

MAY 18

1 Samuel 22-23

Here are some dark days in the history of redemption.

1 Samuel 22

Vs. 1-5 First, David escaped from Gath and regrouped in the cave at Adullam. Notice the people who came to David. This cave was between Gath and Jerusalem and is thought to be the place or near the place where David killed Goliath.

In taking his family to Moab for safety, David could claim that his great grandmother, Ruth, was also from Moab.

I don't know if Gad the prophet traveled with David, but this was good advice, and David began to ask the Lord more and more about what he should do.

Vs. 6-19 This is Saul at his worst. Saul had no qualms or conscience about killing the priests, but he had to appeal to a foreigner, Doeg, the Edomite, to kill the priests. Never trust a guy named Doeg.

Notice that when Saul was commanded to kill everything that belonged to the Amalekites, he didn't do it. Here, regarding the city of Nob, a defenseless city of the priests, He declared "holy war" by killing everyone and everything, using a non-Israelite to do his dirty work.

The reason Saul did this will be clear when you later read that though David helped cities, they turned against him. The cities were afraid of Saul because of this heartless destruction. If Saul would destroy a city of priests and their families, it was clear that he had no respect for God or anyone else. He was totally ruthless.

It is interesting that later Saul will seek the Lord, and God will not answer. Go figure.

It should be noted that this was in fulfillment of the curse that God put on the priestly lineage of Eli (from Aaron's son Ithamar). After this, two priests would emerge, Abiathar, the last priest who would ever serve God from Eli's lineage, and Zadok, from the other priestly family originating in Aaron's son Eleazar. Abiathar will be retired (with his life spared because of his rebellion), when Solomon becomes king. From that point on, the only priests come from the family and lineage of Zadok. God is often very patient, even in His judgments.

Vs. 20-23 It seems that David understood that his lying had played a part in the slaughtering of Abiathar's family. Saul would have killed them anyway because they helped David, but at least they would have known what was going on and could have protected their families. One good thing David got out of this deal was that Abiathar brought the ephod with the Urim and Thummim (U&T).

1 Samuel 23

Vs. 1-5 David had been a shepherd and was anointed as a boy to be the future king. Although David would run for the next 10 years, God had a plan for him. God would use David to protect Israel and to know not to put his trust in people, but rather wholly in the Lord. Notice that David's men were afraid because they would be going closer to Saul if they saved Keilah.

This is the first mention of David inquiring of the Lord. Very cool. Verse 6 explains what made this "inquiring" possible. When you see the ephod, you think of the U&T, right? These things were the best kept secret in Israel and seldom used, but David was wearing them out now.

Vs. 6-14 What I find interesting in all of these adventures in Keilah is that as David was seeking the Lord, asking Him the questions that were on everyone's mind, David was also teaching his

motley crew to seek the Lord and depend on Him. This is how David really became their leader, and it was under pressure and in dangerous times.

Notice that in v. 13, David's little army had grown since 1 Samuel 22:2, from 400 to 600.

V. 14 It is hard to know how much time is passing, but the danger was present every day for a while. Yet it was through this danger and stress that David could see daily how the Lord was protecting him.

Vs. 15-18 Did you know this was here? It touches my heart to read this. So little is said about Jonathan, but what a heroic man of God he was. Supposedly the name means "Yahweh has given." Well Jonathan submitted to both God and David in giving up his right to rule. And in Jonathan, God gave David a friend that he really didn't deserve. More about this when we see how David treats Jonathan's son.

Notice that Jonathan strengthened David's hand *in the Lord*. This was no ordinary pep talk. The German says that Jonathan strengthened David's trust in God. What a model of Barnabas and a selfless disciple maker.

Vs. 19-29 I'm sure this treachery hurt David but the Lord kept David safe.

V. 21 These are incredible, contradictory words.

Vs. 25-29 This is David's closest call. They were separated only by the space of a few minutes. David not only had 600 men, but the men also had families, and families have babies, highchairs, strollers (all-terrain) and potty chairs and tents and plasmas and computers and cappuccino makers, and, and, and... That's all to say that this was not easy. The text here doesn't talk about their families, but when David lands at Ziklag and the town is overrun, it says that everyone lost someone to the kidnappers. Again, reading year after year, letting the Spirit make slow, natural connections pays off and adds human feel to the details.

V. 27 Then, in the nick of time, a messenger arrived telling Saul that the Philistines had raided a city and without knowing how close he was to finding David, Saul broke off the search and went away. David wasn't saved permanently, but this small deliverance probably had a psalm written for it.

