

## FIRST SAMUEL

### A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 22

- Vv. 1- 5 *The prophet Gad and David.* As David left Philistia and moved back through the land of Judah, he was joined by members of his own family. All those who were in distress or in debt also joined David. Altogether he had a company of 400 men. After David fled to Moab, God sent his prophet Gad to be with David and to instruct him not to flee outside the land of Israel.
- Vv. 6-16 *Saul's increasing jealousy.* Saul not only berated the members of his own family, but he loosed a tirade against his officers and soldiers accusing them of being in a conspiracy with David. This caused Doeg to reveal David's brief association with the priests at Nob.
- Vv. 17-23 *Saul's slaughter of the priests.* There was still some fear of God among Saul's men. When Saul ordered the killing of the priests none of his soldiers would obey. Finally, Doeg killed all but one of the priests.

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *God always raises up men to meet the needs of the hour.* God has never been without men to meet the needs of a particular situation. When David was in need of a man of God, God sent Gad his prophet to be with David. When God needed a messenger to carry the gospel to the Gentiles he called Saul of Tarsus to be His chosen vessel. God has worked this way throughout human history, and Christians should always be thankful that there are those who are willing to rise up and meet the call of God.

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

2. *Man's worst enemy is often his own imagination.* Saul imagined that all of his men were against him. He fell into such a slough of self-pity that he thought there was conspiracy in the ranks of his own soldiers. He thus alienated the affections of many of his leaders. Too often this happens in the ranks of Christian workers today.
3. *Nothing is holy to a man who has sold his soul to Satan.* Most men would stop short of killing God's anointed people. When Saul ordered his men to slay the priests there was none at first to do his infamous will. Finally one who was a stranger to the commonwealth of Israel and evidently a mercenary in Saul's army fulfilled the mad king's order. It is hard to imagine anyone falling lower than Saul fell as he slew the priests, but when man sells his soul to Satan, he falls to unbelievable depths.

Saul's Reprisals Against David and His Friends, 22:1-23.

### *The Prophet Gad and David, 22:1-5*

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.

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.

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.

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

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.

1. *Where was Adullam? 22:1*

Adullam is one of the Canaanite towns whose kings are said to have been conquered by Joshua (Joshua 12:15). It is mentioned in the Shephelah, between Jarmuth and Shocoh (Joshua 15:35); in II Chronicles 11:7, it comes in immediate connection with Shocoh; and in Nehemiah 11:3; 11:30, it is one of the towns of Judah. These indications point to a location on the western edge of Judah and favor the identification with the present *Aid-el-ma*, twelve miles west by south from Bethlehem. David probably had friends there, and he was joined by his own clan. With David outlawed, they would not feel safe. At this time also a large number of malcontents gathered around David. These numbered about four hundred men, and David became their leader. Here is evidence that Saul was oppressing his people, causing some of them to sell themselves to others as servants (Leviticus 25:39; II Kings 4:1).

2. *Why did David flee to Moab? 22:3*

His ancestress Ruth was a Moabitess. Mizpeh means literally "a watch-tower" or "mountain height" commanding a very extensive country. It is probably used here in reference to a mountain hideout on the high land which bounded Moab on the eastern side of the Dead Sea. As David came to the king of Moab, the Moabites had probably taken possession of the most southerly portion of the eastern lands of the Israelites. We may also infer this from the fact that Saul had also made war upon Moab.

3. *Who was the prophet Gad? 22:5*

The prophet had probably come to David from Samuel's school of prophets; but whether he remained with David from that time forward to assist him with his counsel in

his undertakings cannot be determined. In I Chronicles 21:9, he is called David's seer. In the last year of David's reign he announced to him the punishment which would fall upon him from God on account of his sin in numbering the people (II Samuel 24:11 ff.); and he also wrote the acts of David (I Chronicles 29:29). In consequence of his admonition, David returned to Judah and went into the wood Hareth, a woody region on the mountains of Judah, which is never mentioned again, and the situation of which is unknown. According to the counsel of God, David was not to seek for refuge outside the land; not only that he might not be estranged from his fatherland and the people of Israel, but also that he might learn to trust entirely in the Lord as his only refuge and fortress. David had said that he would wait until he knew what God would do to him. He was assured of the justice of his cause as contrasted with the insane persecutions of Saul, and he confidently hoped that God would bring his flight to an end. Now he was to trust implicitly in Jehovah.

*Saul's Increasing Jealousy.* 22:6-16

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;)

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;

8 That all of you have conspired against me, and *there is* none that showeth 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?

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.

10 And he inquired of the Lord for him, and gave him victuals, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine.

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.

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

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 inquired of God for him, that he should rise against me, to lie in wait, as this day?

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?

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.

