

The chase from Saul only occurs in 1 Samuel, 1 Chron more positive and jumps to the kingdom, skipping the anointing and opposition from Saul.

David

## David, Waiting for the Kingdom

### *Waiting for the Lord*

In the rest of 1 Samuel we see David, the anointed king, waiting for the promised kingdom. This was a time of preparation. It was a time of humiliation and danger as He faced opposition and threats on his life from the hand of Saul, the outgoing king. A favorite theme of David in the psalms was “wait for the Lord,” 5 times specifically, “wait” alone, of the Lord, 23 times.<sup>1</sup> Our own struggles need to be informed by this same dynamic as we wait for the Lord in our own lives and apply New Testament truth about growth, that God uses testing in our journey to become like Jesus Christ. Few things test our faith like waiting for God to act in His own timing and for His own purposes. It should be of some comfort and encouragement for us to persevere in faith as we see God’s faithfulness to David. We, also, must fight the “little battles” as we grow and serve and wait, trusting in His faithfulness, even as our own unfaithfulness is exposed. The New Testament reveals this kind of testing as part of the process of character growth we must all go through (James 1:2-4).

### The Matter of Nob

Chapters 21-22 account for trouble that Saul brought on a whole city of priests on account of David. After leaving Jonathan, “David came to Nob, to Ahimelech the priest” (21:1). This was only a stone’s throw from Gibeah, Saul’s residence and center of his kingdom (see map). So the danger to David was still very present and real. The priest was fearful that something unusual was up so he “came trembling to meet David (21:1)” and asked about David’s business in



Aert de Gelder, Ahimelech Giving the Sword of Goliath to David

coming to Nob. David spun a little yarn about being on the king’s business and being short on supplies. Ahimelech was convinced that David was on a legitimate errand for Saul and gave David the sacred **bread of the Presence from the tabernacle**

So David was helped on his escape from Saul. Weaponless, David, also, asked about any weapons on hand. He was informed of the presence of the sword of Goliath the Philistine from Gath, which he gladly took, “There is none like it; give it to me” (v. 9).

Aert de Gelder, Ahimelech Giving the Sword of Goliath to David <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 5 times total in Psalms (English) 2 times in Psa 27:17; “wait” alone, of the Lord, 23 times. [New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update](#) (La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995). All scripture quotes are from this version unless otherwise noted.

<sup>2</sup> Aert de Gelder, Ahimelech Giving the Sword of Goliath to David.

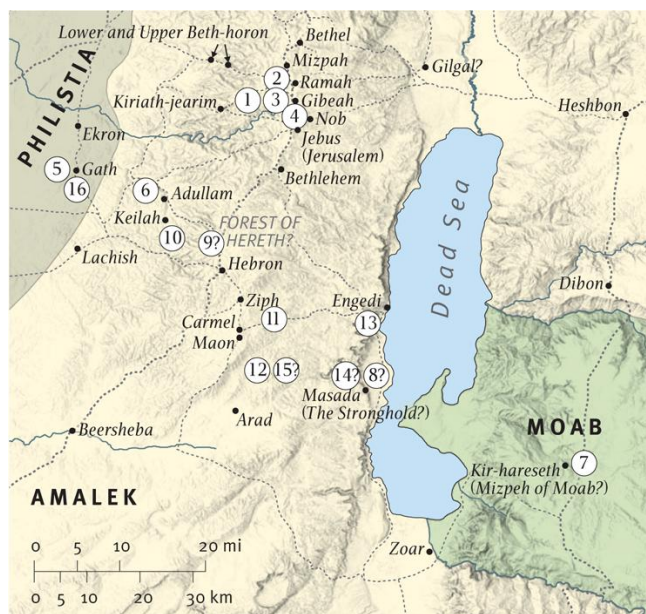
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David's next adventure, running from Saul, is recorded to be with Achish, king of Gath and the Philistines, who he had made his reputation killing, from Goliath, who was from Gath, to any that would dare to raid Jewish cities and villages. He went to Achish to seek refuge until the Philistines around Achish became suspicious of David and complained. David "greatly feared Achish king of Gath," and resorted creatively to a new tactic. He faked insanity! The text says he "disguised his sanity in their sight and acted insanely," which any insane person would do! Achish and his comrades were convinced. "Achish said to his servants, 'Look, you see the man is behaving like an insane person. Why do you bring him to me?'" (v.14)."

Turning to Achish didn't work. "So David departed from there and escaped to the cave of Adullam (22:1)."