Because we weren't there, we see these events very one dimensionally and objectively. We don't feel the heat or sense the urgency, but it was all there. Ironically, in the middle of this desperate escape, God was so present that Saul could have been a million miles away, because God wasn't going to let David get caught. It is good to remember God's sovereignty even when we are acting with God's urgency, going nuts and sweating like crazy in the harvest. We can work hard but still be calm, knowing that our Father is working.

John 10:1-21

This is such a great portion of Scripture that what it says to us as disciples is deeper than any of us could ever go. Note that this reading concludes at v. 21. All of this is happening in October. Verse 22 picks up at Hanukkah in December.

As you read, look for stuff to underline, especially about doors and shepherds. Take a little time to figure out what all that means.

Vs. 1-6 What Jesus says here is immediately after what He just said to these Pharisees. As shepherds, they had just cast this sheep out of the synagogue. This is why Jesus launches into this talk. They showed by their action against this man who had been blind, that they were robbers and thieves and had not entered the sheepfold by the right way. And then to boot, they didn't get what Jesus was saying.

Vs. 7-10 So to explain what He meant, Jesus further confused the Pharisees by telling them who He was. Here Jesus says that the only way to come into the fold as a sheep or a shepherd is

through Him. He is the door to serve the sheep and He is the door for the sheep. Those who come to Him are saved and find pasture and life.

Vs. 11-13 Now Jesus says He is the Good Shepherd who dies for the sheep. Notice that dying for the sheep is how He will protect them.

Vs. 14-16 As the *Good Shepherd*, Jesus calls His sheep; they know His voice, and they follow Him. I wonder if the Pharisees understood that they couldn't hear His voice. Notice that Jesus is saying that He also had Gentile sheep and that there would eventually be one flock.

Vs. 17-18 This is the *authority* that Jesus spoke of back in John 5. The Father has granted Him to have life in Himself. Although no one could take it from Him, as the Good Shepherd, Jesus willingly laid down His life for the sheep. Hallelujah!

Vs. 19-21 This is a very interesting look into the minds of the leaders of the people. Most of them simply rebelled, but some of the priests, scribes and Pharisees were being honest and were challenged by the spiritual truth in Jesus' words. Later it will say that many, even among the authorities, believed in Jesus. They were just afraid to admit it.

Jesus will pick up this same line of teaching in the next verse, which will occur two months later.

As disciples following our Lord, we are also under the authority of the Father. We are not our own; we've been bought with a price, and there are sheep who need to hear the message of Christ. We are called according to His purpose and given the Spirit to be His witnesses in His harvest.

And as disciples we need to remember that we are His sheep and need to follow His voice.

Psalm 115

This psalm seems to echo how alive, close and dependable the Lord is to His people. This was probably written during the reign of David or some other king who promoted the worship of Yahweh.

V. 1 The declaration of worship here is to give glory to the living God who is known by His *steadfast love* and *faithfulness*.

Vs. 2-3 Notice the contrast. The nations that have idols wonder where Israel's idols are. Israel, according to the psalmist and God, didn't need idols. They had a living God in heaven.

Vs. 4-8 These verses are full of the contradictions of serving *idols*. The nations, but also Israel, followed idols. The irony in v. 8 is interesting. Not only do people who trust in idols become dumb like the idol, but they also actually trust in themselves.

Vs. 9-13 This is the call for Israel to throw away their idols and trust in God. Notice the repetition of words like *help*, *trust*, and *bless*. This is what only the living God can do and He promised to do just that in the law. Notice the mention of Aaron. This is referring to the priesthood and worship at the tabernacle. That was where Israel was supposed to gather for worship and be blessed. Instead they worshiped and sacrificed on every high hill. This writer, possibly David, wanted the people to return to God.

Vs. 14-16 The Lord is the one who blesses, because He is the creator of everything.

Vs. 17-18 Most religions have some sort of rite for the dead. Israel didn't have that. Israel was to worship and praise the living God who saved them. The *forevermore* suggests that those the Lord has saved will, in fact, praise Him *forevermore*, because they will be alive in Him.

As disciples, all of this talk about idols shouldn't be taken lightly. I know we all laugh at the thought of idols, but when we're in need, it is easier to go to the plastic (charge card) than to sit before the Lord in silence, waiting until He answers as only He can.

Proverbs 15:18-19

In contrast to yesterday when the three verses fit together, we have these very different verses.

So, I figure it like this: A hot-tempered man is like a sluggard in the sharp contrasts, edges, and unevenness in his life. The upright controls his temper and is balanced in dealing with his life before the Lord.