

DAVID, A FUGITIVE

BIBLE TEXT: I Samuel 22:1, 2, 6-19; 23:1-29; Psalm 52:1-9; 56:1-13; 120:1-7; 142:1-7

LESSON 213 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: ""I will praise thee for ever, because thou hast done it: and I will wait on thy name; for it is good before thy saints" (Psalm 52:9)

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

1 Samuel 22:1-2

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.

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.

1 Samuel 22:6-19

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 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?

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 enquired 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 enquired of God for him, that he should rise against me, to lie in wait, as at 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?

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I David and the Distressed and Discontented

1 David escaped to the cave Adullam and was joined by his father's household, I Samuel 22:1; Psalm 56:1-13

Hebrews 11:37-38

³⁷ They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented;

³⁸ (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and *in* mountains, and *in* dens and caves of the earth.

2 David became the captain of an army of volunteers, I Samuel 22:2; Psalm 142:1-7

Hebrews 2:10

¹⁰ For it became him, for whom *are* all things, and by whom *are* all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

Mark 12:37

³⁷ David therefore himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he *then* his son? And the common people heard him gladly.

II The Slaying of the Lord's Priests

1 Saul charged his lieutenants with disloyalty, I Samuel 22:6-8

2 Doeg spoke against David, I Samuel 22:9, 10; Psalm 52:1-9

3 The priests declared their innocency, but Saul commanded that they be slain, I Samuel 22:11,16

4 Saul's officers rightly refused to slay the priests, but the diabolical deed was done by Doeg, I Samuel 22:17-19; Psalm 120:1-7;

Acts 4:19

¹⁹ But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.

III Saul's Pursuit of David

1 The people of Keilah were rescued from the Philistines by David, I Samuel 23:1-5

2 David was hunted by Saul at Keilah, I Samuel 23:7, 8

3 The ingratitude of the inhabitants of Keilah was shown to David by God, I Samuel 23:9-12

4 Jonathan strengthened David's hand in the Lord, I Samuel 23:13-18

5 The invasion of the Philistines prevented David from being captured by Saul and his army, I Samuel 23:19-29

NOTES:

David's Flight

Our lesson opens with the incident where David was in the cave Adullam. He went there to escape from Saul. We remember his previous parting with Jonathan and that Jonathan had comforted and encouraged him. After leaving Jonathan, David had gone to Nob to Ahimelech, the priest, who lived there with the other priests. David asked for bread and Ahimelech gave him some of the hallowed bread, which only the priests were allowed to eat.

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.

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 did 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.

1 Samuel 23:1-29

¹ Then they told David, saying, Behold, the Philistines fight against Keilah, and they rob the threshingfloors.

² Therefore David enquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go and smite these Philistines? And the LORD said unto David, Go, and smite the Philistines, and save Keilah.

³ And David's men said unto him, Behold, we be afraid here in Judah: how much more then if we come to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines?

⁴ Then David enquired of the LORD yet again. And the LORD answered him and said, Arise, go down to Keilah; for I will deliver the Philistines into thine hand.

⁵ So David and his men went to Keilah, and fought with the Philistines, and brought away their cattle, and smote them with a great slaughter. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah.

⁶ And it came to pass, when Abiathar the son of Ahimelech fled to David to Keilah, *that* he came down *with* an ephod in his hand.

⁷ And it was told Saul that David was come to Keilah. And Saul said, God hath delivered him into mine hand; for he is shut in, by entering into a town that hath gates and bars.

⁸ And Saul called all the people together to war, to go down to Keilah, to besiege David and his men.

⁹ And David knew that Saul secretly practised mischief against him; and he said to Abiathar the priest, Bring hither the ephod.

¹⁰ Then said David, O LORD God of Israel, thy servant hath certainly heard that Saul seeketh to come to Keilah, to destroy the city for my sake.

Jesus referred to this incident when He and His disciples walked through a cornfield one Sabbath day. The disciples were hungry and began to pick and eat the ears of corn. At that time the Pharisees said, "Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day." But Jesus answered: "Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungred, and they that were with him; how he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shewbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests? . . . and are blameless?" (Matthew 12:3-5). David and his companions were starving; and Jesus showed that, in a case of absolute necessity, such a breach of ritual law was not sin.

At this same time David asked for a sword, and Ahimelech gave him the sword of Goliath that had been hung in the Tabernacle as a memorial. David said, "There is none like that." This sword would be especially valuable to David since it would be a constant reminder to him of the time when the Lord gave him the victory over Goliath, his enemy; and, of all people, David surely was the one who was entitled to it.

David a Type of Jesus

From Nob, David had escaped to the cave Adullam. David's father and mother came down to him. They were getting old and David did not want them to be endangered; so he went to the king of Moab and got his permission for them to dwell with him. From secular history we are told that the king of Moab was related, through Ruth, to the house of Jesse. The king of Moab was also an enemy of Saul and that would naturally make David feel that his parents were more secure there than anywhere else.

