

DAVID, A FUGITIVE

BIBLE TEXT : I Samuel 22:1, 2, 6-19; 23:1-29;

LESSON 213 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies" (Psalm 18:3).

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

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

David's Escape

Because of Saul's jealousy, David was forced to leave the court where he and Jonathan had enjoyed a beautiful friendship, and escape to the wilderness. After David and Jonathan had pledged themselves to love each other forever, David went into hiding in the cave of Adullam.

David's father and brothers did not forsake him now that he was in disgrace with the king. They went to him where he was hiding. Other people, too, joined him — people who were poor or in trouble and who thought they might help David and also receive help for themselves.

The Poor Welcomed

David welcomed all who came unto him. He did not refuse those whom the world did not love, those in debt and in distress, and the discontented. His welcome reminds us of the great love of Jesus toward all men. When Jesus was on earth it was more often those who were in trouble and who could not help themselves who willingly listened to the Lord and followed Him. The invitation He gave them, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28), is still going out today. Anyone who wants peace in his heart, healing for his body, or rest for his troubled spirit, can come to Jesus with confidence, and receive what he desires.

For a time David would have to continue his wandering and hiding, but he had the promise that he would be the king of Israel, and then he would be able to help his faithful followers.

We who are Christians today are as pilgrims and strangers in this world, but our King has promised us that some day He will set up His Kingdom here on earth, and all His faithful followers will rule with Him in a reign of peace. Jesus told His disciples a little while before He was crucified: "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Luke 22:28-30).

Saul's Jealousy

It was not long until David had a following of four hundred men. This made Saul very jealous. He asked his servants around him, "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?" He wanted to know why it was that the people were following David. Did they expect great wealth and honor from him?

David did not have to bribe his soldiers. They followed him because they loved him. Saul had not done anything for them, so they could lose nothing by leaving him.

honourable in thine house?

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

Saul felt sorry for himself, and tried to make the people feel sorry for him, too. He tried to arouse their sympathy by telling them that even his own son, Jonathan, had turned against him and no one would tell him. Saul felt that no one loved him any more, nor would pity him.

The Priests of God Slain

There was one man among Saul's herdsmen who stood by the king. He was an Edomite named Doeg. Doeg had been at Nob, a town where the priests lived, when David had come to ask help of the priests. Ahimelech had given him bread to eat, and also the sword of Goliath. But why should he not? Was not David the king's son-in-law, and had he not won great victories for Israel? Who had a greater right to the sword of Goliath than David. who had killed the giant? Had he not always been faithful to the king? There was no reason why Ahimelech should not have helped David. David had not told the priests anything about the trouble between himself and Saul.

But Saul's insane wrath knew no reason, and he ordered all the priests to be killed. Saul had drifted so far from God that he did not fear to kill the ministers of the Lord. Saul's servants had a greater fear of God in their hearts than did their master; and they feared God more than they feared the king. They refused to obey his order to kill the priests. But Doeg, that wicked Edomite, probably thought he would win favor with Saul if he carried out that inhuman order, so he killed all the priests except Abiathar, who escaped. Not only the priests were destroyed, but their wives and children, and even their cattle. Think of how wicked Saul had become since the Spirit of the Lord had departed from him!

Abiathar, the only remaining priest, went to be with David. They were now both running from Saul, and would be safer together.

The Philistines' Attack on Keilah

About this time the Philistines renewed their raids upon the towns of Judah. Their marauding armies would enter the territory of the Israelites to steal their crops. When David heard that the Philistines had come to Keilah to rob the threshing floor, he felt sorry for the inhabitants and decided to help them. But first he asked God if it would be all right for him to take his army, which had grown to 600 men, to help defend Keilah. The Lord answered, "Go, and smite the Philistines, and save Keilah."

David had an army, but his men were not brave soldiers. They said, "We be afraid here in Judah: how much more then if we come to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines?" If they were fearful while in comparative safety, what would become of them in the face of danger?

David was not afraid, but he wanted to be sure that he was in the will of the Lord. So he asked once more, and the Lord answered, "Go." That was enough for David. He knew he was doing what God wanted him to do, and even his fainthearted men could not hold him back. Those fearful soldiers became brave, too, after they started out to obey God.

It may be that the Lord will call us to do something we feel we cannot do. We may think of a hundred reasons why we are not fit to do God's bidding. But if God says "Go," we should take a step and at least try to obey, even though we may tremble as we start. God will see our obedience, and will

to come to Keilah, to destroy the city for my sake.

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

strengthen us for His work. Victory will be sure.

The armies of David triumphed over the Philistines who had to return home without any of the fruit and grain they had hoped to get.

Danger in the City

David and his men remained in Keilah, which was a walled city. It seemed that they would be safer here than out in the wilderness. But when Saul heard where David was, he thought this was his chance to capture him. He thought he could surround the city and starve out the inhabitants.

David wondered if the people of Keilah would stand by him; or if> when they became hungry, they might turn him over to Saul in order to save themselves alive. Abiathar, the priest, had brought with him the ephod, which probably contained the Urim and Thummim. David now asked him to inquire with it of the Lord whether or not they were safe among the people of Keilah. God answered that Saul would attack the city, and its inhabitants would turn them over to Saul. There was nothing for David and his army to do but to return to the wilderness and hide there. Even there Saul pursued them.

During this time Jonathan paid his last visit to David. How happy they were to see each other, although it would have meant their death if Saul had discovered them together! Their love was stronger than the fear of death.

Jonathan encouraged David "in God." It was his firm trust in God that could make Jonathan say to David: "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." There was no jealousy in the heart of Jonathan. They never met again, but no doubt Jonathan often prayed for David during the years that he was a fugitive from Saul; and he had confidence that God would see David through this time of trouble, and in the end would make him king of all Israel.

No Safe Place

No matter where David hid there was always someone to tattle to Saul. We next hear of the Ziphites saying: "Doth not David hide himself with us in strong holds in the wood ... ? 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." But God was with David, and Saul could never catch up with him. David had confidence in God, and could write at such a time, "I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the LORD sustained me" (Psalm 3:5). David did not have to lie awake nights worrying whether Saul would find him.

There were times when David did become discouraged, but when he would think of God's care and love, he could ask himself, "Why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God" (Psalm 42:11).

There came a time when Saul was on one side of a mountain, and David on the other side. At that critical hour the Philistines attacked at Saul's home, and he had to withdraw in order to defend himself against them. It may be that God permitted this to happen in order to give David a little rest from his pursuers.

Among the Psalms of David we read this song: "Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the LORD will deliver him in time

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, 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.

of trouble. The LORD will preserve him, and keep him alive; and he shall be blessed upon the earth: and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies" (Psalm 41:1, 2). That was the confidence that David had in the God he served, and he was safe.

QUESTIONS

- 1 Why did David leave the court of Saul?
- 2 Who was his best friend at the court?
- 3 What did he and his friend promise each other when David left?
- 4 What happened at Keilah?
- 5 How did David know that it was not safe to remain at Keilah?
- 6 How did Jonathan encourage David?
- 7 Why was David not afraid?
- 8 What kept Saul from attacking David when only a mountain separated them?
- 9 What did Jesus promise to His disciples who continued with Him in his "temptations"?