

1st Samuel Chapters 21-22 – John Karmelich

1. I like to call this section of Scripture, “Don’t let this happen to you”. ☺
 - a) In life, we usually learn the most from our mistakes. When we fail or go through really tough times are usually the greatest growing experiences.
 - b) In this lesson, David commits a series of lies and gets deeper and deeper into trouble. There is a point of “rock bottom” and we’ll see David turn for the better. We’ll also read of the consequences of those lies, not only to David but to innocent people. Many people are going to get killed due to David’s lies in Chapter 22.
2. This section of 1st Samuel is a first hand account by David. The reason I mention this is I want you to contemplate: Why did David include his failures in his writings?
 - a) If I was putting the bible together, and I was an author, why write about the time in your life where you lied and lied, got yourself into big trouble and these events got innocent people killed?
 - b) When David was composing this section, I doubt he was thinking about billions of people reading his stories over hundreds and hundreds of years. ☺
 - c) My point is David is trying to tell us, “Hey folks, learn from my mistakes so you won’t repeat them yourself. Here is an episode of my life where I wasn’t trusting God, I was living in fear, and look what happened to me! These lessons are painful to me (David) to write and painful for me to recall. I’m telling them to you the reader as I want you to trust God and not make the same mistakes!”
 - d) This is why the bible is full of negative stories that happen to the heroes of the bible.
 - e) They are there for us to learn. Often, if we repeat the same mistakes that these God-fearing people made, we will suffer the same or similar consequences.
 - f) The bible is designed to work in “patterns”. These patterns are not just patterns of how to be obedient to God, but patterns of how to avoid disasters. Chapters 21 and 22 are one big disaster. Our prayer is that we learn from these lessons and recall them at the appropriate time as to not repeat David’s mistakes.
3. Let’s get started. Chapter 21, Verse 1: David went to Nob, to Ahimelech the priest. Ahimelech trembled when he met him, and asked, "Why are you alone? Why is no one with you?"
 - a) Let me summarize where we last left on in our story.
 - i) The last we read of David, he was on the run from King Saul who was trying to kill him. King Saul was jealous over the fact that David was rising in power.
 - ii) Saul was given prophetic predictions that he would lose his throne and someone else would rise to be the next king. It became obvious to everyone, including Saul that David was that man and Saul was trying to kill him. Saul is a model of those “living for their desires and not God’s”. By trying to kill David, Saul is also a model of those living to prevent God’s will from dominating their lives.
 - iii) The last chapter ended with the “arrow story” between David and Jonathan.
 - a) Jonathan was the son of Saul. He comprehended that David was eventually to be the next king and submitted his will to David.
 - b) When Jonathan understood that David was going to kill him, Jonathan sent a “coded message” to David.
 - c) David was hiding in a field. Jonathan shot three arrows. The coded message was, “If I shoot these arrows beyond your location, run for your life, Saul wants to kill you. If I shoot the arrows in front of you, come home as everything is ok.” The arrows were shot beyond David and therefore David knew he had to run for his life.

- b) So here we are at Chapter 21 with “David the fugitive”.
 - i) Prior to the “arrow message”, David lived in or near the king’s home as he was married to the king’s daughter. David couldn’t run to his hometown of Bethlehem, as Saul would look for him there. David couldn’t run to Samuel the prophet, as again, Saul would look for his there.
 - c) So here we read of David on the run. His first stop was to a priest named Ahimelech in a town named Nob.
 - i) Ahimelech was the High Priest. When the Israelites came out of the Exodus, God set us the High Priest to intercede between the people and God. The High Priest was from the tribe of Levi and a direct descendant of Moses’ brother Aaron.
 - ii) If you recall, the early chapters of 1st Samuel, the prophet Samuel was raised by Eli, the high priest of Israel. Eli’s two sons were corrupt and a prediction was made that eventually their descendants would no longer be priests in Israel. (Reference: 1st Samuel 2:30).