The people who were distressed, and those who were in debt and discontented, gathered around David, and he became their captain. Here we have a wonderful type of Jesus who was rejected by His own nation but who, nevertheless, said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

Saul had promised David half the kingdom if he would kill Goliath; but now Saul is trying to chase David out of the kingdom. We read, of the saints of old, that "they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth" (Hebrews 11:37, 38). This was David's lot for some time. While David was in this cave the Lord put him through this schooling that he might better understand the trials and troubles of the poor, and be better fitted to rule over the kingdom.

Saul's Servants Upbraided

Saul suspected everyone. He accused Jonathan and David of conspiring against him to overthrow the kingdom. He appealed to the patriotism of his own tribe, the 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; 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 ... ?" What an exhibition of self-pity and self-sympathy!

Slaying of the Priests

¹¹ Will the men of Keilah deliver me up into his hand? will Saul come down, as thy servant hath heard? O LORD God of Israel, I beseech thee, tell thy servant. And the LORD said, He will come down.

¹² Then said David, Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul? And the LORD said, They will deliver thee up.

¹³ Then David and his men, *which were* about six hundred, arose and departed out of Keilah, and went whithersoever they could go. And it was told Saul that David was escaped from Keilah; and he forbore to go forth.

¹⁴ And David abode in the wilderness in strong holds, and remained in a mountain in the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul sought him every day, but God delivered him not into his hand.

¹⁵ And David saw that Saul was come out to seek his life: and David *was* in the wilderness of Ziph in a wood.

¹⁶ And Jonathan Saul's son arose, and went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hand in God.

¹⁷ And he said unto him, Fear not: for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee; and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee; and that also Saul my father knoweth.

¹⁸ And they two made a covenant before the LORD: and David abode in the wood, and Jonathan went to his house.

¹⁹ Then came up the Ziphites to Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth not David hide himself with us in strong holds in the wood, in the hill of Hachilah, which *is* on the south of Jeshimon?

²⁰ Now therefore, O king, come down according to all the desire of thy soul to come down; and our part *shall be* to deliver him into the king's hand.

²¹ And Saul said, Blessed *be* ye of the LORD; for ye have compassion on me.

²² Go, I pray you, prepare yet, and know and see his place where his haunt is, *and who* hath seen him there: for it is told me *that* he dealeth very subtilly.

²³ See therefore, and take knowledge of all the lurking places where he hideth himself, and come ye again to me with the certainty, and I will go with you: and it shall come to pass, if he be in the land, that I will search him out throughout all the thousands of Judah.

²⁴ And they arose, and went to Ziph before Saul: but David and his men *were* in the wilderness of Maon, in the plain on the south of Jeshimon.

²⁵ Saul also and his men went to seek *him*. And they told David: wherefore he came down into a rock, and abode in the wilderness of Maon. And when Saul heard *that*, he pursued after David in the wilderness of Maon.

²⁶ And Saul went on this side of the mountain,

Doeg, the Edomite, a man just as wicked as Saul and one who had absolutely no regard for the servants of the Lord, told Saul that he had seen David at Nob when Ahimelech had inquired of the Lord for David and had given him victuals and the sword of Goliath. Saul sent for Ahimelech and all the priests at Nob, and accused them of conspiracy. Ahimelech knew nothing of the trouble between Saul and David, and pled his innocence. But Saul said, "Thou shalt surely die, Ahimelech, thou, and all thy father's house." Then Saul called his footmen to slay them. But the footmen would not fall upon the priests of the Lord, fearing God more than the command of the king. The wicked Doeg had neither the fear of God nor the love of mankind in his heart so he readily obeyed the command of Saul and killed the priests, the women and children of the city, and all the livestock that belonged to them.

David wrote this of Doeg: "Thou lovest evil more than good; and lying rather than to speak righteousness.... Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength; but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness" (Psalm 52:3, '7).

A Jewish historian placed the total number slain at "three hundred and eighty-five," which probably included the priests and their families — all the inhabitants of the city of Nob which Saul wiped out. This brutal slaying of the priests of Nob was the most diabolical act of Saul's reign. A well-established Jewish tradition states that Doeg was the armor-bearer mentioned in the account of Saul's death (**1 Samuel 31:3-5** ³ And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers hit him; and he was sore wounded of the archers. ⁴ Then said Saul unto his armourbearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith; lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and abuse me. But his armourbearer would not; for he was sore afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword, and fell upon it. ⁵ And when his armourbearer saw that Saul was dead, he fell likewise upon his sword, and died with him.). When Saul was mortally wounded in the battle with the Philistines he fell upon his armor-bearer's sword, and then the latter took his own life. Thus these two men perished; and if this man was Doeg, then they both probably took their lives with the same weapon with which Doeg slew the priests at Nob.

