

David in Exile – 1 Samuel 21:1- 22:5

Introduction:

When the king decides you are an enemy of the state, you need to hide. We find David in this situation. Though he is a revered leader in the army, married to the King's daughter and best friend to the King's son, David is still in serious trouble. King Saul has announced that he desires to kill David, and has made several attempts already. He has even attacked Jonathan, his own son, when Jonathan defended David. In this chapter we find David on the run, making some desperate decisions to preserve his life. We may not agree with what David does, but we can plainly see how desperate his situation is. Where is God in all this? This is an important question not only for us as we study David's life, but for ourselves when we go through the deep waters as well.

David at Nob – 1 Samuel 21:1-9

1. We end chapter 20 with David and Jonathan parting ways. Where does David go (21:1)? Who is there? Why might David go to this spot first (cf. 22:10)?

Note of interest: Ahimelek is the grandson of Eli the priest who raised the prophet Samuel in the temple (tabernacle). Ahimelek's brother is Ahijah, who is a spiritual advisor to King Saul (cf. 14:3, 22:11)

2. What is the response of Ahimelek when he saw David? (v. 1) Why would he respond this way?
3. How does David explain his circumstances (v. 2)? Is this completely honest?
4. What does David seek from the priest (v. 3)?
5. The tabernacle of worship at Nob did not have a foodbank to help David out. What did they have (v. 4)? Explain what "consecrated bread" is (cf. v. 6)

6. It is interesting to note how “holy” is defined in verse 5. What how does David define “holy” here, and what broader principle might be at stake here?
7. In Matthew 12:1-3 we find the Pharisees upset at the disciples of Jesus for taking a few grains of wheat to eat as they walked through a field. Jesus refers to this incident with David to justify the actions of the disciples. What was Jesus’ point in this story?
8. In verse 7 we are introduced to a character who will be instrumental in bringing great harm to the household of the priests. Who is this person and what do we know about him? (“chief shepherd” = “leader of the shepherds” cf. Zech 10:2-3)
9. David is looking for something else besides food. What does he seek (v. 8)?
10. In verse 9 the priest Ahimelek offers David a weapon. Which weapon is it? What is the value of that sword to the priest? How does David respond to the offer of this weapon?

David at Gath – 1 Samuel 21:10-15

11. In his flight to get away from King Saul, where does David go next (v. 10)?

Note of Interest: Gath is a Philistine city in the south part of the country, and happens to be the hometown of a certain giant named Goliath!

12. David, however, is not safe in Gath. Why (vs. 11)?
13. David is surrounded by his enemies, and they have recognized him. What is his response (v. 12)? What does he do to “save his hide” (v. 13)? How convincing is he (vss. 14-15)?
14. Though we might smile at David’s antics before King Achish, what do we learn about David in this passage?

David in Adullam and Mizpah – 1 Samuel 22:1-5

15. Where does David flee to next (22:1)? (note: Adullam is in the south like Gath but is in the territory of Judah). Why might David flee here?
16. Who joins David in Adullam (v. 1)? Why might they go to David?
17. Who else joins David according to verse 2? Why might this be a significant moment in the life of David?
18. Where does David go next (v. 3)? What seems to be David's purpose for this trip into the territory of the Moabites (cf. v. 3-4)? Why might David take his family to the land of the Moabites (cf. Ruth 1:4)?
19. What word in verse 4 gives the impression that the family of David will be safe?
20. The prophet Gad shows up and gives a message to David in verse 5. What is the message? Where does David go? (David is once more on Jewish territory)

Conclusion:

David is now a fugitive. Chosen and anointed to be king, he now flees for his life from the man he will replace. If ever David needed to learn to trust God it was now. David will use deception twice to protect himself, and each time he does there will be terrible consequences (see chapter 22). Why would God allow David to face such trials? It is the training ground for David. King Saul failed as a king because he never learned to trust God. David is being tested even before he takes the throne as to whether he will trust God or rely on his own devices. In this chapter David leans towards "helping himself" and will learn how ineffective that really is. But David is learning...

So we turn to a Psalm of David that might express what is going through the mind of David at this time: Psalm 34.

Psalm 34

Of David. When he pretended to be insane before Abimelek, who drove him away, and he left.

- ¹ I will extol the LORD at all times;
his praise will always be on my lips.
- ² I will glory in the LORD;
let the afflicted hear and rejoice.
- ³ Glorify the LORD with me;
let us exalt his name together.
- ⁴ I sought the LORD, and he answered me;
he delivered me from all my fears.
- ⁵ Those who look to him are radiant;
their faces are never covered with shame.
- ⁶ This poor man called, and the LORD heard him;
he saved him out of all his troubles.
- ⁷ The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him,
and he delivers them.
- ⁸ Taste and see that the LORD is good;
blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.