How often do we turn to our own devices when in a corner? David seems to have been doing the same thing. Michal his wife wasn't the answer, nor was Jonathan his good friend, nor was Ahimelech the priest nor was Achish king of Gath. So David seems to have resigned himself to the Lord's care alone from this point on. It was at the cave of Adullam that allies began to come to him until "there were about 400 men with him" (v. 2). The first mention was of his family (v.1). Then others came. "Everyone who was in distress, and everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was discontented gathered to him" (v. 2). They weren't much! But they were the force God assembled to prove His glory. From one crisis to another throughout the Old Testament the Lord God worked against all human odds to deliver peace and victory for those who feared and trusted Him. Do not fear if He still works in the same way in your life. "When I am weak, then I am strong" 2 Cor 12:10. "What now I live in the flesh, by faith I live in the Son of God" (Gal 2:20c lit SFC).

"So David departed from there and escaped to the cave of Adullam" (22:1). This was not a few miles from Nob and Gibeah, Saul's capital and home (see map, #3, 4, 6).<sup>3</sup> Surely David would find some peace and safety here. David's family came to the cave, along with the others. For



safe-keeping, David took his family to Mizpah of Moab (see map, #7) and asked the king of Moab for asylum for them "until I know what God will do for me" (v 3). This was a long way, on the east side of the southern Dead Sea, from all the drama with David as he waited on God to ascend to the throne of Israel.

Back in Israel now the text tells us that God sent the prophet Gad to warn David to go further into Judah for his own safety. So he went into the Forest of Hereth (see map, 9).

The scene shifts to Saul sitting under a local landmark tree (v 6) with the trusty spear in

his hand, of course. We have already established that Saul and his spear seem to be inseparable.<sup>4</sup> So it is no surprise it is present once again. During a “pity me” session with his servants, Saul learns about David’s visit to Nob and about the favors given to him by Ahimelech the priest. The text almost casually mentioned that Doeg the Edomite was present in Nob when David was there and he is now present with Saul and is the source of the news about David’s visit. Saul immediately sends for the priests of Nob and confronts them about the supplies and weapons and counsel from the Lord given to David.

Ahimelech defends David, much like Jonathan did (20:32), and he defends himself in v 15, “Do not let the king impute anything to his servant *or* to any of the household of my father, for your servant knows nothing at all of this whole affair,” King Saul disagreed, “You shall surely die, Ahimelech, you and all your father’s household” (v 16).

Having said this, he turned to those who were around him and ordered them to kill the priests of the Lord, “Turn around and put the priests of the LORD to death, because their hand also is with David and because they knew that he was fleeing and did not reveal it to me.” But the servants of the king were not willing to put forth their hands to attack the priests of the LORD (v 17). There were still some in Saul’s entourage that feared the Lord.

However, Doeg the Edomite was willing to do the will of the king and “he killed that day eighty-five men who wore the linen ephod” (v 18). More than that, he went to Nob and slaughtered everyone and everything that breathed, including people and animals. Only one son of Ahimelech survived and went to David and joined his small army as priest, remaining with him for many years. David said to him, “Stay with me; do not be afraid, for he who seeks my life seeks your life, for you are safe with me” (v 23).

One cannot help but feel bad for Ahimelech, rightly so, for he got caught between Saul and David and was right in saying to Saul, “your servant knows nothing at all of this whole affair (v 15).” David invented a story, about being on a mission for King Saul, to convince Ahimelech to help him. David should have been forthright with Ahimelech and he probably would have avoided the loss of much innocent life. He finally realized this and said to Abiathar, “I have brought about *the death* of every person in your father’s household” (v 22).

David’s Lord and ours, however, did not condemn what David did but held it out in the Sabbath Controversy of gospels Matthew and Mark ( Matthew 12:3; Mark 2:25) as an example of obeying God when normal laws and rules are not helpful. David took the showbread from the tabernacle which only the priests were to eat in addition to making up the story he told to Ahimelech about his dangerous predicament. I would posit, however, that it might have been even better if the truth had been spoken in faith by this godly man in his moment of crisis.

We are told to “speak truth each one of you with his neighbor” and “speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *even Christ*” (Ephesians 4:25 and 15, respectively). It may be inconvenient at times or even, as in David’s case, it may even be dangerous. However, the Lord can deliver us in many different ways, not just the way we may prefer or hope. Let’s tell the truth and live by the truth. Our goal on every page of the New Testament is to “grow up.” Let’s give our Lord the freedom to deliver and bless us as He desires

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<sup>4</sup> David and Jonathan, third installment of this series, p. 4, paragraph 1, line 7.

and sees best. Truth is an indispensable element of that, “truth will make you free” (John 8:32). Also, Jesus’ prayer to the Father, “Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth” (Jn 17:17). “Long for the pure milk of the word (truth), so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation” (1 Peter 2:2). God’s Spirit uses the word of God, truth, as we “are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit” (2 Corinthians 3:18). This image is that of the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, whom we now know and see more clearly than David did. “I am . . . the truth” (Jn 14:6).

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