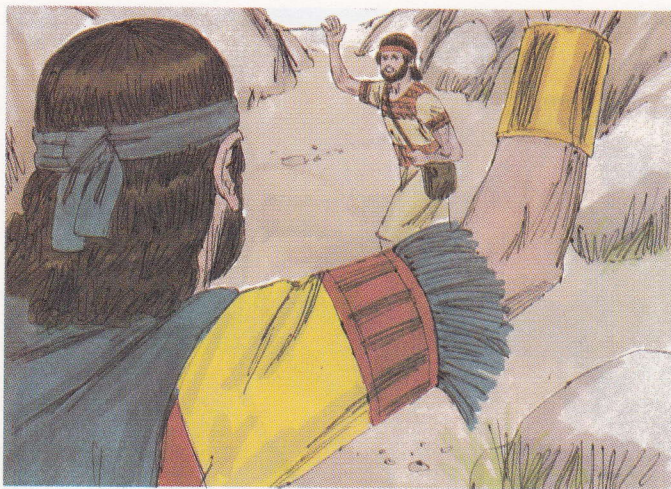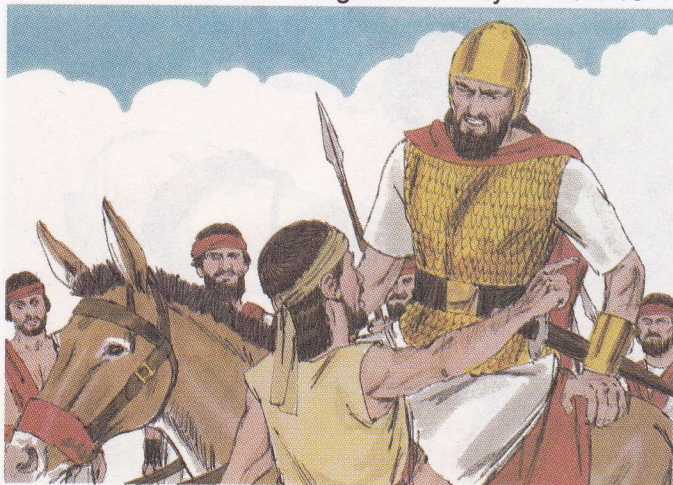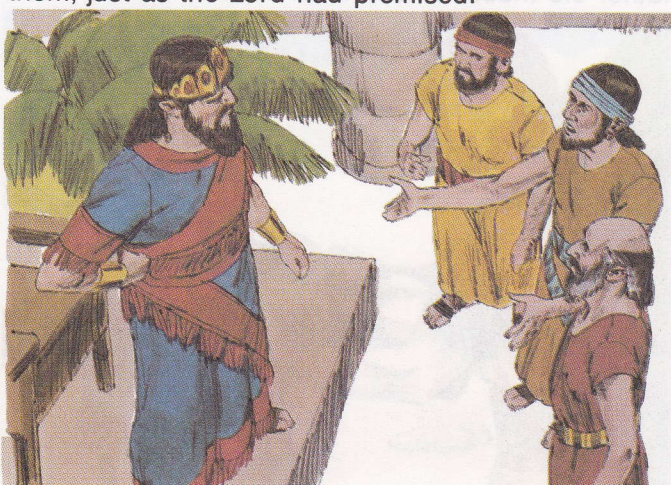# Saul Chases David

