

1Samuel 22:1 ¶ David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave Adullam: and when his brethren and all his father's house heard *it*, they went down thither to him.

1Samuel 22:2 And every one *that was* in distress, and every one that *was* in debt, and every one *that was* discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men.

This chapter continues as if there were no chapter break....

David left Gath and escaped to the cave Adullam, about six miles southwest of Bethlehem. When his brothers and kinfolk heard that he was there, they went down to join him. I'm not sure if their primary motivation was fear that Saul would take his anger out on them or a desire to support him or both.

All other men in the area who were in trouble or in debt or just bitter for whatever reason also joined him. He eventually gathered a following of about 400 men that considered him their captain.

I liked this application Guzik noted from Redpath: "These are the kind of men who came to David: distressed, bankrupt, dissatisfied. These are the kind of people who come to Christ, and they are the only people who come to Him, for they have recognized their distress, their debt, and bankruptcy, and are conscious that they are utterly discontented. The sheer pressures of these frustrations drives them to the refuge of the blood of Christ that was shed for them."

Note: Both psalms 57 and 142 note that they were written during the time that David was in hiding in the cave. Both psalms are honest in reflecting the highs and lows of David's emotions, and both reveal that David's faith remained strong in spite of his troubles.

1Samuel 22:3 And David went thence to Mizpeh of Moab: and he said unto the king of Moab, Let my father and my mother, I pray thee, come forth, *and be* with you, till I know what God will do for me.

1Samuel 22:4 And he brought them before the king of Moab: and they dwelt with him all the while that David was in the hold.

1Samuel 22:5 And the prophet Gad said unto David, Abide not in the hold; depart, and get thee into the land of Judah. Then David departed, and came into the forest of Hareth.

David traveled to Mizpeh of Moab to ask the king to provide sanctuary for his father and mother until God revealed His will as to what he should do. Remember—Ruth, David's great-grandmother, was a Moabite. The king agreed to help David as requested, and his parents stayed in Moab the whole time that David was on the run from Saul.

I think it is significant to note that although David knew it was God's will that he become king, he had no idea how the LORD was going to work that out. Still, he

took the steps that he could to move forward just by trying to stay safe and provide for those he loved as well as he could in the process.

The prophet Gad told David to leave the cave of Adullam and go to the land of Judah, so he went to the forest of Hareth. It was another indication of David's faith that he was willing to go back to Judah, his homeland, so close to the land of Benjamin, Saul's homeland.

1Samuel 22:6 ¶ When Saul heard that David was discovered, and the men that *were* with him, (now Saul abode in Gibeah under a tree in Ramah, having his spear in his hand, and all his servants *were* standing about him;)

1Samuel 22:7 Then Saul said unto his servants that stood about him, Hear now, ye Benjamites; will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards, and make you all captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds;

1Samuel 22:8 That all of you have conspired against me, and *there is none* that sheweth me that my son hath made a league with the son of Jesse, and *there is none* of you that is sorry for me, or sheweth unto me that my son hath stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait, as at this day?

It is noted that Saul still lived in Gibeah. When he received word that the location of David and his men had been discovered, he was sitting under a specific tree in Ramah with spear in hand and surrounded by his servants. He immediately challenged his servants. He asked them a rhetorical question intended to point out how well he treated them compared to what they could expect from David, "the son of Jesse"—clearly disclaiming any connection to him as his son-in-law and noting only his lowly heritage as a shepherd. He then questioned their loyalty by pointing out that none of them had informed him that his own son had conspired against him and encouraged David to flee—even implying that the purpose was to give David the opportunity to kill his father.

1Samuel 22:9 Then answered Doeg the Edomite, which was set over the servants of Saul, and said, I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub.

1Samuel 22:10 And he enquired of the LORD for him, and gave him victuals, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine.

Doeg the Edomite was the first to speak up; it seems he had been put in charge of all of Saul's servants. He told Saul that he had seen "the son of Jesse" when he went to Nob to see Ahimelech the priest. He related that Ahimelech had enquired of the LORD for David and also given him food and the sword of Goliath the Philistine. Notice that Doeg said nothing about how David had deceived the priest by saying that he was on an urgent, secret mission for Saul. He evidently held some type of grudge against the priest.

