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We just went through a pretty tough week with weather, no power, limited communications, no water, having to heat with wood but no way of dispersing the heat at least some of us. The reason I bring this up just consider what life was like during this time of King Saul. Constant attacks from neighboring kings, attacks by wild animals, diseases killing young children, brutality on a scale that we have never seen, most people living like paupers. Little hope of improving your condition. A dismal life but for God. If you were a Jew and you walked with God, He would intervene on your behalf for survival. That would be David's life for a time now with Saul intent on killing him and anyone that aided him.

What we went through lasted as week, what these folks experience lasted a lifetime.

## **1 Samuel 21**

### **David Takes the Consecrated Bread**

**[\(Matthew 12:1-8; Mark 2:23-28; Luke 6:1-5\)](#)**

**1Then came David to Nob to Ahimelech the priest: and Ahimelech was afraid at the meeting of David, and said unto him, Why art thou alone, and no man with thee?**

David was fleeing from King Saul due to Saul trying to kill David. David's only sin against the King was that he was anointed to replace Saul by God. His actual ascension to the throne would be in God's timing. Until that happens David needs to stay safe and fleeing was the way given.

Nob is a location near Jerusalem and was the location the Arc of the Covenant was kept after the destruction of Shilo.

***Psalms 78:60 So that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which he placed among men;***

***Jeremiah 7: 12But go ye now unto my place which was in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel. 13And now, because ye have done all these works, saith the LORD, and I spake unto you, rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not; and I called you, but ye answered not; 14Therefore will I do unto this house, which is called by my name, wherein ye trust, and unto the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh. 15And I will cast you out of my sight, as I have cast out all your brethren, even the whole seed of Ephraim.***

Ahimelech is a descendent of Eli the High Priest before Samuel. Eli's sons had done evil as Priests so God condemned Eli's entire lineage that none would live to be old.

Ahimelech obviously knew of the conflict between Saul and David and was afraid to help David. Everyone knew of Saul's mental

instability and violent outbursts. So, Ahimelech was obviously concerned that King Saul would find out he helped David and have him killed.

Ahimelech was curious about David being with a small troop considering his position in Israel and knowing his challenges with King Saul, so he inquires of David why he had so few men with him or the term Ahimelech used was “alone”?

**2**And David said unto Ahimelech the priest, The king hath commanded me a business, and hath said unto me, Let no man know any thing of the business whereabout I send thee, and what I have commanded thee: and I have appointed *my* servants to such and such a place.

We know David is not truly alone as he refers to in vs 2 “appointed my **servants**” plural meaning David had others with him, just not many for his position in Israel.

David of course lied (plausible deniability is the term today) likely to protect the Priest so Ahimelech could tell the King what David had told him. David’s goal here was not to cause trouble for the Priest but to obtain some badly needed food.

**3**Now therefore what is under thine hand? give *me* five loaves of bread in mine hand, or what there is present. **4**And the priest answered David, and said, *There is* no common bread under mine hand, but

**there is hallowed bread; if the young men have kept themselves at least from women.**

The issue for the Priest was that it was his responsibility to God to keep a legal position of Holiness as to the Tabernacle and all those items within it.

One of the items was the “show bread”. It was twelve loaves of bread that would be set before the Holy of Holies on what was called the “Table of Showbread”, by law on each Sabbath. At each new Sabbath, the existing bread would be replaced by fresh baked bread. The week-old bread was then consecrated to the Priests for their consumption.

A condition of Holiness for the Priests and anyone else fulfilling a legal responsibility was that they abstain from intercourse with their wives.

***Exodus 19:15 And he said unto the people, Be ready against the third day: come not at your wives.***

The Priest trying to be helpful made the statement according to Exodus 19:15 to be able to satisfy that legal requirement to give David some bread.

**5And David answered the priest, and said unto him, Of a truth women *have been* kept from us about these three days, since I came out, and the vessels of the young**

**men are holy, and *the bread is* in a manner common, yea, though it were sanctified this day in the vessel.**

David assures the Priest that his men are intent on keeping holiness every day in every task not just on this day.

David understood the law and how the show bread was sanctified. He also understood the replacing of the sanctified bread with fresh sanctified bread. The old bread even though sanctified unto the Lord while it set on the Table of Showbread, when it was removed it became common bread and able to be eaten by the Priests and apparently by others at the Priests discretion but always under the Law.

