

I Samuel

Lesson 36 - Chapter 22

It is a characteristic of the historical books of the Old Testament that we'll see the God-principles laid out for us in Torah brought to life application in a variety of cases and circumstances. For me, personally, this is further evidence that Believers need to begin at the beginning when studying God's Word otherwise we skip over the establishment of the basic divine laws and foundational principles and go right to the circumstances. By doing so we come up with all sorts of misguided conclusions as to what the circumstances teach and command us, because we prefer to ignore the ones clearly given in Scripture in favor of ones that better fit our theological and current cultural agendas.

It's not unlike a citizen who is willfully ignorant of our civil and criminal laws, and who is greatly surprised when he or she undertakes some sort of action that results in arrest or a law suit against them. Only too late do they discover through a legal expert (a lawyer) that had they behaved responsibly and first taken the time to examine the laws and applicable codes and consider their plain application, these now costly mistakes could have been avoided.

The 4 Kingdom books of 1st and 2nd Samuel and 1st and 2nd Kings are overflowing with examples of circumstances that can only truly be understood in light of the Torah. And especially as we've entered the era of David, we must also incorporate into the unveiling of redemption history the several Psalms that overlap and interlace directly with specific Biblical events that are the impetus for David's outpouring of praise to God and for petition for His help and deliverance from danger. Therefore we'll take the time today to examine certain Psalms that are known with certainty to pertain to things we'll read about here in 1st Samuel.

Last week we ended with David fleeing from Gibeah (Saul's headquarters) to Nob where the Priesthood resided that was recognized as most legitimate (at least to the northern tribal coalition). Then when at Nob David acquired the food and weapon he came for, he quickly left for Philistine territory; specifically, the city of Gath. Why he thought he would be accepted and even safer in the province of the Philistines has elicited substantial speculation because the Holy Scriptures don't record David's thoughts on the matter. But they do record David's state of mind when (apparently to his surprise) David immediately became a prisoner upon his arrival in Gath, and we find this in Psalm 56.

Let's go to Psalm 56.

READ PSALM 56 all

We're not going to study this Psalm per se; I merely want to point out that we see a definite prayer pattern in David's words that is recorded for us so that we can follow it. When David is in the midst of trouble and danger (like here in Psalm 56) he is shown to cry out to the Lord, plead his case, and ask for the Lord to deliver. Often David is very specific about what he

wants to occur. Further he expresses absolute trust in God, acknowledges God's immutable ability to rescue (implying that if the Lord does NOT rescue him it is by divine choice and not by any lack of capacity), and David intersperses praise for YHWH throughout. It is so important that we remember that David always leaves room for God's sovereignty to reign. God might choose NOT to deliver; God might decide to deliver in a manner or timeframe entirely different than David hopes for or envisions. David hopes that by being obedient to God PRIOR to these trying events that God will see David's righteousness and take that into account. The point is that a God-pattern is presented, not a God-formula. David didn't present us with a formula or a spiritual recipe that if we follow it we are assured of achieving our goals and wishes. There is no Biblical template to which God has obligated Himself such that if we perform it well enough God is unable to deny us our petition.

It concerns me today when I hear of people assuming that if they are anointed with oil, or if they follow certain verses applicable to healing, or if by some unknown measure they exhibit sufficient personal faith their ills will assuredly be miraculously cured because God has no choice but to do it. And if it doesn't happen, then God (or their faith in God) has failed them. Many people have walked away from the Church for just this reason. David always makes it clear that he is ready to accept God's sovereign decision, and if that decision means his own death then he'll go to his death praising God.

The advent of Christ did not change this principle. As Yeshua was but hours from an excruciating execution on the Cross, and well aware of what was coming, he bent over in agony in the Garden of Gethsemane and prayed like this:

CJB Luke 22:42 "Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me; still, let not my will but yours be done."

He prayed like David. Yeshua asked to have this cup (the agonizing death that awaited him) taken away. Yeshua dreaded and did not want to go through what seemed to be inevitable, and essentially asked if he could be relieved from it; BUT only if the Father willed it. The Father willed otherwise, and we're all here today, as God's redeemed, because God said, "No", and because Yeshua was willing to accept the "No".

Now that the door of escape to the West, to Philistia, has been closed on David, he journeys back to Judah, if only briefly.

Turn your Bibles to 1st Samuel 22.

