

DAVID IN HIDING

Introduction:

1. The Bible continues to reveal the decline of Saul in contrast to the faithfulness of David.
2. However, after being forced to flee for his life, we begin to see some of the weaknesses of David.
3. Yet, even when he sins, David stands in stark contrast to wicked Saul.

- I. David Forced to Flee from Saul (20:1-24)
 - A. After Saul came to Naioth looking for David, he was forced to flee.
 - B. Thus, David came to Jonathan, seeking information about Saul's motive and plans for pursuing him.
 - C. Jonathan promised David that he would find out his father's feelings toward him.
 - D. David and Jonathan renewed their covenant with one another, with David vowing to care for Jonathan's family.
 - E. David hid in a field for three days, not appearing at Saul's table.
 - F. When Saul questioned David's whereabouts, Jonathan reported that he was with his family in Bethlehem.
 - G. Saul was filled with rage and vowed to kill David.
 - H. He also was angry with Jonathan and attempted to kill him with a javelin.
 - I. Jonathan reported this to David and the two friends parted – Jonathan returning to the city and David fleeing into the wilderness.

- II. David in Nob (21:1-9)
 - A. It is important to keep in mind the situation that David faced at this time in his life.
 1. He had lost his position.
 2. He had lost his wife.
 3. He had lost his contact with Samuel.
 4. He had lost his closest friend.
 5. He was in fear for his life.
 - B. It is also important to remember that God was using these events to teach David a vital lesson – he must learn to depend fully upon God.
 - C. So, after losing all of these things, David fled to the town of Nob where the priest, Ahimelech, dwelt.
 1. At this time, the Ark of the Covenant was still in Kirjath-jearim, in the house of Abinadab (7:1).
 2. The tabernacle was located at Gibeah (14:2-3).
 3. Nob was a priestly town about 3 miles south of Gibeah.
 - D. When David arrived alone, Ahimelech was concerned and asked David about this.
 - E. David's reply allows us to see how truly fearful he was.
 1. David lied, claiming that he was on secret business for King Saul.
 2. Some have tried to justify David's actions by claiming that the "king" in this verse is actually God.
 3. Even if that is what David meant, it is a deceitful way of answering the question and meant to mislead the priest.
 4. We should not be surprised to learn that David sinned – he was just as human as we all are.

1 Samuel 20 – 22

5. In fact, David will learn a hard lesson from his error (22:6-23).
 6. However, we should learn an important lesson about fear as a lack faith...
- F. David followed one sin with another – he took the holy bread reserved for use in the tabernacle.
1. God’s instructions concerning the showbread were clear (Leviticus 24:5-9).
 - a. It was to be eaten by the priests alone.
 - b. It was to be eaten in the holy place.
 2. The fact that there was no “common bread” present indicates that the Israelites had not been faithful in their duty to provide for the priests.
 3. However, it does not justify the actions of David or the priest.
 4. In fact, Jesus refers to this event as unlawful (Matthew 12:1-8; Mark 2:23-28).
 - a. Jesus’ disciples did not violate the Law of Moses (cf. Deut. 23:25).
 - b. They did violate the tradition of the Pharisees.
 - c. Jesus states plainly that what David did was not lawful.
 - d. His point was that the Pharisees justified David’s unlawful actions; yet, they condemned the lawful actions of Jesus’ disciples.
- G. Psalms likely written concerning this period of David’s life (Psalm 7, 34, 46, 52, 54, 56, 57, 142)
1. Psalm 34 – *David in Gath*
 2. Psalm 56 – *David in Gath; tears in God’s bottle*
 3. Psalm 52 – *The deceit of Doeg*
- H. We learn that one of Saul’s servants – Doeg, an Edomite – witnessed the actions of David and the priest.
- I. David also asked the priest for a weapon, but the only one he had was the sword of Goliath.
- III. David in Gath (21:10-15)
- A. After acquiring provisions from the priest, David fled to the land of Gath.
 1. Notice that fear of Saul was David’s reason for fleeing.
 2. Achish is also known as Abimelech (Psalm 34:1, *title*).
 3. Gath was the hometown of Goliath (17:4).
 - a. Imagine David traveling to Goliath’s hometown carrying the defeated giant’s sword!
 - b. This illustrates how great David’s fear was.
 - B. Not only did the Philistines recognize David, but they also called him “the king of the land” – indicating that they knew of his great victories in battle.
 - C. Upon being recognized, David was overcome with a new fear – a fear of Achish.
 - D. Thus, David practiced another deception by pretending to be insane.
 - E. As a result, Achish did not detain David, but allowed him to leave.

