

**CALVARY PANDAN BIBLE-  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

[Adapted from Bethel Bible-Presbyterian  
Church, 10 Downing St. Oakleigh, Vic.,  
3166]

**DHW BIBLE CLASS  
LESSON 15B  
FIRST SAMUEL  
CHAPTER 22**

**INTRODUCTION**

Reconciling the matter of God's sovereignty and man's responsibility is beyond our ability. It is an apparent contradiction that we just simply have to accept. These two doctrines are like two parallel lines that will never meet on earth but will one day meet in heaven before God's throne of grace.

God ordained that Eli's descendants will be cut-off in the time of their youth. 1 Samuel 2:30-33, *"Wherefore the LORD God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now the LORD saith, Be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed. Behold, the days come, that I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father's house, that there shall not be an old man in thine house. And thou shalt see an enemy in my habitation, in all the wealth which God shall give Israel: and there*

*shall not be an old man in thine house for ever. And the man of thine, whom I shall not cut off from mine altar, shall be to consume thine eyes, and to grieve thine heart: and all the increase of thine house shall die in the flower of their age."* These words were spoken to Eli who was then the high priest of Israel. He died soon after this when news came to him that his two sons were killed in battle and that the ark of God had been captured by the Philistines.

Now in the days of David, this judgment would be carried out by king Saul. The entire lineage of Eli from the time of Ahimelech would be cut-off except for his son Abiathar (the name means "father of abundance"). He would be cast-off in the days of Solomon. 1 Kings 2:26-27, *"And unto Abiathar the priest said the king, Get thee to Anathoth, unto thine own fields; for thou art worthy of death: but I will not at this time put thee to death, because thou barest the ark of the Lord GOD before David my father, and because thou hast been afflicted in all wherein my father was afflicted. So Solomon thrust out Abiathar from being priest unto the LORD; that he might fulfil the word of the LORD, which he spake concerning the house of Eli in Shiloh."*

God is sovereign over the lives of both the good and the bad. The bad will be judged for the evil

they do. The good will be tested and tried so that they might come forth as gold, that is conformed to the image of Christ.

## COMMENTARY

### David Sought Refuge in Moab for his Parents' sake—22:1-5

David escaped from Gath and hid in the cave of Adullam (the name means 'justice of the people') in Judah. The cave was situated halfway between Gath and Bethlehem. The place was known for its many caves. They provided a natural shelter for David. His parents and brothers came to know that he had taken refuge in Adullam. They felt that it was also not safe for them to remain in Bethlehem and so they joined him there and took shelter in the caves. Many people saw how David was treated by Saul. They too came to David with their families. These were men who were in *distress* (Hebrew, *masoq*, 'oppressed'), *in debt*, and *discontented* (Hebrew, *mar*, 'embittered'). This group of people wanted to see a change in the rule of their country. About 400 such men came to David. David trained them to become a powerful and loyal army. This became David's "adopted" family during his fugitive years and into his years as king of Israel. They would become his loyal friends and comrades for the rest of his life. David had the

ability to bring out the best in people so that they remained loyal to him even if it meant death. This is a rare gift that is possessed by few leaders. For example, David's simple "thinking-aloud" became a command to some of his men. They risked their lives just to give David a cup of water. 1 Chronicles 11:15-19, "*Now three of the thirty captains went down to the rock to David, into the cave of Adullam; and the host of the Philistines encamped in the valley of Rephaim. And David was then in the hold, and the Philistines' garrison was then at Bethlehem. And David longed, and said, Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, that is at the gate! And the three brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem, that was by the gate, and took it, and brought it to David: but David would not drink of it, but poured it out to the LORD, And said, My God forbid it me, that I should do this thing: shall I drink the blood of these men that have put their lives in jeopardy? for with the jeopardy of their lives they brought it. Therefore he would not drink it. These things did these three mightiest.*"