READ 1ST SAMUEL 22 all

David departs from Philistine Gath and goes to the Cave of Adullam in Judah; it's about a 10 mile journey to the southeast and lies about halfway in between Gath and his hometown of Bethlehem. Adullam means "closed in place", and was a known fortress city located in the Shephelah region (the coastal plain). Quickly the word reaches his family in Bethlehem and they come there to join him. It wasn't for a visit; Saul wasn't about to let David's family be at peace what with David now an arch enemy. David's father and mother (and brothers and their

families, too) were in grave danger so they came in hopes of protection. In addition 400 others who knew of David came. It wasn't a matter of rebellion against Sha'ul; they didn't come to form an army. Rather they were people whose lives were in ruin due to Sha'ul's policies and the way he ran his government.

It should be obvious enough by now that the King of Israel ran his kingdom the same way that the other petty kings around the Middle East ran theirs. All that mattered was his own power, his own wealth, and that his tribal dynasty would be established and protected. The Torah Laws that were supposed to be Israel's constitution and there for the benefit of the Israelites' were set aside and so we see that the people who came to David were those who were **ish masoq** (men in a hard-pressed situation) and under the oppression of a **nasha** (a creditor, a money lender). These people were **mar nephesh**, bitter in soul (or spirit). This same term was used of the childless Hannah (who eventually bore Samuel). Picture the poor and oppressed commoners of Yeshua's day, living under the pagan conditions imposed by Rome, and coming in droves to this Rabbi from Nazareth to hear words of comfort and perhaps even of a way out; they were the **mar nephesh** of that era just as were those we read about here in 1st Samuel 22.

So here in this setting of hiding out in a cave, David penned another Psalm. For the sake of connecting Scripture to Scripture, let's read it.

READ PSALM 57

Here again is the pattern of crying out to the Lord, and at the same time praising Him. There is less fear and anxiety present in Psalm 57 as he is hiding in the Cave of Adullam than when in Psalm 56 he had been taken into custody by the Philistines. There is a general danger (he is on the run from King Saul), but not an immediate or specific danger (Saul's soldiers aren't surrounding his place of refuge or waiting in ambush). He comments that even though his enemies are lurking about, the Lord has helped him to avoid their snare. He has a kind of peace and calm covering him like a garment, despite a very uncertain future. He feels the Lord's presence and senses the Lord's providence in his life, and is comforted by it.

Next we have a transition as David leaves the Cave of Adullam for Moab, taking his elderly parents with him. He first tried escaping towards the west and it didn't work out, so now he goes towards the east to a place called **Mitzpah** of Moab (this simply means the overlook, or watchtower). This tells us that David crossed over the Jordan to its eastern bank, probably fording near Jericho, and went up to this fortress city in Moab that overlooked the Jordan River Valley. Actually this would have been in territory formerly governed by Reuben and Gad (it appears that Moab had regained at least some areas of land they controlled before Joshua and the Israelites showed up).

David felt, apparently, that even though Israel was a long time enemy of Moab that there was some customary right of sanctuary available for him and his parents in Moab. There's been much conjecture on this issue (just as also why David would think that Achish would accept him), but the predominant thought is that it was because his great-grandmother Ruth was from Moab. In any case David reckoned that his parents would be safer from Saul in Moab than

anywhere else he could take them. And apparently the King of Moab welcomed David and his family and indeed afforded them sanctuary.

David tells the king of Moab that he'd like for his parents to stay there until he knows what "God will do with me". Interestingly, whereas David's usual reference to God is Yehoveh, here he uses the term **elohim**, which is a general term for any god. I suspect it was out of respect for the King of Moab who called Chemosh his god.

Chapter 22 moves very rapidly and jumps over significant blocks of time. Thus in verse 4 we're told that David and his parents lived in Moab for an unspecified period; however a prophet named Gad approached David and told him that Yehoveh didn't want him living in Moab (rather he should come back to Judah). Who exactly this prophet Gad was and where he came from is left up in the air. Probably he was from Samuel's school of prophets in Naioth, and for some reason (maybe at Samuel's direction) Gad came and attached himself to David. Prophets usually attached themselves to kings. David was no king and there is no hint that he envisioned himself as a king-in-waiting; but from a spiritual aspect he was already God's anointed king and Samuel may have understood that and so felt compelled to provide David with a prophet so he could receive God's oracle as needed.

Gad tells David that the Lord doesn't want him to seek refuge in a foreign land, depending on foreigners as a barrier between him and King Saul. David had fled west to the Philistines and they kicked him out. Now he was in the east and God was kicking him out. I must say I've had that same feeling that David must have had about now. There is a situation I do not want to face, a place I do not want to be, a task I do not want to perform; but my every attempt to escape it is frustrated. And looking back, it could have been nothing less than the Father blocking my exits and directing me back into the fray to learn something valuable or to play a role in His plan even though I many never fully understand what that role was.

