

## Imagine That I Samuel 26

**Intro:** For all his troubles & trials, it is interesting to see that David has not become timid; on the contrary, he has become audacious. Audacity is normally exciting (nearly every movie ever made uses it in the plot) but successful audacity is really exciting; and in David's case, it's also encouraging b/c it shows us that he is learning from his trials.

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**1-5-** Those Ziphites either really hate David or they really crave Saul's good will. Either way, they've done it again & Saul comes lurking for David again. This means Saul has reneged on his previous repentance in ch24. Just like ch24, Saul brings his 3000 man strike force. But this time, David doesn't run; he stays put in the wilderness & sends out his spies to see what Saul is up to. David always seems to know where Saul is but Saul never knows where David is. When the spies locate Saul's troop, David took to the high ground to look over the encampment. As normal military protocol, Saul bivouacked right in the middle of his 3000 men & their equipment (safest, most logical place for king).

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**6-** Here's where it starts to get interesting. There's a big difference between this meeting of David & Saul & their previous meeting. In ch24, David is hiding in a cave & Saul happens to pick that cave for a temporary outhouse. Thus, David's audacity was defensive & reactionary (he had to do something). Here, David's not hiding, he's watching. Now, his audacity is on offense & is deliberate. He presents a bold initiative: Let's go visit Saul! Who's with me?

Abishai readily volunteers for this suicide mission. Maybe he thinks David has finally come to his senses & is ready to strike. He probably thought David was forming a 2 man hit squad to take Saul out. If he were hoping for death & plunder, he will be sorely disappointed. The only plunder David will allow is Saul's spear & water jug. As we will discover, Saul's spear is the dominant symbol of this story. Primarily, Saul's spear will serve as irrefutable evidence that David really was in Saul's camp, really was standing over Saul's body & really was able to end Saul's life. But Saul's spear will also have a greater significance, 1 that will provide David with greater assurance in YHWH's promise.

**7-8-** Now, we must picture the scene: Saul is fast asleep in the camp. The captain of his army is sleeping next to him & he is surrounded by 3000 of his

finest warriors & in the middle of all that comes strolling David & Abishai, like nobody's business. Strangely enough, Abishai apparently feels like this is a good time to engage David in a heated theological discussion! "It's a present from YHWH. Let me at 'em! I'll use his own spear & I'll get it right the 1<sup>st</sup> time!" Clearly, Abishai assumed this was a commando raid to get rid of Saul & Abner in 1 fell swoop. He even volunteered to do the dirty deed so David could still claim innocence. But this plan was not acceptable to David at all.

9- David now enters into this whispered theological discussion by reminding Abishai of that 1 prohibitive principle. You can't touch the Lord's anointed & remain guiltless! It wasn't that David thought Saul was right. He knew better than anyone how deep in sin Saul was. He knew even a sinning Saul was still the anointed king over Israel. Again, David's decision was based on principle & not on circumstances. He knew it was wrong to lay a hand on the Lord's anointed even tho Saul wasn't serving as the Lord wanted him to serve. But the discussion doesn't stop there...

10-11- This is the same patience & restraint we saw in ch24 but, it's a deeper patience, a more informed restraint. It's obvious Saul hadn't learned anything from their previous encounter & apparently David's men hadn't either but it seems that David has learned something important from his run-in w/ Nabal. In that story it says, **the Lord struck (nagaph) Nabal & he died (25:38)**. Here in vs10, David surmises that YHWH may also **strike (nagaph)** Saul. Using the exact same verb shows that David has **learned** that YHWH **can be trusted to handle both fools & oppressors when those matters are left in His hands**. The Lord may be pleased to deal w/ Saul as He did Nabal; then again, He may not. YHWH may work by some other method: Saul might die by natural causes or he might die in battle. There were many possibilities but the important point is: YHWH **will handle Saul's destiny**. It's **not** in David's hands!

There's something exciting about David's restraint here & the **faith** that fuels it. It's **faith** that sets David's imagination to work. He's instantly able to think of several ways God could deliver him from Saul: directly, naturally or indirectly. Sure, the main point is that YHWH will see to it but yet, it's a **lively faith** that sees plenty of ways YHWH might work. There's nothing wrong w/ that as long as 1 doesn't try to restrict God to his limited range of possibilities or methods. **Eph 3:20** says God's **able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think** & we don't want to restrict that.

Many Christians today would do well to let their imaginations run wild, at least in regard to the adequacy & sufficiency of God. Imagination is what separates the

good from the great. Whether it's in art, engineering, mechanics or even carpentry; in order 2 break the bonds of convention, you must 1<sup>st</sup> imagine what you can do & how 2 do it. Albert Einstein didn't come up w/ his theories in a physics lab, he sat in a patent office & thought about how the forces of the universe worked & imagined what the laws of physics would lead to. DaVinci, Michelangelo, Edison, Gates, Zukkerberg; they all imagined what was beyond the normal. Don't equate imagination w/ falsehood or fancy, especially if it's ***informed by faith***. You might even say faith needs imagination 2 clear the way if we ever hope 2 grasp the ***grandeur, majesty & ability*** of God (**Isa 40:12-31**). Imagination doesn't lead us beyond the truth of God, it helps us ***arrive*** at it! It doesn't falsify God, it ***finds*** Him! Our minds are lazy, uncreative & proud; we desperately need an imaginative faith. God is definitely honored when His people ask, "Who can say how God will work here?" Wasn't that Jonathan's statement back in 14:6? It wasn't a statement of doubt but of confident faith, imaginative faith! As long as we don't try 2 limit God's work we should feel free 2 speculate on how He may bring our deliverance!