David was concerned for his parents. They needed a safer place. He journeyed to Mizpeh in Moab which was outside the territory of Saul. He chose Moab as

a refuge for his parents because of the family ties. His great grandmother was Ruth, a Moabitess. Jesse, his father, was the son of Obed who was the son of Boaz whose wife was Ruth (Ruth 4:13, 17).<sup>1</sup> Mizpeh was the chief city where the king of Moab lived. David petitioned the king to let his father and mother live in the land for the time being. The king of Moab granted his request and allowed his parents to stay in Moab while David was living in his *hold* (22:4b; Hebrew, *matsudah*, 'stronghold'). If it is God's will, even your enemies can become your friends in time of need. The Moabites were not friendly toward the Israelites. But the God of David was in control of all nations in accomplishing His purpose for His servant.

But the prophet Gad (Hebrew, 'troop') counselled David against staying in the stronghold. He must depart from there and go into the land of Judah. Gad the prophet was not heard previously. He might have been a prophet sent by Samuel to serve David. His counsel to David would put David back into the lion's den. David obeyed him and settled in the

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<sup>1</sup> Ruth 4:13 So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife: and when he went in unto her, the LORD gave her conception, and she bare a son. . . . And the women her neighbours gave it a name, saying, There is a son born to Naomi; and they called his name Obed: he is the father of Jesse, the father of David.

forest of Hereth. Away in Moab, he was safe but it was not God's will for him to be safe. David had many more precious and priceless lessons to learn in his special school of hard knocks. He would learn to trust in God no matter how dark the circumstances. He would learn that the real battle was not outside but inside his heart. David must learn to be a man after God's own heart. These were the experiential knowledge he must have as he was being trained by God to be the best king of Israel.

#### **Saul Massacred the Priests of Nob—22:6-19**

In the meantime, Saul heard that the people knew of the whereabouts of David and his men. Saul was in Gibeah, his own home town of Ramah. He was under a tree with a spear in his hand and all his servants stood around him. He was frustrated, bitter and angry when he addressed his fellow Benjamites. He posed to them a rhetorical question which was intended to create division in the nation of Israel. He belonged to the tribe of Benjamin whereas David belonged to the tribe of Judah. He posed a question (22:7): "Will the son of Jesse, give every one of you fields and vineyards, and make you all captains of thousands and captains of hundreds?" The implication was that if David were king, he would reward the people of his tribe, Judah, with material

prosperity and military promotions instead of the Benjamites. In his desperation, Saul was seeking to incite the Benjamites against their Judean brothers. He was frustrated and angry that his son had worked against him and that his people had not reported to him concerning David.

The two lines of argument that Saul used were very common. First, he used property and power. David was from Judah while his men were from Benjamin - as your king, you have received these from me. Why are none of you helping me to capture this son of Jesse? In fact, all of you have conspired against me including my own son. Saul's second argument was one of self-pity - no one is sorry for me. Even my own son is against me when he helped my enemy. The contrast between David's loyal men and Saul's lack of loyal men revealed the character each possessed.

Then Doeg, the Edomite, whom Saul had promoted to be an overseer of his servants, spoke up. He informed Saul that David was in Nob and that Ahimelech the priest had enquired of the LORD for him, provided him with food and given him the sword of Goliath. On hearing this, Saul ordered that Ahimelech together with his father's family and all the priests be brought before him. Saul called Ahimelech to attention and the

latter addressed him appropriately and respectfully as "my lord." Saul charged Ahimelech for conspiring with David to oppose him by providing him with food, giving him Goliath's sword and enquiring of the LORD in his behalf so that he would be able to rise up and pose a threat to him (22:13). Notice the reverse order in what Doeg said and what Saul said. The key point was "enquiring of the LORD for David."