Apparently Gad faithfully served David for a number of years; we read of him in 1Chronicles 21 verse 9 where it tells us that Gad served as David's "seer", thus Gad was given the gift of receiving divine knowledge of the future as a legitimate prophet of God. It also means that in time David had a court of prophets who brought the various aspects of Yehoveh's words and instructions to David. David obeys the Lord's instructions through the Prophet and he returns to Judah to a place called the forest of Hereth. No one knows where exactly that is.

In verse 6 the scene makes a dramatic shift back to King Saul, where we learn that David and his men's whereabouts have been discovered. Sha'ul was in Gibeah (his hometown) sitting under a tamarisk, an **eshel**, tree on a **ramah**, a hilltop. This was a place where the King customarily visited and deliberated and met with his men. Here we again see that the spear, a weapon of war and death, was in his hand; I dare say he was seldom seen without it for it had become his scepter and symbol of his personal authority and character.

As a note, depending on what Bible you use, you may see **ramah** capitalized meaning this is being translated as a proper noun, so there is this confusing verbiage that says Saul was at a place with the formal name of Ramah, but also this place was Gibeah. That is nonsensical. The village of Ramah was Samuel's home; but that is not where Saul is meeting with his men.

Rather this just means hilltop in general; this was a hilltop at Gibeah.

The narrative says that Saul's servants were there with him; but these are not house servants, they are high ranking members of his court or war council. Saul is doing some politicking. Apparently these men while loyal to Saul also didn't see any conflict in holding David in high regard, and this was unacceptable to the King. So Saul begins his arm-twisting with the words, "Listen you men of Benjamin!" What he actually said was "***Shema Benyemini***", or "hear and obey you Benjamites!" He was trying to persuade but he was also speaking from a position of authority and was not pleading with them to listen. He was rather insisting that they accept and obey what he is about to say to them. But also notice that this council consisted ONLY of men from Saul's own tribe, Benjamin. Those men would have been the most naturally loyal to Saul because they also had the most to gain from a member of their own tribe being the king. It is also likely that other tribes and clans began to pull away from Saul due to his insatiable desire to lord over them and to behave in risky and irrational ways. Saul's inexplicable hatred of David undoubtedly played a role in this. Had they known that God had designated David as the king-in-waiting, they may have felt differently about the situation and clung closer to Saul (after all, why would the northern tribal coalition want a southerner, a Judahite, to rule over them?)

So Saul uses the customary ways of tribalism to his advantage. He tells his fellow Benjamites that although they may have some hidden thoughts about David becoming their king, they need to think again. Is the son of Jesse, a Judahite, going to give land and power and authority to Benjamites? Is he going to confiscate fields and vineyards and turn them over to anyone other than close family and member of his own ruling tribe?

The men listen intently; Saul is telling them the truth. It was fully usual that the tribe of the man who ruled would receive great benefit from one of their own being in charge. In fact it would be hard to imagine it otherwise. Thus it would be to their detriment to continue their support of David. But then Saul takes another step and accuses them of being co-conspirators because they didn't inform him about the agreement Jonathan had made with David. Saul's suspicion is reaching extreme levels; there is no reason why these men would have known anything about Jonathan and David's dealings but it doesn't matter because Saul's purpose is to make them feel guilty so that they will do what he is about to ask of them. Even more King Saul says that David has now risen up against him and become an enemy. Of course that is a complete fabrication; it is Saul whose paranoia has gotten the best of him and has tried numerous times to kill the fully loyal and perplexed David.

Verse 9 reveals that Do'eg the Edomite, who was at Nob when David came and received the 5 loaves of Shewbread and Goliath's sword from the High Priest, is also present at King Saul's council meeting in Gibeah. This non-Hebrew informer takes advantage of Saul's suspicions of his Benjamite brothers and says that he happened to be there the day David fled to Nob. He tells Saul that he personally witnessed the High Priest Ahimelech consult with God for David as well as give him food and Goliath's sword. Naturally the point of this exercise was for Do'eg to appear valuable and loyal to the king (as opposed to these other men of the council who Saul now doubted). We find that the term "Edomite" was used 3 times in this episode, undoubtedly to cement the point that it was a foreigner who was about to betray David and do mass murder on Saul's behalf.