 - iii) Here we are, many years later, and Ahimelech was a descendant of Eli’s two sons. That prediction was not 100% completed as their family was still holding the priests’ office. Remember that Samuel himself was not the high priest, but he was respected as a religious leader in Israel even more so than the high priests’ family.
 - d) The next thing to read is that Ahimelech “trembled” at David coming alone. The reason is not given, but there is some logical speculation as to why:
 - i) David was a man of war. For David to show up without Saul was a reason for suspicion. There was no “royal entourage” accompanying David. That would make the high priest suspicious.
 - ii) There is the possibility that the priest heard rumors of the struggles between Saul and David. For David to come alone could make the man suspicious.
 - iii) Another thing to consider is that this high priest did know there was a curse on the family line. Maybe the guy feared for his life and somehow, here was David, a man of war and part of the royal kingdom. The fact that David was alone “could” mean that David was coming to kill him.
 - iv) Most likely, this priest was simply a fearful and suspicious type of person and hear was the king’s son in law coming to him alone.
4. Verse 2: David answered Ahimelech the priest, "The king charged me with a certain matter and said to me, 'No one is to know anything about your mission and your instructions.' As for my men, I have told them to meet me at a certain place. ³ Now then, what do you have on hand? Give me five loaves of bread, or whatever you can find."
- a) To paraphrase David, he is telling the high priest, “I’m working for the king on a secret mission. I can’t tell you, nor anyone what that mission is. I left in such a hurry, I didn’t have time to pack any food. So, do you happen to have any food on you that I can have?”
 - b) Here we read of David lying to Ahimelech.
 - i) When you read these two chapters, the word “lie” or “lied” is never used. It is a logical assumption that David is lying. This assumption is obvious when you compare it to the surrounding text. We know that David is on the run from Saul. Contrast that with Verse 2 where David states he was “on the king’s business” doing some sort of secret mission.
 - ii) When we get to Chapter 22, this lie by David gets Ahimelech killed.
 - a) The point here is that innocent people suffer because of David’s lie.

- c) David specifically asked for five loaves of bread to feed him “and his men”
 - i) When David said he was “alone”, that did not count his assistants. It just meant the king was not with him. David probably had some assistants with him. There were probably five men in total.
 - ii) Jesus commented on this incident. He said, “Haven’t you read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? He entered the house of God, and he and his companions ate the consecrated bread”. (Matthew 12:3-4a NIV)
 - iii) If Jesus says David had companions with him, that’s good enough for me. ☺
- 5. Verse 4: But the priest answered David, "I don't have any ordinary bread on hand; however, there is some consecrated bread here--provided the men have kept themselves from women."
 - a) The priest didn’t have any “ordinary” bread on hand, only the 12 “special” loaves of unleavened bread, which were always to be kept by the high priest.
 - b) Part of the duties of the high priest and his family is to weekly bake 12 loaves of bread.
 - i) These represent the 12 tribes of Israel. The center place of worship was a man-made portable structure called the tabernacle. One of the pieces of furniture in the tabernacle was a table to hold these 12 pieces of unleavened bread. Every week the priests were to bake 12 new loaves and eat the old ones.
 - ii) The symbolism of the bread was God’s relationship with the Nation of Israel and that the high priest was responsible to prayerfully intercede for Nation of Israel on their behalf. Further, in that culture to eat with someone is to be “one with them”. The eating of the bread is symbolic of communing with God.
 - a) This table and the bread are described in Exodus Chapter 25, et.al.
 - b) The ritual to replace the bread is described in Leviticus 24:5-9.
 - c) If you read Leviticus 24:9 carefully, it implies that the priests are to eat the old bread, but it does not say the priests “have” to eat it.
 - d) This is a case of one biblical law having more weight than another. A more important law is to “love your neighbor as yourself” (Leviticus 19:18). The point is the high priest understood David was hungry and that took precedence over the “requirement” that the High Priest eat the bread.
 - c) Earlier I mentioned that Jesus himself quoted this incident in Matthew 12.
 - i) If you happen to believe Jesus is Lord, which I do, then you must also accept the validity that this story took place as stated.