1 more point: tho David didn't know how **YHWH** would work, he ***did*** know what obedience required. He could think of plenty of ways God could remove Saul; but he ***didn't know how*** God would do it. What he ***did know*** was that God didn't want David 2 dispose of Saul himself. God's ways may baffle us but God's will is sufficiently clear 4 us 2 follow in the meantime. A believer in a difficult marriage might not know how God will bring resolution 2 their marital problems but they ***do know*** that they cannot commit adultery against their spouse. God's ways might not be clear but our way is – obedience. We may wait 4 God's providence but we already have God's Word & that's all we need.

**12-** Abishai may've been disappointed even tho David saved him from divine punishment (that David would execute).

Now we see how they could stroll into camp & argue the finer points of theology – God's providence. We're not just seeing David's audacity but also **YHWH's** hand at work. Saul is helpless b/c God made him that way again. The 1<sup>st</sup> time it was by the power of His Spirit (19:22-24), this time it was by a deep sleep (best sleep he's had in a while).

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**13-16-** David ruins everyone's good sleep when he starts hollering at Abner. It probably took them awhile 2 gather their wits but David continues 2 hurl accusation all the while. His point is clear: 4 Abner 2/b such a high officer, he sure make a sorry body guard! In fact, all of Saul's men (including Abner) deserved 2/b court-martialed & executed b/c they failed 2 protect their king. David was not kidding – this was a serious offense! The evidence is indisputable!

You don't have 2/b wide awake 2 see the problem. 4 all his protection, Saul is defenseless. The ever-present symbol of his power (spear) has been easily stolen. In effect, David (thru providence) has **disarmed** Saul! Even in the dark of night this 1 thing is clear: Saul's power is gone; nothing can keep David from obtaining the kingdom. It was both a sign 4 Saul & 4 David. David should take it as encouragement, another assurance that **YHWH's** promise w/b fulfilled.

**17-20-** Saul must've thought it was all just a bad dream, but it wasn't. He pulls the old **my son** routine but David's having none of it this time. In fact, he ignores Saul's kind overture & focuses instead on Saul's injustice towards him. "Why do you keep chasing me? What have I done? What wrong?" Then David offers some scenarios & solutions. If **YHWH** is prompting you, I can offer a sacrifice 2 appease Him. But, if it's someone else, well David has some choice words 4 them. Take notice of David's greatest complaint: Saul's unrelenting pursuit has pushed him 2 the point of leaving Israel. Wherever he goes, he'll be in **Paganland**. It's as if people were telling him 2 **go & serve other gods**. It wasn't that David thought he had 2 give up **YHWH** if he left Israel but he knew that 2/b cut off from **YHWH's inheritance**= cut off from **YHWH's** face; 2 leave Israel meant there's no possibility of participating in public worship w/ **YHWH's** people.

Unlike a lot of believers today, David would never be satisfied w/ just a study Bible, a prayer list & a quiet (MT) cave. **Ps 63:2** tells us **YHWH's** face (=presence) was especially experienced in the sanctuary. Now, David was being driven away from the tabernacle & sacrifice, the ministry of the priests. He was being shut out from the place where **YHWH** met w/ His people. His most severe regret & complaint was being cut off from the **privilege** of public worship! Does it bother us? Modern Christians surpass David in privileges but few match him in appetite (**Ps 42:1-2; 63:1**).

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**21-24- played the fool-** perfect autobiography, complete life-story of Saul. He had been given the Spirit of God, the friendship of Samuel (man of God) & the devotion of Israel (people of God). But b/c of his proud & rebellious actions, the Spirit departed from him, Samuel was unable 2 help him & the hearts of the people turned away from him. Saul's problem was he leaned on his own understanding, failed 2 obey & became the evil-tempered man he was, controlled by hatred & fighting against God. He certainly was a fool but I don't think he was playing at it.

Saul's response seems 2/b sincere: there's confession, regret, invitation &

promise. But what does sincerity have 2 do w/ anything? Saul's always sincere, **until he's not**. Just b/c Saul's been a fool doesn't mean David has 2/b one! Instead of accepting Saul's invitation, David decides 2 stick w/ **YHWH**. David places himself & his future squarely on his **only hope (24)**. David's no longer concerned if his life is valued in Saul's eyes. He's **not looking 2 Saul, not hoping in Saul, not believing Saul**. He places himself under **YHWH's** eyes & in **YHWH's** hands. Truth be told, we have no better words 2 face the troubles of life w/. We have no other help than what David had, so we can move forward w/ no other prayer on our lips than what David offers here (**24b**).

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**25-** This vs. is significant- David & Saul will never see each other again after this. As the 2 depart, they each head towards their own destiny: Saul – 2 ultimate disgrace & death; David – 2 ultimate glory & victory. Only Saul goes on alone from here. David departs w/ a God who is determined 2 deliver him from every distress

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Believer, are you in distress today? The Word tells us over & over that God is sufficient 2 meet our needs; He will come thru 4 you 2. I've seen it happen 2 many times in my life (& others) 2 doubt it anymore. Just think of what God is capable of doing. Imagination will feed your faith but it will also feed your patience. Knowing God can easily resolve or remove our problems should give us the confidence that He will do it in His own way & time. Remember, it's only those who patiently **wait on the Lord** who will renew their strength; mount up w/ wings; run & not be weary; walk & not faint. David's courage grew only b/c his faith grew. He was learning of God's faithfulness thru his trials & tribulations. Are we growing or just groaning?

