



# guidelines for living

*a 5 minute message*

September 6, 2017

## CONFRONTATION IN A CAVE

***Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." Romans 12:19***

Should you have the opportunity to visit Israel, I could wish nothing more exciting and fulfilling for you than to visit a little corner of the world where so much biblical history has taken place--the Jordan Valley. Jerusalem is 2700 feet above sea level, and the Dead Sea is 1200 feet below sea level. This means that in a matter of only a few hours you would descend going down a seismic fault.

On your way to the Dead Sea on your right you will see a series of caves caused by erosion, passing the very caves where thousands of manuscripts were once hidden from the first century AD to 1947 when Mohammed Ab Dibh, an illiterate Arab who along with his brother found them, and eventually bartered them for provisions in Bethlehem where a merchant who went by the name Kando purchased them--a fascinating story in itself.

A short distance from the trove of caves known as the Dead Sea caves, you will see on your right a turn-off to a nature reserve where four springs come together forming one of the most refreshing and historic sites in Israel--Ein Gedi. There some 3000 years ago a drama took place that the world has never ceased talking about. The principal players were Saul, then the king of ancient Israel, and a young man, then probably in his late 20s, who had been anointed by the prophet Samuel to be the next King in Israel, known the world over as David, the son of Jesse.

Saul had no thoughts of turning the kingdom over to David and did everything in his means to take his life. Yet David esteemed him as the Lord's anointed and refused to harm him. David, however, had his chance. While some followed David, others were indifferent to him so David was never sure, however, whether someone was his friend or enemy. He knew, however, that Jonathan, the King's son, was committed to him and the two loved each other as brothers.

Understanding that Saul was searching for him, David took refuge in the cave of Ein Gedi which provided excellent protection for a fugitive. In the area there were and still are hundreds of caves--the result of erosion over the centuries. However, by chance



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David and Saul were in the same cave at Ein Gedi--unexpectedly. David was deep inside the cave when Saul, searching for David, came into this very cave.

David, however, quietly slipped by Saul in the darkness and seeing Saul's outer garment, cut a piece from it. Then David called out Saul's name! Saul recognized the voice of David. Then Saul realized that David could have killed him as easily as he cut off a piece of his robe!

David could easily have killed Saul, yet he refused to take the kingdom in this manner. On another occasion, David and his right-hand man, Abishai stole into Saul's camp, and took the king's spear and water. It was all David could do to keep Abishai from killing the King. But David knew that God had a different plan and he refused to take Saul's life.

David's difficulties didn't end with this encounter; yet David's respect for the laws of Moses and his reverence for the office would not allow him to take Saul's life.

When he was finally made king, David reigned at Hebron for seven years, then in Jerusalem for 33 years. Because he was a man of war with blood on his hands, God never allowed David to build the temple but he prepared the way for his son, Solomon, to build the temple--an awesome feat. More on this edition of Guidelines tomorrow.

Resource reading: 1 Samuel 24