 - ii) Jesus’ point was that when the high priest gave David and his men the bread that was only supposed to be eaten by the high priest, Jesus condones the idea of “higher laws” and that some of God’s laws have more weight and significance than others.
 - iii) Jesus specifically quoted Hosea 6:6 at that point: “I desire mercy, not sacrifice”. Jesus’ point is that God cares more about having compassion than following the ritual laws. The latter is still important, but again, it is about priority.
 - d) The verse also said the men can eat their bread only if “(the) men have kept themselves from women”.
 - i) One of the requirements of eating this bread is that men be “ceremonially clean”.
 - ii) This shows a good balance for the high priest.
 - a) On one hand, he was willing to have compassion on David’s men and give them bread because they are hungry.
 - b) On the other hand, the priest still understood this bread is “special” as it is dedicated to God. Therefore, if a person eats it who claims to be a follower of God, then that person better be “sin free” to eat it. In that case, it meant to be ceremonially clean for the time being.

6. Verse 5: David replied, "Indeed women have been kept from us, as usual whenever I set out. The men's things are holy even on missions that are not holy. How much more so today!"⁶ So the priest gave him the consecrated bread, since there was no bread there except the bread of the Presence that had been removed from before the LORD and replaced by hot bread on the day it was taken away.
- a) Here we read of the actual giving of the ceremonial bread to David and his men.
 - b) One has to remember that the whole period of David the fugitive is a test by God.
 - i) God had tremendous future plans for David as a king, and therefore, this testing ground was designed to prepare David for his role later in life.
 - ii) God works that way in our lives as well. What God puts us through today is often to prepare us for what He has planned for us tomorrow.
 - iii) Although David does lie and pay the price for that lie, David does get "partial credit" in that He was still obedient to God during this time and obeyed these ceremonial laws.
 - c) Notice David said, "(the) men's things are holy even on missions that are not holy."
 - i) The word "holy" means "separate". Suppose I was to take a dinner plate and say, "this plate is only to be used by my friend Joe, no exceptions". That is the idea behind "holy". It is to take things or lives and make them for God's use only.
 - ii) David's point is that his life is dedicated to serving God in all he does. In that sense, David is "holy". David sees his whole life in whatever he does as serving God. Does that excuse David lying? No. But there is truth in that if we have committed our lives to serving God, all we do is "holy". That doesn't just apply to going to church, but our day-to-day lives as well. That is what David meant here.
7. Verse 7: Now one of Saul's servants was there that day, detained before the LORD; he was Doeg the Edomite, Saul's head shepherd.
- a) Verse 7 is a "parenthesis" in the story. The verse mentions this character named "Doeg the Edomite". We are not going to read of Doeg again until Chapter 22.
 - i) Doeg will betray David and tells King Saul that David was here.
 - ii) Doeg is nicknamed the "Judas of the Old Testament" for his betrayal.
 - iii) There is even a Psalm written by David "dedicated" to what Doeg did. We'll discuss that further when we get to Chapter 22.
 - b) Doeg is mentioned here so that when Doeg betrays David, you the reader know that Doeg was there when David got the bread.
8. Verse 8: David asked Ahimelech, "Don't you have a spear or a sword here? I haven't brought my sword or any other weapon, because the king's business was urgent."
- a) Now we get back to David lying. He is saying in effect, "Oh yeah, since I'm here, do you happen to have any weapons? I was in such a hurry, I forgot to pack my sword!"
 - i) Imagine going to your church and asking your pastor or priest, "Oh, do you happen to have any weapons lying around?" ☺ Personally, I would sarcastically say, "Yeah, my semi-automatic is on the table. You're welcome to it." ☺
 - ii) Actually, the only "weapons" a priest should have would be those used to kill the animals for sacrifices.
9. Verse 9: The priest replied, "The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you killed in the Valley of Elah, is here; it is wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod. If you want it, take it; there is no sword here but that one." David said, "There is none like it; give it to me."
