



# CAPITOL COMMISSION

## Communication and Vindication (I Samuel 24-25)

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*Capitol Commission state directors are missionaries who teach weekly verse-by-verse Bible studies for legislators, lobbyists, and staff members. These Bible studies are hand-distributed to each legislative office, emailed, and made available throughout the Capitol community. The love and grace of God compels us to proclaim the truth of the Gospel with a heartfelt compassion for the Capitol community, to faithfully teach and apply the Word of God, and it is our desire to build meaningful relationships that bear fruit for an eternity to come.*

With the Bible as our foundation and authority, the mission of Capitol Commission is obedience to the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20) within the Capitol communities of the world. We are not a lobbying group attempting to garner votes or reform society. Our mandate is to see the hearts and lives of elected officials transformed with the Word of God. Capitol Commission is a ministry of the church seeking to proclaim the gospel message, and to help believers mature through the verse-by-verse teaching of Scripture. In the Bible, we see God's great love for the world, especially for those who have been placed in authority. This is the foundation for our ministry to you.

The church is instructed to submit and to honor government leaders (Rom 13:1-7), and as a matter of first importance, to pray for their salvation (1 Tim 2:1-4). Our desire is witness God transform the hearts and lives of elected officials, lobbyists, and staff members. We apply this mandate to four major areas of making disciples: (1) *evangelize* those who have not experienced saving faith in Jesus Christ; (2) *establish* those who desire to grow in their faith and knowledge of Scripture; (3) *equip* those called to spiritual leadership; and, (4) *encourage* churches to participate with us in ministry.

### Introduction

First Samuel 23 concluded with Saul pursuing David into the Desert of Maon (23:24-25). David and his men were on one side of the mountain trying to elude capture, while Saul and his forces were following on the other side. Only a messenger's urgent warning that "the Philistines have made a raid on the land" forced Saul to abandon his pursuit (at a crucial moment for David). God certainly led David into exile, but the closing events of chapter 23 are a reminder that the Lord will not allow any difficulty to enter the lives of His own that are not possible to overcome. "No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it" (1 Cor 10:13; cf. Eph 1:13-14; Jas 1:12).

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... SEEK THE WILL OF GOD BECAUSE THE LORD WILL DIRECT THE LIVES OF HIS PEOPLE WHEN THEY DO SO. ...

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The emphasis upon communication in chapter 23 is noteworthy. The chapter begins with a crucial situation, and David immediately inquired of the Lord. Verses 2-14 explain how David was able to rescue the city of Keilah from the Philistines. Verses 19-29 provide the communication of the Ziphites to Saul, which they believed would help the king to capture David. Between the two accounts is a visit from David's dear friend, Jonathan, who encouraged him. David and Jonathan renewed their covenant with each other before the Lord. In each of the three accounts, David inquired the will and wisdom of God, but Saul continually trusted in his own ability and desires. The success of David is a reminder to seek the will of God because the Lord will direct the lives of His people when they do so (Jer 10:23; cf. Ps 119:35; 2 Tim 3:5).

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SIN PROHIBITS ONE FROM DOING THE WILL OF GOD, AND THEREFORE, FROM FINDING MEANING AND PURPOSE IN LIFE.

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Chapter 23 ended with David staying "in the strongholds of Engedi," which was approximately 2,000 feet above the Dead Sea and a beautiful oasis in a barren wilderness. David composed Psalm 54 during this time. He recognized that God would sustain him. God alone was his help, and would deliver David from his troubles. God's people do not vindicate themselves; rather, God will provide vindication through His power. The events of chapter 24 record David's trust in God's faithfulness (Ps 54:5) because it reveals the first occasion in which David spared Saul's life when he had a perfect opportunity to overcome him (cf. 1 Sam 24:6; 26:8-11).

### DAVID AND SAUL

(24:1-22) Saul's obsessive passion is evident in verse 1. "Now when Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, he . . . took three thousand chosen men from all Israel and went to seek David and his men in front of the Rocks of the Wild Goats." As opposed to submitting to the will of God for his life, Saul's rebellion consumed him so that nothing else mattered. The exhortation of Hebrews 12:1 is to "lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us." Especially in the life of the believer, sin will hinder from accomplishing what God intends for one's life. Sin prohibits

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one from doing the will of God, *and therefore*, from finding meaning and purpose in life.

“Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled” (Heb 12:14-15). If sin is not confessed and true repentance follows, there will always be further difficulties in life. Although the evidence of God’s existence and power is evident, sin will blind one from this reality. Consequently, sin will prevent one from the provision of God’s grace, and will result in bitterness. The most dangerous sin is that which is hidden from everyone because the bitterness of it becomes consuming.

Somewhere in his all-consuming pursuit, Saul came to a cave to “relieve himself” (24:3). The idiom literally means, “to cover his feet” (cf. Deut 23:13), which could mean that Saul was relaxing for the moment. Saul’s rest provided David with the opportunity and time to remove “the edge of Saul’s robe secretly.” David was convicted by his conscience for what he did because his action was a symbolic attack to Saul’s kingship, and was therefore rebellion against God (24:6). David’s conviction is unbelievable if he did not believe in the sovereignty of God to remove Saul from his office.

David quickly arose and called to Saul from the entrance of the cave (24:8). David’s words are somewhat sermoniac. He proclaimed judgment, God’s justice, and the character of evil. Citing the proverb of the ancients, David said, from “the wicked comes forth wickedness” (24:13). David’s actions were compelling evidence that he did not mean to harm Saul. Saul’s sin, however, was consuming; therefore, he could not reason properly. Although he admitted that David would be king, Saul still determined to murder David. Saul’s actions are maddening, but his madness was not from a poor mind but an evil mind. It is significant that Saul did not invite David to return to his court; rather, David would remain in Engedi.

The covenant that Saul pleaded in verse 21 was both vacuous and unnecessary because he did not intend to keep his word. David already made this covenant with Saul’s son, Jonathan, and he did intend to keep his word. Saul made a promise that he never intended to keep. The evidence of Saul’s untruthfulness is recorded in chapter 26. Although he “wept” (24:16), which seemed to be genuine tears, Saul’s calloused and hardened heart was unaffected by this brief emotion.

## DAVID AND ABIGAIL

(25:1-44) The next chapter introduces us to Abigail. Although it may seem to be an interruption in the account of Saul, this

chapter is important because it demonstrates the weakness of David in responding impulsively toward Nabal.

Abigail warned David to leave vengeance to God. David was impressed by her actions and words, and returned to his camp without taking revenge upon Nabal. Abigail longed to communicate the recent events to Nabal but he was “very drunk” (25:36). When she spoke to him in the morning, he had suffered an apparent stroke and was in a coma. “About ten days later, the LORD struck Nabal and he died” (25:38), which was God’s judgment for his contempt (25:39).

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DAVID ALSO UNDERSTOOD THE VALUE OF LEAVING VENGEANCE TO GOD. . . . “NEVER TAKE YOUR OWN REVENGE . . . FOR IT IS WRITTEN, ‘VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY,’ SAYS THE LORD” (ROM 12:19).

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David learned that Nabal died, and sent messengers to his widow, offering to marry her and provide her with lifelong care and provision. David also understood the value of leaving vengeance to God. “Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath *of God*, for it is written, ‘VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY,’ says the Lord” (Rom 12:19). “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (Rom 12:21).

It is significant that Abigail knew the prophecies with regard to David’s future as king of Israel (25:30). She reminded David that God would protect him; therefore, retaliation was unnecessary. Apparently the entire nation knew that Saul was doomed to failure, and that David was his rightful successor to the throne. The only individuals who would not live in accord with reality were Saul and Nabal. Saul’s failure to do so is the consequence of his evil mind. Nabal’s refusal was due to supreme foolishness (25:25).

Chapter 25 is a reminder of God’s providence. The historical account demonstrates how God will establish His kingdom and why only His work can be trusted. Humanity alone cannot be trusted because Eli honored his sons more than God, and Saul honored his own abilities and reasoning to the exclusion of God’s Word. God’s choice is essential because even Samuel would have chosen another king to replace Saul, who would not be any different from the previous (cf. 1 Sam 16:6-7). According to chapter 25, even David was tempted to defile the kingdom with Nabal’s blood. Be faithful to God’s leading in your life, and pray for God’s choice in the upcoming election to be individuals with godly wisdom and humility, biblical courage and conviction, and delight in the sufficiency of the living and written Word.