

5. *What kind of trench was in Saul's camp?* 26:5

The American Standard Version translates this word with the phrase, "place of the wagons." Once again we find a reference to the custom of ancient armies to throw up a rampart around their supplies (I Samuel 17:20). It was around these supplies that the main body of the army had pitched its tents. Saul and Abner were in the place

of the wagons. They must have been behind the rampart and in the center of the army where they would enjoy utmost protection.

*David Again Spares Saul. 26:6-20*

6 Then answered David and said to Ahimelech the Hittite, and to Abishai the son of Zeruah, brother to Joab, saying, Who will go down with me to Saul to the camp? And Abishai said, I will go down with thee.

7 So David and Abishai came to the people by night: and, behold, Saul lay sleeping within the trench, and his spear stuck in the ground at his bolster: but Abner and the people lay round about him.

8 Then said Abishai to David, God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day: now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear even to the earth at once, and I will not *smite* him the second time.

9 And David said to Abishai, Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed, and be guiltless?

10 David said furthermore, As the Lord liveth, the Lord shall smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into battle, and perish.

11 The Lord forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the Lord's anointed: but, I pray thee, take thou now the spear that *is* at his bolster, and the cruse of water, and let us go.

12 So David took the spear and the cruse of water from Saul's bolster; and they gat them away, and no man saw *it*, nor knew *it*, neither awaked: for they *were* all asleep; because a deep sleep from the Lord was fallen upon them.

13 Then David went over to the other side, and stood on the top of a hill afar off; a great space *being* between them:

14 And David cried to the people, and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, Answerest thou not, Abner? Then Abner

answered and said, Who *art* thou *that* criest to the king?

15 And David said to Abner, *Art* not thou a *valiant* man? and who *is* like to thee in Israel? wherefore then hast thou not kept thy lord the king? for there came one of the people in to destroy the king thy lord.

16 This thing *is* not good that thou hast done. *As* the Lord liveth, ye *are* worthy to die, because ye have not kept your master, the Lord's anointed. And now see where the king's spear *is*, and the cruse of water that *was* at his bolster.

17 And Saul knew David's voice, and said, *Is* this thy voice, my son David? And David said, *It is* my voice, my lord, O king.

18 And he said, Wherefore doth my lord thus pursue after his servant? for what have I done? or what evil *is* in mine hand?

19 Now therefore, I pray thee, let my lord the king hear the words of his servant. If the Lord have stirred thee up against me, let him accept an offering: but if *they be* the children of men, cursed *be* they before the Lord; for they have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord, saying, Go, serve other gods.

20 Now therefore, let not my blood fall to the earth before the face of the Lord: for the king of Israel is come out to seek a flea, as when one doth hunt a partridge in the mountains.

6. *Why did David propose to go into the camp? 26:6*

For a moment David may have weakened and thought that he might do some personal harm to Saul. Since he had refused to do this before, he may have had other objectives in mind. He had sent out spies to find out as much as he could about Saul's army and its movements. It may have been his own purpose to go into the camp to learn as much as he could about Saul's army for himself. He found out that Saul was there lying within the trench.

He saw his spear stuck in the ground at the head of his bedroll. He saw that Abner was there also as well as many of the other captains of thousands and soldiers whom David had fought with on previous occasions.

7. *What was Abishai's proposal? 26:8*

Abishai, the son of David's sister, Zeruah, and brother of Joab, proposed that they slay Saul while he lay sleeping. Abishai seems ever ready to take immediate action against David's enemies. He made this same proposal when Shimei cursed David as David fled from Jerusalem during the revolt of Absalom (II Samuel 16:9). Abishai seemed sure of his prowess for he said that he would smite him but once and that he would not need to smite him the second time. He felt that he could kill Saul with one stroke.

8. *What was David's reaction? 26:10*

Once again David said that he would not lift up his own hand against the Lord's anointed. He predicted that Saul would go down into battle and be killed. If this were not his end, he would die sometime of old age. At any rate David himself was not going to be a party to the slaying of Saul. He did take evidence from his visit to Saul's camp and returned to his own men. The evidence which he took was the spear and the cruse of water. The spear evidently had a sharp point on the butt end of it so that it could be stuck down in the ground without dulling the sharp point on the other end of the shaft. The cruse of water was the personal jar or cup which would be recognized as Saul's own.