**6So the priest gave him hallowed *bread*: for there was no bread there but the shewbread, that was taken from before the LORD, to put hot bread in the day when it was taken away.**

The Priest sacrifices his own sustenance to accommodate David and his men for badly needed food.

**7Now a certain man of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before the LORD; and his name was Doeg, an Edomite, the chiefest of the herdmen that *belonged* to Saul.**

Several things to account for in this verse. First, this man was “detained”, meaning he was under compulsion to God to remain there, either by vow, or perhaps a ceremonial cleansing issue for

him, either way he was present when David arrived and had this discussion with Ahimelech.

Secondly, he was an Edomite from the tribes of Esau which were a constant enemy to Israel. From the time of Esau and his brother Jacob, God later renamed to Israel, the Edomites were an antagonist to Israel. They are one of the forerunners to the Arab nations.

It also portrays yet another flaw in King Saul in that he would have an outsider from the Edomites as his chief shepherd.

It should be noted and we will see this later that Doeg will report to Saul as an eyewitness but lie or add to about what he saw and many innocent Israelites will die because of his testimony.

***1 Samuel 22:9 9Then 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. 10And he inquired of the LORD for him, and gave him victuals, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine.***

David neither asked the Priest to inquire of the Lord nor did the Priest offer to inquire of the Lord on David's behalf. That was a lie that Doeg told to King Saul.

**8And David said unto Ahimelech, And is there not here under thine hand spear or sword? for I have neither**

**brought my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's business required haste.**

David continued the ruse I think to protect the Priest. David declared that in the King's haste in sending David on this mission David had not had time to secure his weapons and needed a sword.

**9**And the priest said, The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom thou slewest in the valley of Elah, behold, it *is here* wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod: if thou wilt take that, take *it*: for *there is* no other save that here. And David said, *There is* none like that; give it me.

Irony or simply God's planning that extends beyond our lifetime. Just when David needed something, just when we need something God has stored it up for David and for us.

David reclaimed the very sword of Goliath that he had taken from Goliath after slaying him with a stone and cutting off the giant's head with this very sword.

### **David Flees to Gath**

**[\(Psalm 34:1-22; Psalm 52:1-9; Psalm 56:1-13\)](#)**

**10**And David arose, and fled that day for fear of Saul, and went to Achish the king of Gath.

David's fear of King Saul could be categorized in two ways. First King Saul intended to kill David, so David was rightfully afraid of

Saul in that way. David also revered God's choice of King in Saul and the father of his best friend Jonathan and his wife Michale. That reverence he had for King Saul would not allow him to reach out and harm let alone kill King Saul. David left that all in the hands of God, in His timing and in His own manner of removing Saul as King.

**11** And the servants of Achish said unto him, *Is not this David the king of the land? did they not sing one to another of him in dances, saying, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands?*

Even though we have not been told explicitly that the whole country knew that David had been anointed King over Saul, apparently others had surmised this due to the singing that had occurred after David killed Goliath and pursued the Philistines deep into their own country.

Gath is in the Promised Land of Israel, even though in control of the Philistines and those who lived there were right in the heart of many events that had happened. Gath was also the hometown of Goliath.

As with King's in this day of any nation, treason was dealt with quickly and severely so the King of Gath would not turn against the King of Israel, King Saul and David soon learned this.

**12And David laid up these words in his heart, and was sore afraid of Achish the king of Gath.**

Whether through observed body language or outright spoken words, David listened and saw how he was being perceived by the King of Gath and the King's advisors. David rightfully understood that the King of Gath would side with Saul and David would be in danger from him as well.

**13And he changed his behaviour before them, and feigned himself mad in their hands, and scrabbled on the doors of the gate, and let his spittle fall down upon his beard.**

David simply acted insane, once he recognized that the King of Gath would not be his friend but gave deference to King Saul.

**14Then said Achish unto his servants, Lo, ye see the man is mad: wherefore *then* have ye brought him to me? 15Have I need of mad men, that ye have brought this *fellow* to play the mad man in my presence? shall this *fellow* come into my house?**

Whether the King of Gath recognized the acting of David in his presence is unknown, but he does use the term "play the mad man in my presence". The point being it gave the King of Gath an out to declare David mad or insane and to not allow him entrance into his home or city. As with the Priest the King of Gath had plausible deniability if asked by King Saul if he had helped David.

Being able to give a reasonable response should have saved both the Priest and the King of Gath their heads.

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