

1 Samuel 22

From Gath, where did David go next (v. 1)? The cave of Adullam. Hardly a suitable “home” for the next King of Israel!

How would you describe David’s quality of life? He was a fugitive. Living life on the run. He couldn’t go to his house, he couldn’t go to the palace, he couldn’t go to Samuel, he couldn’t go to Jonathan and he couldn’t go to the house of the Lord. But he could go to a humble cave and find refuge. The name Adullam means *refuge*.

Which elements of Israelite society associated themselves with David at this time (v. 2)? The distressed, the indebted, and the discontented. Like the “Dirty Dozen.” In the world, these men were misfits, but under David they became mighty men of valor (2 Samuel 23).¹

What might have motivated these men to join David? They identified with him - down and out, hunted and despised. “*And he became their leader.*” Good leaders are like a magnet. Plus, Saul was not an attractive option for them.

But notice this: When these guys spent time with David, they became more like David. Soon, these same men will become known as “David’s mighty men.” They will be the most fearsome fighters around - a top-notch military unit - as they hang out with David.

Application: Hang out with people of character. The more time we spend with Jesus, the more we become like Him. 1 Corinthians 15:33 “*Do not be misled. Bad company corrupts good character.*”

One cannot read v. 2 without reflecting on how the needy, the distressed and the discontented people that gathered around David make up much of the same kind of group that later sought refuge in David’s greatest son: Jesus Christ (cf. Matthew 11:28; John 7:37). This growing movement of support behind David led eventually to his coronation as king of all Israel.²

What was David’s next destination (v. 3)? The city of Mizpah in Moab.

Who initially joined him there (vv. 3-4)? David’s parents. Because of concern for their welfare, he traveled to Moab to make arrangements for them to stay there while he was in hiding.

Previously all David had was trouble, criticism and persecution from his family. They had seemed to mostly be against him. Now, they joined him at Adullam cave. Now they are *for* him. What a blessing to David.

Why might David be welcome in Moab? His great grandmother Ruth was a Moabitess. So, they were distant kinfolk. Also, when Saul had become king, he waged war against the Moabites (14:47). It is reasonable to assume that the Moab king would think that any enemy of Saul’s was a friend of his.

What warning did the prophet Gad give to David (v. 5)? Leave Gath and go to Judah. **Why Judah?** No doubt to be among his own people over whom God had anointed him to reign.³ They would not pose a threat to David. So, David then went to the forest of Hereth in Judah.

How did Saul try to motivate his men (vv. 6-7)? What did he appeal to? Tribal loyalty. Saul appealed to the truly worst in these men, asking them if a man from Judah will favor the tribe of Benjamin as generously as he had done with riches and promotions.

How would you characterize Saul’s comments in v. 8? As soon as Saul found out about David’s return to Judah, he began to blast his followers for their failure to communicate all they knew about David’s activities, particularly his close relationship with Jonathan (vv. 6–8).⁴ Saul accused them of treason.....of concealing from him plots against

his life. By now he was completely paranoid and irrational. He saw everyone as being against him, even his own son.⁵ In his fleshly, self-focused world, everything revolved around Saul. He led through guilt and accusation.

Also, notice how Saul referred to David: He didn't say, "The Man Who Killed Goliath," or "The Man Who Killed 200 Philistines," or "The Man Anointed by God." Saul knew that David came from a family of simple farmers, so he calls him by the humblest name he can think of - the son of Jesse.

Who responded to Saul's accusations (vv. 9-10)? Doeg the Edomite. Wanting to make the most of his opportunity to impress the king, he tattled on David and told Saul how Ahimelech the priest had helped David by giving him provisions and inquiring of the LORD for him.⁶

In his paranoia, Saul confronted Ahimelech and how did Ahimelech defend himself (vv. 14-15)? Ahimelech answered Saul with the honesty of a man with a clear conscience. Ahimelech was telling the exact truth. When David initially came to Ahimelech, the priest questioned him carefully (*Why are you alone..... (1 Samuel 21:1)*). Then, instead of telling Ahimelech the truth, David lied to him. This now put Ahimelech in a very vulnerable position.

Ahimelech cited David's loyalty to the king and his own innocence in helping a man whom he believed to be faithful to Saul. He pointed out that this was not the first time he had inquired of the Lord for David. As for Saul's accusation that David was rebelling against him and lying in wait for him, Ahimelech said he knew nothing at all about it.⁷

Why did Saul's guards refuse to strike down Ahimelech and his family? Saul's servants feared God more than Saul. Imagine asking Jews to murder their own priests!

How did Saul's actions prove that he was quite insane by now (v. 18)? When his guards refused to follow Saul's orders and kill the priests of the Lord..... Doeg, a Gentile "dog" in the truest sense of the word, following Saul's orders, fell on them swiftly, little caring that they were priests, and slew eighty-five of them. As if that was not enough, he also attacked Nob, Ahimelech's city and killed all the inhabitants and livestock.⁸ He was an Edomite. It didn't bother him in the slightest to kill Jews.

All the priests of Israel were killed except whom (v. 20)? Only Abiathar survived; he fled to David and told him what had taken place. Then he stayed with David and served as high priest until he was justly removed from office by Solomon (*1 Kings. 2:27*).⁹ Abiathar marked the beginning of David's priestly staff which would later lead the tabernacle worship in Jerusalem.¹⁰

How would you describe David's feelings when he heard the news about the killing of the priests (v. 22)? Guilt and sorrow.

Was David responsible for the death of the priests and the people of Nob? In one sense, the deaths were the result of David's lying and scheming (v. 22). In another sense, it was the judgment of God upon the house of Eli (*2:31-36; 3:11-14*). But Saul himself must bear the major share of the blame since he ordered the massacre.¹¹

¹ William MacDonald, *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*, ed. Arthur Farstad (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 314.

² Dr. Thomas L. Constable, *Notes on 1 Samuel 2024 Edition* (published by Sonic Light), 164.

³ Eugene H. Merrill, "1 Samuel," *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1* (Victor Books, 1985), 451.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ William MacDonald, *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*, ed. Arthur Farstad (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 314.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*, 315.

¹⁰ Eugene H. Merrill, "1 Samuel," *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1* (Victor Books, 1985), 451.

¹¹ William MacDonald, *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*, ed. Arthur Farstad (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 315.