9. *Why did David rebuke Abner? 26:15*

After David got back to his own men, he cried out to Abner and asked him if he did not consider himself to be a valiant man. He chided him by asking if there were any man in his field to equal him. He then asked why he had not kept better watch over the king. He then announced that there had been those in the camp who intended to kill Saul. David's rebuke was stinging as he

judged that Abner was worthy of death because he had not guarded the king more carefully. He asked him to go out to see if he could find the king's spear or the water jar which had been kept at his pillow. Abner's search must have revealed that these items were gone. He knew that David had passed up an opportunity to kill Saul.

10. *Why did Saul call David his son? 26:17*

David was Saul's son-in-law. He had just been awakened out of his sleep, and he may have been very kindly disposed towards David. Saul loved David when he first met him; and since he was old enough to be his father, he may have looked on him as he did the members of his own family. Certainly this kind of address does not reveal any real feeling of animosity towards David on the part of Saul. It must have been largely when he was possessed of the evil spirit that Saul sought to kill David.

11. *What was David's proposal? 26:19*

David proposed that he make an offering to God, if God was stirring up Saul's hatred for him. A sinner was to be punished. If the king knew of his sin, his duty was to execute judgment. For example, one of God's laws through the ages has been that a man who killed another man should be put to death (Genesis 9:6). David was saying that if he were guilty of some crime for which the punishment was less than death, perhaps he could make a sin offering to the Lord and be forgiven of his sin. Thus Saul would not need to continue to search for him. On the other hand, if wicked men were making false accusations against David, he prayed that they might be cursed before the Lord because they were keeping him out of the presence of the king and making him to live on the borders of the promised land. In the areas outside of the borders of Israel David would be in pagan territory. These people worshipped other gods. The net result of his exile was that he could not go to the Tabernacle or to the priests of God and was in effect being told to go and serve other

gods. David was willing therefore that his blood might be shed if there were just cause: but if there were no real reason for his being killed, he prayed that his blood would not be shed in vain.

12. *What figures did David use to describe his plight?*  
26:20

David said he was like a flea or a partridge. He was being forced to move about from place to place. He was like a bird being hunted in the forest. He was forced to make himself as inconspicuous as a pesky insect. These were humble figures, but they described his condition very well.

*Saul Again Repents. 26:21-25*

21 Then said Saul, I have sinned: return, my son David: for I will no more do thee harm, because my soul was precious in thine eyes this day: behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly.

22 And David answered and said, Behold the king's spear! and let one of the young men come over and fetch it.

23 The Lord render to every man his righteousness and his faithfulness: for the Lord delivered thee into *my* hand today, but I would not stretch forth mine hand against the Lord's anointed.

24 And, behold, as thy life was much set by this day in mine eyes, so let my life be much set by in the eyes of the Lord, and let him deliver me out of all tribulation.

25 Then Saul said to David, Blessed *be* thou, my son David: thou shalt both do great *things*, and also shalt still prevail. So David went on his way, and Saul returned to his place.

13. *What was Saul's decision? 26:21*

Once again Saul said that he had sinned. He gave permission for David to return to his place unmolested. He

promised him that he would do him no harm. Saul admitted that he had acted like a fool. He had made a grave mistake. Saul parted from David after pronouncing a benediction upon him (v. 25). He predicted that David would go on to accomplish outstanding feats and that he would eventually prevail over him. David was allowed to go on his way unmolested and Saul went back to his home in Gibeah.

## CHAPTER 26 IN REVIEW

1. Who told Saul where David was hiding? \_\_\_\_\_
2. In what hill was David hiding? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How many men did Saul take to find David? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Who went with David into Saul's camp? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Who was Saul's captain? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What items did David take from Saul's camp? \_\_\_\_\_
7. By what title did Saul address David? \_\_\_\_\_
8. By what figures did David refer to himself? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What part did Saul say he had played? \_\_\_\_\_
10. What part of Saul's armor did David show to Saul? \_\_\_\_\_