Ahimelech simply and honestly stated that there was no one who had served Saul more faithfully than David. Moreover, David was Saul's son-in-law, wholly obedient to Saul and an honourable man in the royal family. Ahimelech denied that he enquired of the LORD in David's behalf and finally called on Saul not to believe the false accusations. Ahimelech's reply was dignified, just and commendable. The other two points, giving food and sword, were not denied by Ahimelech. He took issue with only one point, the most important point.

Saul pronounced his judgment of death upon Ahimelech and his whole household. Saul was thoughtless, selfish and unjust. In his uncontrollable anger, he was determined to wreak vengeance against any person who helped David. He ordered his soldiers to kill "the priests of the LORD." But Saul's servants were all united in

not carrying out his command to kill the priests. They would not touch the anointed of the LORD and His prophets (Psalm 105:5).

On Saul's instruction, Doeg the Edomite did it. He killed all the priests, the men, their women folks, children, infants, cattle, sheep and asses. The priests themselves numbered 85. Perhaps Saul still remembered a previous incident of how he was rejected when he did not obey the LORD's commandment to kill all the Amalekites. At the time, he was reluctant to kill king Agag and the best cattle and sheep. The difference was that, this time he killed not the enemies of Israel but the servants of the LORD. "Although the killing of Ahimelech and his household was a fulfillment of the curse upon the descendants of Eli, Ahimelech and the priests had conducted themselves admirably and honestly." Do you agree with this observation?

### **God's Providence—22:20-23**

Doeg the Edomite acted with demonic lunacy in killing the priests and their households. He thought he had killed all of them. But one of the sons of Ahimelech who was called Abiathar escaped with the ephod (23:6). He fled to join David and related all that had happened to him. David expressed his regret and revealed his premonition that evil would befall Abiathar's father on the day that he saw Doeg the

Edomite in Nob. David invited Abiathar to stay with him and told him not to fear because Saul was looking for him too. David became the protector of the priesthood. He had a priest and the ephod. He was now able to communicate with the LORD and seek His counsel, a privilege that Saul did not have. Indeed the LORD was protecting his anointed.

### **PRACTICAL VALUE**

David was able to bring out the best in people. His men served him with the devotion and loyalty that only great men deserved. Saul on the other hand had nothing except for his power and property which he used liberally to buy "loyalty".

David's care and concern for his parents served as a good example for us. He was concerned for their safety. Being a filial son, he sought to protect them from Saul even in the midst of his own troubles. Do not run away from trials that God has sent to help us grow in faith. Trust in Him. David was asked to return to Israel that he might learn and grow in faith.

Obsession and hatred are lethal cocktail combinations. When a king possesses such evil traits, injustice may occur. Saul slaughtered Ahimelech and his descendants. God will always have his way. Saul was doomed from

the very beginning. David now had a priest, Abiathar, on his side. The more Saul came after David, the stronger David become.

AMEN

**DAILY READINGS & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

**Daily Readings**

**Monday:** 1 Samuel 22:1-23.

**Tuesday:** 1 Samuel 22:1-23.

**Wednesday:** 1 Samuel 22:1-23; Psalm 34:1-9.

**Thursday:** 1 Samuel 22:1-23; Proverbs 6:34; 14:30; 27:4.

**Friday:** 1 Samuel 22:1-23; Psalm 52:1-9.

**Analysis:**

Text	Practical Value
1Samuel 22:1-5	
1Samuel 22:6-19	
1Samuel 22:20-23	

**Discussion Questions**

1. Are you able to instil such loyalty from the friends around you? What did David have that enable him to command such devotion and loyalty from his followers? Do you have these qualities?

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2. Based upon the false accusations of Doeg, Ahimelech and his descendants were massacred by Saul? How do you explain this in light of God's prophetic judgement on Eli?

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3. Saul's men were more honourable than him when they refused to kill innocent men. How should we respond to a wrong command or instruction that is given to us by a superior whether at home or in school or at work or in church?

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4. Do you agree that the priests of God were the Lord's anointed?

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5. Are you fearful when your enemies seem to be more "powerful" than you?

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