

INTRO // Read vs. // Set the Scene

1. David is now king over **all** Israel. He's conquered & made Jerusalem the new capital.
2. God's promise, made yrs before, has finally come to pass.
3. And as it always is, satan retaliates.
 - a. Know this: A season of blessing is inevitably followed by one of trial.
 - b. The devil can't leave well-enough alone.
 - c. He hates it when we're blessed and tries to mess things up.
 - d. SKD = Steal, Kill, Destroy is ever his MO.
4. So it's to be expected that David who's had one blessing; ridden one victory after another, now becomes a target.
5. The attack come sin the form of the Philistines who see David as king over a united Israel as a threat.
 - a. He had, after all, killed their champion, Goliath.
 - b. He'd handed them one defeat after another when he commanded Saul's army.
 - c. Though they've dominated Israel ever since the Battle of Jezreel where Saul was killed 8 yrs before
 - d. David's elevation as king over all the tribes of Israel presents a major threat.
6. They figure a quick strike is called for before David can solidify his forces.

¹⁷ Now when the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel, all the Philistines went up to search for David. And David heard *of it* and went down to the stronghold. ¹⁸ The Philistines also went and deployed themselves in the Valley of Rephaim.

1. The stronghold here is the Cave of Adullam where David & his men had hid out when Saul pursued him yrs before.
2. It made a perfect staging point to meet the Philistines who've deployed in the Valley of Rephaim.
3. A parallel account of all this 1 Chr 14 says the Philistines raided the villages & towns there
 - a. Hoping to goad David into leaving his stronghold to face them where they had an advantage.
 - b. They had chariots and preferred the open, flat land of Rephaim.
 - c. David's stronghold of Adullam was in a hilly, forest where chariots couldn't go.
4. David knew what the Philistines were up to. // They **didn't** know what HE was ...

¹⁹ So David inquired of the Lord, saying, "Shall I go up against the Philistines? Will You deliver them into my hand?" And the Lord said to David, "Go up, for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into your hand."

1. Instead of gathering the best military minds among his men to plot a strategy for dealing with the Philistines, David asked God for directions.
 - a. This is remarkable. David's already proven his skill as a strategist.
 - b. His record in battle is one success after another.
 - c. He knows the area well and how the enemy fights.
 - d. But he sets all of that aside and seeks God on what to do.

2. He called for the high priest & asked, "Attack or not?"

3. The answer was clear; "GO! Victory's yours."

²⁰ So David went to Baal Perazim, and David defeated them there; and he said, "The Lord has broken through my enemies before me, like a breakthrough of water." Therefore he called the name of that place Baal Perazim. ²¹ And they left their images there, and David and his men carried them away.

1. The attack was so successful it was like watching a wave knock down a sand castle.
2. His men plowed through the enemy lines so quickly it sent the Philistines into a panic that saw them leave their idols behind.
3. They'd assumed they were their secret weapon; sure to gain them victory.
4. Much as Israel had mistakenly done with then took the Ark of the Covenant into battle years before.
5. The Philistines captured it. Well, turn about is fair play. Israel now captures the Philistines idols.
6. But they don't keep them as the Philistines had kept the Ark. 1 Chr. 14 tells us David **burned** them.
7. Now; when the Philistines captured the Ark, it brought a plague to where ever they kept it.
 - a. They assumed something **even worse** would happen to Israel for burning their idols.
 - b. So they attacked again, thinking victory would **for sure** be theirs this time.

²² Then the Philistines went up once again and deployed themselves in the Valley of Rephaim.

1. ‘The Battle of Rephaim, Pt II’ • But; take note what David does. It’s our lesson today ...
²³Therefore David inquired of the Lord, and He said, “You shall not go up; circle around behind them, and come upon them in front of the mulberry trees. ²⁴And it shall be, when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the mulberry trees, then you shall advance quickly. For then the Lord will go out before you to strike the camp of the Philistines.”
2. Have you noticed how almost every afternoon about 2:30 here in our portion of VC the wind off the ocean picks up?
3. Something similar happens at mid-day in that Valley.
 - a. A breeze from the Med sweeps up the plain toward the central highlands.
 - b. As it does, it sets the large leaves of the trees fluttering.
 - c. They sound like many marching feet.
3. The Philistines arrayed their formation to counter the attack Israel used so successfully before.
 - a. Why change it when it works?
 - b. But whenever you set your formation to deal with a threat from **one** direction, you open a weakness to another.
4. God knew the Philistine plan & sent Israel around to where they were most vulnerable.
5. The key to springing the trap was Israel’s need to come close to the enemy position without being heard.
6. They came from the direction of the trees, when a breeze set the leaves rustling.
7. The Philistines didn’t hear them until it was too late.
- ²⁵And David did so, as the Lord commanded him; and he drove back the Philistines from Geba as far as Gezer.
1. Victory was theirs because of the first part of v25 “David did so, as the LORD commanded him.”
2. That’s the great key to success: Do as the Lord commands.
 - a. How very different things would be if we did as the Lord commands.
 - b. How much better the **entire world** would be.
3. These 2 battles at Rephaim were the turning point in Israel’s long war with her long-time nemesis.
4. From here on, the Philistines are steadily removed from Israel & confined to a narrow strip along the coast.