- a) The sword of Goliath was kept as a "souvenir" and was kept with the High Priest.

- b) There is “interesting symbolism” that Goliath’s sword was here and David took it.
 - i) Personally, I don’t have a problem with the sword being kept as a souvenir as long as it wasn’t worshipped as an idol. That sword is a reminder of how God worked through David’s faith in God to redeem Israel from the Philistines.
 - ii) Think about how David beat Goliath, David was trusting in God and Goliath was trusting in his strength and his weapons.
 - iii) David was lying to stay alive. Now David was “trusting” in the sword of Goliath as opposed to trusting in God. It is an example of how David is sinking a step lower in his faith toward God at this moment.
 - iv) This is actually an important lesson for Christians: We don’t “fall from God” all at once. Just as we grow in faith in steps, we also grow in fear (lack of faith) in steps. This is the beginning of David’s decline in faith in God for the moment. It doesn’t mean David is going to hell or will lose his throne. This is about David going through a series of lessons to teach him to trust God more.
 - a) When we fail, God does not immediately send an angel down and say, “Don’t do that”. Instead, God usually lets us sink to a “rock bottom” point where we realize our mistakes, confess them and turn back to God. David is starting down that downward path right now.
 - v) Notice David said about the sword, “There is none like it. Give it to me”.
 - a) David is praising the sword that David defeated by faith! It is a subtle reminder that David now trusts in things other than God.
10. Verse 10: That day David fled from Saul and went to Achish king of Gath. ¹¹ But the servants of Achish said to him, "Isn't this David, the king of the land? Isn't he the one they sing about in their dances: "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands!?"
- a) Here we read of David running to Achish king of Gath.
 - i) Gath is one of the five cities in Israel that were controlled by the Philistines.
 - ii) Gath was also the home city of Goliath.
 - b) You have to see the humor in this. Here is David, with the sword of Goliath in hand, running to the hometown of Goliath. It wasn’t the smartest thing David did. ☺
 - i) David was thinking, “I need to run somewhere to where Saul won’t attack me. I know, I’ll go to the Philistine territory as Saul won’t attack me there”.
 - ii) When we start to live in fear, we make bad decisions. This is an example.
 - c) David went to Gath. We learn from Psalm 56 (introduction) that David was captured by the Philistines and brought to the King of Gath. David wrote Psalm 56.
 - i) You have to imagine how scared David was at this point.
 - ii) I personally suspect that when the Philistines captured David, he wrote Psalm 56 while he was waiting in prison to see the king for judgment. Psalm 56 describes David crying out to God in his fear.
 - iii) The point is when David was down, he turned to God. Despite his mistakes and his lies, he understood that his only hope was in God and turned to him for help.
 - d) Verse 11 is the actual trial in front of Achish. Notice King Achish was familiar with the hit tune, “Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands!” ☺
 - i) We don’t know if David’s men were captured as well. The text only reads of David himself in front of this king. Imagine David, probably captured with Goliath’s sword in hand, now sitting in judgment before the King of Gath!
 - e) There is also another Psalm that was penned at this point in time: Psalm 34:
 - i) The title reads: A psalm of David when he pretended madness before Abimelech, who drove him away, and he departed.”
 - a) This Psalm also teaches of David’s trust in God at the low point in his life.

11. Verse 12: David took these words to heart and was very much afraid of Achish king of Gath.
¹³ So he pretended to be insane in their presence; and while he was in their hands he acted like a madman, making marks on the doors of the gate and letting saliva run down his beard.
- a) Here was David, captured by the Philistines in Gath, and taken into the presence of the king. David pretended to be insane. David scratched on the door and drooled.
 - b) Commentators are mixed on this one. I'll try to present both views here:
 - i) When you read Psalm 56, (and I encourage you to do ☺), you get the impression that this is where David hit rock bottom. He realized that he wouldn't be in this mess if he didn't lie to the high priest and he sinned. Psalm 56 speaks of David making his confession to God. Chapter 21 never mentions God. David does mention his trust in God in Chapter 22. Many see this point as the turning point.
