

The Unstoppable Plan of God

1 Samuel 24

August 16, 2026

THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

1 Samuel 24

When Saul returned from following the Philistines, he was told, "Behold, David is in the wilderness of Engedi." ² Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel and went to seek David and his men in front of the Wildgoats' Rocks. ³ And he came to the sheepfolds by the way, where there was a cave, and Saul went in to relieve himself. Now David and his men were sitting in the innermost parts of the cave. ⁴ And the men of David said to him, "Here is the day of which the LORD said to you, 'Behold, I will give your enemy into your hand, and you shall do to him as it shall seem good to you.'" Then David arose and stealthily cut off a corner of Saul's robe. ⁵ And afterward David's heart struck him, because he had cut off a corner of Saul's robe. ⁶ He said to his men, "The LORD forbid that I should do this thing to my lord, the LORD's anointed, to put out my hand against him, seeing he is the LORD's anointed." ⁷ So David persuaded his men with these words and did not permit them to attack Saul. And Saul rose up and left the cave and went on his way.

⁸ Afterward David also arose and went out of the cave, and called after Saul, "My lord the king!" And when Saul looked behind him, David bowed with his face to the earth and paid homage. ⁹ And David said to Saul, "Why do you listen to the words of men who say, 'Behold, David seeks your harm'? ¹⁰ Behold, this day your eyes have seen how the LORD gave you today into my hand in the cave. And some told me to kill you, but I spared you. I said, 'I will not put out my hand against my lord, for he is the LORD's anointed.'" ¹¹ See, my father, see the corner of your robe in my hand. For by the fact that I cut off the corner of your robe and did not kill you, you may know and see that there is no wrong or treason in my hands. I have not sinned against you, though you hunt my life to take it. ¹² May the LORD judge between me and you, may the LORD avenge me against you, but my hand shall not be against you. ¹³ As the proverb of the ancients says, 'Out of the wicked comes wickedness.' But my hand shall not be against you. ¹⁴ After whom has the king of Israel come out? After whom do you pursue? After a dead dog! After a flea! ¹⁵ May the LORD therefore be judge and give sentence between me and you, and see to it and plead my cause and deliver me from your hand."

¹⁶ As soon as David had finished speaking these words to Saul, Saul said, "Is this your voice, my son David?" And Saul lifted up his voice and wept. ¹⁷ He said to David, "You are more righteous than I, for you have repaid me good, whereas I have repaid you evil. ¹⁸ 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. ¹⁹ 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. ²⁰ And now, behold, I know that you shall surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in your hand. ²¹ 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." ²² And David swore this to Saul. Then Saul went home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold.

MAIN THEME

Have you ever looked back on an event in your life and realized, "There is no way that happened by accident"? That's exactly what we see in 1 Samuel 24.

After months of pursuing David, Saul unknowingly enters the very cave where David and his men are hiding. Humanly speaking, David finally has the opportunity to eliminate the man who has relentlessly hunted him. Yet David refuses to seize the throne by force. Instead, he trusts God's timing and God's plan.

This remarkable encounter reminds us that no amount of human effort, power, or opposition can stop what God has determined to accomplish. Kings rise and kings fall. People make real choices with real consequences. Yet above it all, God faithfully carries out His sovereign purposes.

The chapter also presents a striking contrast between David and Saul. Saul is overcome with emotion but never truly repents. David is far from perfect, yet he continually submits himself to the Lord. We are reminded that God desires more than sorrow over sin; He calls us to repentance, faith, and obedience.

As followers of Christ, we can rest in the confidence that God's plans are always right, always good, and ultimately unstoppable.

DISCUSSION & APPLICATION

1. Trust God's Plan Instead of Taking Control

1 Samuel 24:1–7; Proverbs 3:5–6; Romans 8:28

- Why do you think David refused to kill Saul when he had the opportunity?
- What pressures tempt us to take matters into our own hands instead of waiting on God?
- How does trusting God's timing require faith?
- Where is God asking you to trust Him instead of forcing your own solution?

2. Leave Justice in God's Hands

1 Samuel 24:8–15; Romans 12:17–21; Deuteronomy 32:35

- What does David's response teach us about handling people who have wronged us?
- Why is it difficult to trust God with justice?
- What is the difference between seeking revenge and seeking righteousness?
- Is there someone you need to forgive or release into God's hands?

3. Respond with Repentance, Not Mere Remorse

1 Samuel 24:16–22; Psalm 51:1–12; 2 Corinthians 7:10

- Why was Saul's sorrow not enough?
- How is genuine repentance different from simply feeling guilty?

- What areas of your life need confession and change rather than regret alone?
- How does the gospel give us hope when we fail?

4. Live Confidently in God's Unstoppable Plan

1 Samuel 24:20; Revelation 22:3–5; Philippians 1:6

- How did David's confidence in God's promises shape his decisions?
- How does knowing that Christ will ultimately reign encourage believers today?
- What circumstances in your life make it difficult to trust God's plan?
- How can remembering your future with Christ change the way you live this week?

PRAY

Dear Father, thank you that your plans can never be frustrated. Forgive us for the times we try to force outcomes, seek revenge, or refuse to trust your timing. Give us hearts like David—hearts that submit to you even when the path is difficult. Protect us from becoming like Saul, whose sorrow never led to lasting repentance. Thank you for sending Jesus, the greater King, who perfectly obeyed your will and secured our eternal future. Help us rest in your sovereign plan, follow you faithfully, and look forward to the day when we will reign with Christ forever. In Jesus' name, Amen.

DIG DEEPER

For Further Study:

- Proverbs 3:5–6
- Psalm 51
- Romans 8:28
- Romans 12:17–21
- 2 Corinthians 7:10
- Revelation 22:3–5

NEXT WEEK'S BIG IDEA

1 Samuel 25

David faces another test—not from Saul, but from Nabal. Through Abigail's wisdom, God restrains David from taking vengeance into his own hands, once again demonstrating that those who trust God's timing never regret it.