1 After leaving Jonathan, David and his men hid at different places in the wilderness west of the Dead Sea. Word reached them that the town of Keilah, north of Hebron, was being attacked by Philistines.
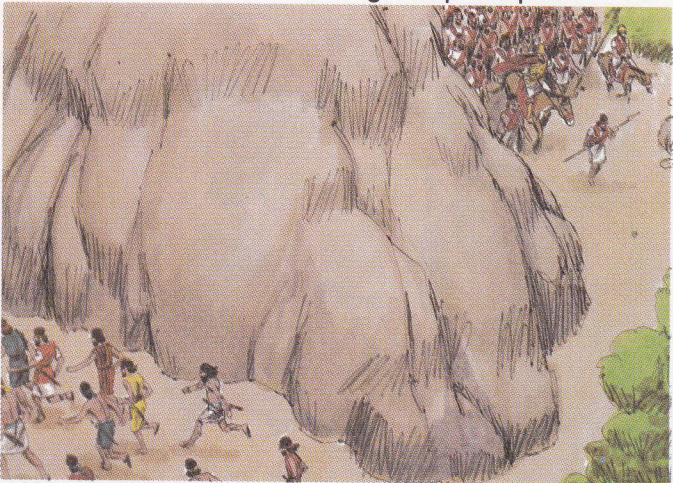
2 David asked the Lord whether he should try to save the town, and the answer was yes. So he and his men attacked the Philistines and defeated them, just as the Lord had promised.
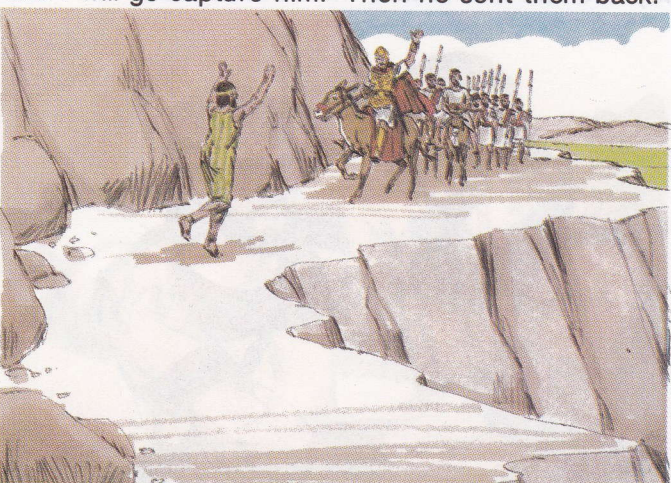
3 Hearing that David was at Keilah, Saul set out to capture him. David and his men fled when the Lord warned them that the people would turn them over to Saul. So Saul had to give up his plan.
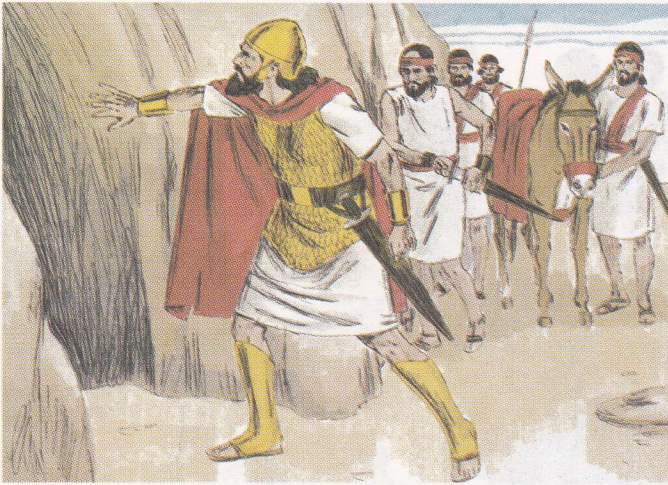
4 Then one day some people from Ziph came to Saul and told him that David was hiding near their town. Saul said, "Find out exactly where he is, and I will go capture him." Then he sent them back.
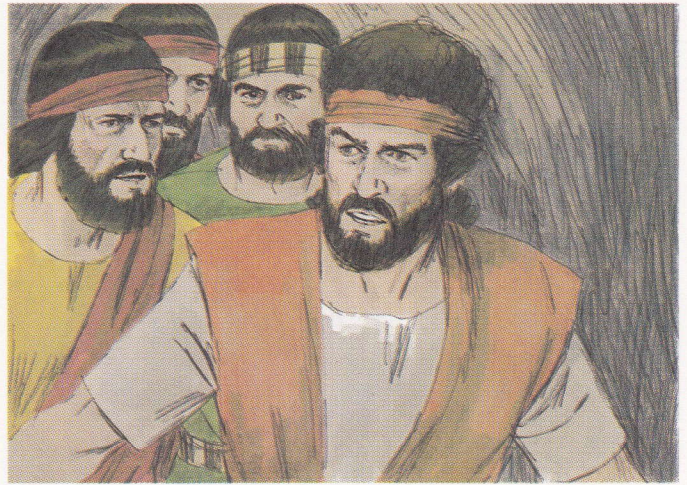
5 Soon afterwards, Saul led his men to Ziph. He almost caught up with David there. Saul's men were on one side of a mountain and David's were on the other, trying to get away.

6 Just then, a messenger arrived and said to Saul, "You must come home at once! The Philistines are attacking our country!" Immediately Saul returned home, allowing David to escape.

7 After the Philistine threat, Saul heard that David was hiding near Engedi. He took 3,000 men and began a new search for David. One day he saw a cave near some sheep pens beside the road.

8 Saul went into the cave alone for a minute. It happened that David and his men were hiding in the darkness in that very cave! David's men urged him to kill Saul. "This is your chance," they said.
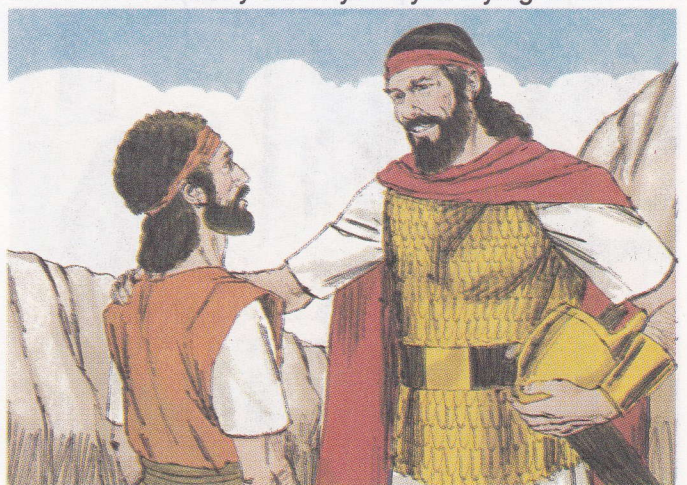
9 But David did not harm Saul. Instead he slipped up close to the king in the darkness and cut off a piece of his robe. Saul did not know that anything at all had happened.

10 As Saul left the cave, David followed him and called out to him, "Saul, I could have killed you just now, as this piece I cut from your robe proves. I do not want to harm you! Why are you trying to kill me?"

11 Saul said, "Is it really you, David?" He began to cry. "You are right and I am wrong," he said. "You have shown your goodness to me by not killing me when you had the chance."

12 "Now I am sure you will be the king of Israel," Saul said. "Just promise me that you will not kill my descendants." David promised, and Saul returned home. David and his men remained in a safe place.

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