CONCLUSION

1. Take note of v23. It’s what we find there that frames the lesson today.
 Therefore David inquired of the Lord ...
2. When the Philistines staged a repeat of their prior attack, we’d assume David would do the same as well.
 - a. After all, he’d **already asked** God what to do.
 - b. And the previous instructions led to rousing success.
 - c. Why bother God with another request for instructions?
 - d. Isn’t it obvious? Doesn’t common sense say, “Do what you did before.”
 - 1) “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.”
3. Most of us would assume since the **situation** was the same, the instructions would be the same.
4. But that’s not David’s thinking.
 - a. He knew it wasn’t **the plan God gave** that led to success the first time.
 - b. It was **seeking God FOR the plan** that led to success.
5. David understood something important about his relationship with God.
 - a. He knew God didn’t just want him to come for instructions.
 - b. He wanted David to come to Him—**for Him**; for fellowship, friendship, sharing.
 - c. David understood God wasn’t just using him as a **tool** to get things done.
 - d. God loved him & wanted to pour on Him mind-blowing favor & blessing.
6. So he didn’t see going to God for direction as a bother, as difficult or as a waste of time.
7. It was a delight, as many of the Psalms he wrote make clear, David knew fellowship with God was the best thing of all.
8. Hear that: Fellowship with God is the main thing.
9. It’s why Jesus came; to restore it, because sin broke it.
10. When trials come, don’t just seek a way out. **Seek God**. He IS the way out.
 - a. The Philistine attack was a trial.
 - b. A trial David had long experience dealing with.
 - 1) It might be expected that after having so many victories over them already, he’d see this as just

one more and had in to battle.

2) He didn't. He sought God. He didn't assume he knew how to win. He asked God for direction.

3) Then, he didn't assume one victory guaranteed the next.

4) When the Philistines attacked again, he again sought God for the plan.

11. Christian: God is not "bugged" by your dependence on Him.

a. **We're** bugged by needy people. God isn't.

b. He WANTS us to lean on Him, look to Him. Depend entirely on Him.

12. Again: When Trials come, don't just seek a way out. Seek God. He IS the way out.

Fellowship

1. In high school, a bunch of us got together to play football.

a. It was full on tackle, but without pads or helmet.

b. Yeah; we were idiots, as the many injuries we had proved.

c. But we kept at it because we had such a great time.

d. The best part wasn't the plays we ran. The best part was the **huddles**.

f. There was no time limit & we usually spent a while on both sides deciding what we were going to do.

g. Without pads, we changed how we played & made it far more about **strategy** than brute force.

h. So we huddled to make elaborate plans.

i. That's where the fun of it all took place = In the huddle.

1) The jokes we told,

2) The ribbing we gave each other,

3) The praise for a good run or catch,

4) The sarcasm when someone messed up;

k. If it wasn't for the fun we had in those huddles, we never would have played.

2. The great joy of the Christian life is huddling w/God, getting our plays from Him.

a. Sure it's fun to blast through some spiritual obstacle,

b. Or score a goal by leading someone to Christ.

c. But the sweetest thing of all, is the huddle; hanging with God, enjoying Him & letting Him enjoy us.

3. Christian, it's all about the huddle; staying in intimate contact with God, checking in with Him constantly for direction.

4. Yesterday's manna is no good for today.

a. The people of Israel had to collect fresh manna **every** day. Monday's manna spoiled by Tuesday.

b. God wanted them to learn to depend on Him for everything, every day.

c. Following up on that, Jesus taught us to pray, "Give us **this day**, our **daily** bread."

d. That's not a weekly prayer. We don't pray, "Give us this month a month's allotment of bread."

e. Prayer out to be daily; going to God for everything.

5. David's example teaches us we can't live off yesterday's experience of God. It has to be fresh every day.

Unique

1. When you read all 4 Gospels you realize Jesus never healed the **same way** twice.

a. Each was unique. He did that for a reason.

b. Jesus knew if He used the same method when healing, the disciples might think it was the words He spoke, the position of His hand, or some other external that was the key to healing.

c. They'd think the power of God comes through a formula.

e. By always changing **how** He healed, Jesus made it clear healing isn't the result of a special ritual.

f. It's the grace & power of God Who's wants us to give ourselves completely to Him so He can give Himself to us.