The Philistines at Keilah

The Philistines were robbing the threshing floors of the people at Keilah. David took his men and smote the Philistines, delivering the people from their enemy. It was told Saul that David was in Keilah; and Saul thought that this was the time to capture David, while he was shut up in a city. But David had his trust in God and he inquired of the Lord if the people of Keilah would deliver him into Saul's hands. The Lord told him they would disregard their obligation to him and favor Saul in the matter. So David and his men left Keilah and abode in strongholds in a mountain in the wilderness of Ziph.

Jonathan's Visit

It was in this wooded country that Jonathan visited David. We do not know if there had been any secret communication between Jonathan and David, but at this time Jonathan knew where David was, and he visited him and "strengthened his hand in God." Think of what courage this must have put in David's heart! When we are strengthened in the Lord we are indeed strengthened. It is something that stays with us, putting stamina in us. Jonathan seemed to have sufficient confidence that this father would not find David, and fully believed that one day David would be king over Israel.

and David and his men on that side of the mountain: and David made haste to get away for fear of Saul; for Saul and his men compassed David and his men round about to take them.

²⁷ But there came a messenger unto Saul, saying, Haste thee, and come; for the Philistines have invaded the land.

²⁸ Wherefore Saul returned from pursuing after David, and went against the Philistines: therefore they called that place Selahammahlekoth.

²⁹ And David went up from thence, and dwelt in strong holds at Engedi.

Psalm 52:1-9

¹ Why boastest thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man? the goodness of God *endureth* continually.

² Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs; like a sharp razor, working deceitfully.

³ Thou lovest evil more than good; *and* lying rather than to speak righteousness. Selah.

⁴ Thou lovest all devouring words, O *thou* deceitful tongue.

⁵ God shall likewise destroy thee for ever, he shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of *thy* dwelling place, and root thee out of the land of the living. Selah.

⁶ The righteous also shall see, and fear, and shall laugh at him:

⁷ Lo, *this is* the man *that* made not God his strength; but trusted in the abundance of his riches, *and* strengthened himself in his wickedness.

⁸ But I *am* like a green olive tree in the house of God: I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever.

⁹ I will praise thee for ever, because thou hast done *it*: and I will wait on thy name; for *it is* good before thy saints.

Psalm 56:1-13

¹ Be merciful unto me, O God: for man would swallow me up; he fighting daily oppresseth me.

² Mine enemies would daily swallow *me* up: for *they be* many that fight against me, O thou most High.

³ What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.

⁴ In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.

⁵ Every day they wrest my words: all their thoughts *are* against me for evil.

⁶ They gather themselves together, they hide themselves, they mark my steps, when they wait for my soul.

⁷ Shall they escape by iniquity? in *thine* anger cast down the people, O God.

⁸ Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle: *are they* not in thy book?

We next find Saul on one side of the mountain and David on the other. From all natural appearances, David's little band was about to be swallowed up by Saul's huge army. How many times, when the devil has stood ready to devour a saint of God, the hand of God intervened to prevent it! The Lord knew just the right time to allow the Philistines to invade the land. A messenger came to Saul saying, "Haste thee, and come; for the Philistines have invaded the land." Saul left his search for David and went to fight the Philistines. Then David could again say, "The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them" (Psalm 34:7).

QUESTIONS

- 1 What kind of people came to David in his flight from Saul?
- 2 Where did David take his father and mother for safety?
- 3 Why did Saul want the priests of the Lord slain?
- 4 Who did Saul first tell to slay them? and what was their attitude toward the command?
- 5 Who did finally slay them?
- 6 Tell us something about the sword that was used to slay the priests.
- 7 Who visited David in the wood? and what did he do?
- 8 How near was Saul's army to David?
- 9 How did God intervene to prevent David from being captured?

⁹ When I cry *unto thee*, then shall mine enemies turn back: this I know; for God *is* for me.

¹⁰ In God will I praise *his* word: in the LORD will I praise *his* word.

¹¹ In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me.

¹² Thy vows *are* upon me, O God: I will render praises unto thee.

¹³ For thou hast delivered my soul from death: *wilt* not *thou deliver* my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?

Psalm 120:1-7

¹ In my distress I cried unto the LORD, and he heard me.

² Deliver my soul, O LORD, from lying lips, *and* from a deceitful tongue.

³ What shall be given unto thee? or what shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue?

⁴ Sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper.

⁵ Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, *that* I dwell in the tents of Kedar!

⁶ My soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace.

⁷ I *am* for peace: but when I speak, they *are* for war.

Psalm 142:1-7

¹ I cried unto the LORD with my voice; with my voice unto the LORD did I make my supplication.

² I poured out my complaint before him; I shewed before him my trouble.

³ When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path. In the way wherein I walked have they privily laid a snare for me.

⁴ I looked on *my* right hand, and beheld, but *there was* no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul.

⁵ I cried unto thee, O LORD: I said, Thou *art* my refuge *and* my portion in the land of the living.

⁶ Attend unto my cry; for I am brought very low: deliver me from my persecutors; for they are stronger than I.

⁷ Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name: the righteous shall compass me about; for thou shalt deal bountifully with me.