The king summons the High Priest Achimelech and calls him, "The son of Achituv". Saul had a penchant for calling someone not by their proper name but according to their family line. Actually, this was an ominous sign. What it indicted was that Saul saw individuals who posed a possible threat to his throne as part of an entire family who would also be held accountable. In Machiavelli's famous book "The Prince", he explains that it is a practical matter that if one who takes the throne away from another expects to hang on to that throne he had better kill the former king and all of his family. Otherwise he'll spend the rest of his days looking over his shoulder. Sooner or later, some descendant of the deposed king will feel aggrieved, vengeful, and even entitled to try and wrest the throne back for the family name.

Saul accuses Achimelech of aiding and abetting an enemy of the state. It was one thing to give David food and a weapon, but to "inquire of God" for David seems to have been a particular irritant. It's interesting that Saul didn't say, "inquire of YHWH", but rather to "inquire of elohim" (elohim being a generic word for any god). But the implication is not merely that the High Priest prayed with David or had some kind of ritual ceremony for David, but rather that the High Priest inquired to the Lord on behalf of David so that David would know how to proceed in his rebellion against Sha'ul. Achimelech naturally understanding that this was Saul's meaning answers that as far as he knew David was a trustworthy servant of the king's. In fact, David was even a family member of the king (a son-in-law married to Saul's daughter Michal). Even more, David's reputation was that anything the king asked of him was carried out in the most loyal manner. Bottom line: the High Priest was defending David and at the same moment claiming his own innocence. Achimelech was answering Sha'ul's questions with a clear conscience and was probably shocked at the accusations.

But in his deluded state the King of Israel sees conspiracy behind every rock. And notice how in verse 15 Achimelech perfectly understands the repercussions of Saul's not-so-subtle message of lumping all of Achimelech's family in with whatever phony charge was trumped up against Achimelech himself. "I know nothing of any of this" Achimelech truthfully pledges; but the king was having none of it. The lives of others meant nothing to King Saul anymore. Completely absent of God's light and guidance, Saul has turned to the dark side in total. Even if his suspicions were unfounded it was easier for Saul to go ahead and execute judgment than to worry about the consequences. Thus he pronounces the death sentence upon the High Priest as well as his whole family. Understand: this was not just Achimelech's family, but it was his father's entire family who were condemned.

It is hard to overstate what an amazing turn of events we have here. The King of Israel had just ordered the elimination of the Priesthood. Not because they violated the Torah, or were derelict in their duties to the people of Israel, or because they had offended Yehoveh in some serious breach of trust; but because they showed mercy to someone that Saul in his paranoia and uncontrollable hatred deemed an enemy.

Saul turns to the men of the council and instructs them to go and execute the High Priest and all the priests of Nob because they supposedly were siding with David. One can only imagine the shock wave that went through them. To a man they refused probably on account of the unjustness of such a harsh sentence and because they were not about to harm God's holy Priesthood and set themselves at war with Yehoveh. To deny this homicidal king could have

meant death for any one of them, but enough of the fear of the Lord remained in them that death at Saul's hand was preferable to the far reaching wrath of God upon their heads. Of course the pagan foreigner Do'eg held no such awe or fear of Yehoveh, and Saul full well knew this (which is why Do'eg was in his employ in the first place).

So the king says, "Fine; you kill the priests". Do'eg wasted no time in carrying out the king's decree.

Patterns. It's all about patterns. A pattern was established here in the story of the massacre of the Priests of Nob that we'll see repeated 1000 years from King Saul's time, and that some of us may witness yet again in the not very distant future. A foreigner set out to kill the God-anointed and legitimate King of Israel that was divinely scheduled to replace an illegitimate King of Israel. The same thing will happen with the paranoid King Herod when he hears that God's anointed king, the Messiah, has been born and so treats him as an unwelcome rival. Even more interesting is that both Do'eg and Herod were Edomites. Although the New Testament calls Herod an Idumean, that is merely the Greek word for Edomite, just as Palestinian is Greek for Philistine.

The Anti-King/Anti-Christ had a pagan henchman who somewhat masqueraded as a friend of God. His primary job was to thwart any attempt by God to remove his bosses' authority and turn it over to the Anointed One. And one of the best ways to do that was to kill all of the Anointed One's friends and followers in the process of killing the Anointed One. Does that sound a little like the coming Anti-Christ and his false prophet who will carry out all the dirty work? Does that mean that since the first two occurrences of this pattern were carried out by Edomites that we can look for a future false prophet of the Anti-Christ who has an Edomite heritage? From our vantage point of today, I'd say "yes".

We'll finish chapter 22 and move into chapter 23 next time.