1Samuel 22:11 Then the king sent to call Ahimelech the priest, the son of Ahitub, and all his father's house, the priests that *were* in Nob: and they came all of them to the king.

1Samuel 22:12 And Saul said, Hear now, thou son of Ahitub. And he answered, Here I *am*, my lord.

1Samuel 22:13 And Saul said unto him, Why have ye conspired against me, thou and the son of Jesse, in that thou hast given him bread, and a sword, and hast enquired of God for him, that he should rise against me, to lie in wait, as at this day?

Saul then sent for Ahimelech the priest and all his family that served with him as priests in Nob, and they all came. Saul proceeded to question Ahimelech. He asked him why he had conspired with David against him by giving him bread and a sword and enquiring of God for him in support of his rebellion against the king. He clearly identified David as his enemy.

1Samuel 22:14 Then Ahimelech answered the king, and said, And who *is so faithful among all thy servants as David, which is the king's son in law, and goeth at thy bidding, and is honourable in thine house?*

1Samuel 22:15 Did I then begin to enquire of God for him? be it far from me: let not the king impute *any* thing unto his servant, *nor* to all the house of my father: for thy servant knew nothing of all this, less or more.

1Samuel 22:16 And the king said, Thou shalt surely die, Ahimelech, thou, and all thy father's house.

Ahimelech basically told the king that he had no reason to suspect that David was his enemy. He only knew David as the most faithful of Saul's servants, the king's son-in-law, and an honorable man that served according to Saul's command. Ahimelech then reminded Saul that he had enquired of God for him before—implying that it had been for the good of the kingdom. He said that he certainly had done nothing with evil intent against the king and neither had any of his family. The priest assured Saul that he knew nothing of the animosity between him and David. Interesting to me was that Ahimelech also said nothing about how David had deceived him by declaring that he was on an urgent, secret mission for Saul.

Saul's response was rash, irrational and totally evil. He pronounced a sentence of death against Ahimelech and all the rest of his fellow priests.

1Samuel 22:17 And the king said unto the footmen that stood about him, Turn, and slay the priests of the LORD; because their hand also *is* with David, and because they knew when he fled, and did not shew it to me. But the servants of the king would not put forth their hand to fall upon the priests of the LORD.

1Samuel 22:18 And the king said to Doeg, Turn thou, and fall upon the priests. And Doeg the Edomite turned, and he fell upon the priests, and slew on that day fourscore and five persons that did wear a linen ephod.

1Samuel 22:19 And Nob, the city of the priests, smote he with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and sucklings, and oxen, and asses, and sheep, with the edge of the sword.

The king turned to his servants and ordered them to kill all the priests of the LORD because they had conspired with David and had not told him of his flight. Amazingly, his servants defied his order and refused to kill the priests of the LORD. They still feared the LORD more than they feared Saul.

Saul then turned to Doeg and ordered him to kill the priests. Doeg didn't hesitate; he evidently feared the king more than God. That one man killed 85 priests that day. It seems that he then went to Nob and killed the families of the priests as well as all their livestock.

This is one of those really hard to believe stories. How did one man overpower 85 men? Why did the priests not fight back? Did the other servants keep them from escaping?

1Samuel 22:20 ¶ And one of the sons of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped, and fled after David.

1Samuel 22:21 And Abiathar shewed David that Saul had slain the LORD'S priests.

1Samuel 22:22 And David said unto Abiathar, I knew *it* that day, when Doeg the Edomite *was* there, that he would surely tell Saul: I have occasioned *the death* of all the persons of thy father's house.

1Samuel 22:23 Abide thou with me, fear not: for he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life: but with me thou *shalt be* in safeguard.

Thankfully, one of the priests did escape—Ahimelech's son Abiathar. He fled and found David and told him how Saul had killed all the LORD's priests. David admitted that he knew when he saw Doeg there that day that he would tell Saul. He was grieved at having been the cause of the death of Abiathar's whole family. He promised Abiathar that he did not need to fear for his life even though Saul wanted them both dead. He promised that he would be safe as long as he stayed with David.

Again, we see that David's faith is strong. Even though the facts seem to say otherwise, he knows that since God had chosen him as the next king of Israel, he would live to be the next king of Israel.