1 Samuel 20 – 22

- IV. David at Adullam (22:1-5)
- A. The cave of Adullam seems to have been located in the vicinity of Bethlehem.
 - 1. In fact, the language indicates that it was not one cave, but a series of caverns.
 - 2. According to Easton's Bible Dictionary, it was about 13 miles west of Bethlehem and consisted of "a hill some 500 feet high pierced with numerous caverns ...some ...large enough to hold 200 or 300 men."
 - B. While hiding there, David's family came to him, probably because their lives were also in danger.
 - C. It was here that those who were discontented with the tyranny of Saul began to gather under the leadership of David.
 - 1. This marks the beginning of "David's mighty men."
 - 2. It is worth noting that David had the opportunity to lead a rebellion against the throne of Saul.
 - 3. However, he waited patiently for God to prepare the circumstances by which he would finally be made king.
 - 4. Though David has been acting out of fear, his faith in God has remained strong and perhaps grown stronger.
 - D. Out of concern for his parents, David journeyed with them to the land of Moab and made request for the king to grant them asylum.
 - 1. Remember that Jesse, David's father, was the grandson of Ruth, who was from the land of Moab.
 - 2. Furthermore, Saul had fought against the people of Moab, increasing the likelihood of their working against him (cf. 14:47).
 - E. Notice that David's request is "till I know what God will do for me."
 - 1. Clearly, David's faith has returned.
 - 2. David was content to serve faithfully as he waited for the Lord.
 - F. Soon thereafter, David was visited by the prophet Gad and told to return to the land of Judah.
 - 1. Gad would remain a faithful prophet throughout the reign of David (cf. 2 Samuel 24:11; 1 Chronicles 21:9).
 - 2. Furthermore, he (along with Nathan) would record the biography of David (1 Chronicles 29:29).
 - G. Thus, David returned and remained hidden in the forest of Hareth.
- V. The Cruelty of Saul (22:6-23)
- A. When Saul learned some information about the location of David, he called a meeting of his servants to try to entrap or kill David.
 - B. Saul appealed to their baser instincts to turn them against David.
 - 1. First, he appealed to their lineage from the tribe of Benjamin.
 - 2. Next, he appealed to their greed for possessions and power.
 - 3. Then, he played the victim and appealed to their patriotism and guilt.
 - C. Finally, Doeg saw his chance to make a name for himself.
 - D. He told Saul of David's meeting with Ahimelech and how the priest had helped David escape.
 - 1. To understand Doeg's motive, read Psalm 52.
 - 2. Doeg loved to stir up trouble and he loved material possessions.
 - E. Ahimelech was brought before Saul and accused.
 - F. He replied that he had no reason to suspect David of traitorous actions for he was always faithful to Saul.

1 Samuel 20 – 22

- G. Furthermore, he claimed that he did not enquire of God for David and that he knew nothing of David's flight from Saul.
- H. Saul's response was cold and callous – "Thou shalt surely die, and all thy father's house."
- I. Thus, Saul commanded his footmen to turn upon the priests and kill every one of them.
- J. However, the men refused.
- K. So, Doeg carried out the wish of Saul – he killed 85 priests and then attacked the city of Nob, killing men, women, children and animals.
- L. One of Ahimelech's sons, Abiathar, escaped and carried word of this atrocity to David.
- M. David recognized and admitted the folly of his former deception and took responsibility for this terrible occurrence.
- N. He promised to protect and care for Abiathar.