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

#### 4. *Why was Saul under a tree?* 22:6

The unsophisticated society of the early Israelites did not demand that the king have a palace which was equipped with finery. Saul evidently held court in the open air. This was the custom in the days of Deborah. We read of her that she "dwelt under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment" (Judges 4:5). Conditions had not changed greatly in the days of Saul, and his judgments were passed out to the people under similar circumstances.

5. *What was the meaning of Saul's question? 22:7, 8*

In order to elicit response from his servants, Saul asked them if David was in a position to reward them for their services. David obviously could not make any of them captains of thousands because he had less than a thousand in his band. By accusing his people of conspiring against him, Saul reveals that he is yet not quite rational. The corrupt state of his mind is brought out in his statement that nobody felt sorry for him. He even indicated that he thought Jonathan had stirred up David against him to lie in wait to kill him. Such an evaluation of the situation was a complete reversal of the facts. It was Saul who was lying in wait for David. David was not lying in wait for Saul. Saul must have learned of Jonathan's final covenant with David; for he asked why nobody had told him that his son had made a league with David, the son of Jesse.

6. *Who reported the action of Ahimelech to Saul? 22:9, 10*

Doeg, the Edomite, told Saul of David's coming to Nob. He did not tell all the facts. He did not tell Saul that David had told Ahimelech that he was on a secret and hurried mission for the king. For his part in the transaction, Saul afterwards took fearful vengeance upon the priest and his associates at Nob. The verse prepares us for the account of Doeg's betrayal of David. Some have therefore supposed the earlier verse to be an interpolation, but the later passage seems to presuppose the earlier. Doeg, the Edomite, who is described as Saul's muleherd, was kept at the sanctuary by some ceremonial obligation.

7. *Who was Ahimelech? 22:11*

Ahimelech was the high priest and successor of Eli, although of a different line. He was the son of Ahitub and not the son of Hophni or Phinehas, the sons of Eli. His name is a good Hebrew word signifying that his father was king. His father was probably not really king, but

the name has this meaning. His father was the leading priest, and in the position of ruling over the other priests.

8. *Had Ahimelech inquired of God for David?* 22:13

The scripture contains no reference to Ahimelech's making any sacrifice for David. There is no statement of his having used the Urim or Thummim to find out the Lord's will for David's life. The only benefits bestowed on David by Ahimelech were his giving him some of the shewbread and the sword of Goliath. These two items are mentioned by Saul, but he was evidently more concerned about the possibility of David's having secured the blessing of God at the hands of the high priest. If Saul thought that this had been done, he would have felt that not only men but God himself were surely against him. Indeed God was against him for Saul had failed to obey God.

9. *What was Ahimelech's reply to the king?* 22:14, 15

Ahimelech took the same position that Jonathan had taken. He reasoned with the king that there was nobody in all of Israel more faithful to Saul than David. The high priest also assured Saul that he had not transferred his allegiance to David. He was not serving as David's high priest. He denied that he had inquired of God for him. What Ahimelech had done he had done in integrity.

*Saul's Slaughter of the Priests.* 22:17-23

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.

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 wear a linen ephod..

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.

20 And one of the sons of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped, and fled after David.

21 And Abiathar shewed David that Saul had slain the Lord's priests.

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.

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

10. *What vengeance did Saul execute on Ahimelech?*  
22:17, 19

Upon being informed by Doeg concerning David's flight to the priest at Nob, Saul summoned the priest and all his father's house, the entire priesthood, to answer for what they had done. Ahimelech was not conscious of any crime, since David had come to him with a false pretext; and probably knowing little of what transpired at the court, he answered calmly and worthily. In his consciousness of innocence, he prayed that no guilt be laid to the charge of himself or the priests. That they were under suspicion is manifest from their being summoned before the king. To this protestation of ignorance and innocence, Saul replied only with a sentence of death on him and his whole clan. He commanded the runners, his body guard, to act as executioners; but they refused to carry out the command, owing to the sacred character of the accused. Doeg was less scrupulous, and at the king's command he turned about and slew the priests. When Abiathar told David of what had happened, David accused himself as an

accessory, since his visit had precipitated the whole affair. Abiathar found refuge with David, and David's exile continued.

11. *Who escaped from Saul's slaughter? 22:20, 23*

Only one son of Ahimelech escaped, and his only refuge was with David. David assured the young priest that he would protect him as one of his own men. It was in this manner that David secured not only the services of Gad, the prophet, but also the services of Abiathar, the priest. One by one the leading citizens of Israel were coming over to David's side.

## CHAPTER 22 IN REVIEW

1. To what point in Israel did David return? \_\_\_\_\_
2. In what tribe was the place located? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How many men did David have with him? \_\_\_\_\_
4. To what point in Moab did David flee? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Which of David's ancestors was from Moab? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What was the name of the prophet who came to David? \_\_\_\_\_
7. How does Saul refer to David? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Whom did Saul order to kill the priests? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Who did kill the priests? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Which priest escaped? \_\_\_\_\_