 - a) Given, that, the argument is David pretending to be insane and the king of Gath releasing David soon afterwards was "God helping David to escape". Some argue that David's idea here was God inspired.
 - ii) The negative argument is that David was in fear. Fear is the opposite of faith. Verse 12 states that David was afraid. Notice David did not say, "Excuse me oh king, the God of Israel, who helped me defeat Goliath, told me I would be king of Israel one day, and I'm trusting in that promise".
 - a) David had sunk to even a lower point. The brave man who stood up to Goliath was now so afraid he pretended to be insane.
 - c) Whether or not David's actions were positive or negative, the results are that God did save him from this king and David could go back and be on the run again.
 - i) What's the lesson for us? Even when we turn our back on God, God does not turn his back on us. If we have committed our lives to serving God, and we are in a time of fear where we are not trusting in God and trying to live by our wits, God is still there saying, "I'm going to help you because I made unconditional promises to you. I promised David he would be a king and I'm not going to let David mess it up no matter how hard he tries!" ☺
 - ii) God is saying the same to us. When we "walk away from God", God still calls out to us in His unconditional love. You may suffer the consequences of turning away from God, but if you have committed your life to serving God, then the "bad days" or "bad weeks" or "bad years" are only a confession away from turning your life around again. That does not mean, "Well, I can sin now and confess it later". There are consequences for our negative actions.
12. Verse 14: Achish said to his servants, "Look at the man! He is insane! Why bring him to me? ¹⁵ Am I so short of madmen that you have to bring this fellow here to carry on like this in front of me? Must this man come into my house?"
- a) First of all, notice what Achish does not say:
 - i) "This is the guy who killed lots of Philistines. Go execute him!"
 - ii) "This guy is insane. Go throw him in the loony bin dungeon." ☺
 - b) What is a "miracle" is that Achish decides to let David go! He has pity on him for being insane, or simply doesn't care, and lets him go. That miracle is God "working behind the scenes" to allow David to escape.
 - c) Again, it is great to read this verse in context of Psalm 56. David pours out his heart and his fears to God and God makes a way for David to escape.
 - d) Personally, I also find this to be the funniest verse in the chapter. The king says that he is not "short of madmen". To paraphrase the king, he is saying, "Look, I have enough loony bins on the government payroll. Why bring in another one?" ☺

13. Chapter 22, Verse 1: David left Gath and escaped to the cave of Adullam. When his brothers and his father's household heard about it, they went down to him there. ² All those who were in distress or in debt or discontented gathered around him, and he became their leader. About four hundred men were with him.
- a) Now we read of David leaving Gath to go live in a cave. This cave is not that far from David's hometown of Bethlehem. Word gets out to the local residents that David is living in this cave. I suspect that when David was a young boy-shepherd, he knew of this cave and that is why David picked it as a hideout.
 - b) The next sentence of Verse 1 states that David's brothers and his father's household (maybe his father was dead) went to live in the cave with David.
 - i) What this implies is that Saul had threatened David's family. Knowing Saul, he would probably threaten to hold David's family ransom until David turned himself in. Therefore, the family hid in the cave with David.
 - ii) That sentence is interesting to think about from the perspective of say, one of David's brothers. They didn't do anything wrong. They were probably loyal to the king. But because of David's actions, they too had to be fugitives. Grant it, when David eventually became king, they would get more perks, ☺ but in the meantime, they had to suffer for someone else's deeds.
 - iii) This is another example of having to trust God. Sometimes we too can get into trouble for no fault of our own. We have to trust that God does have some sort of plan for our life and God is a God-of-justice.
 - c) Verse 2 is a sermon all unto itself. To summarize, 400 men gathered to David. The text says that these were men who were either in debt, distress or discontented.
 - i) There have been lots of wonderful sermons preached how all who follow Jesus Christ are in debt (to sin), distress (over battling this world) and discontented (as we are not satisfied with what the world has to offer). Therefore we follow Jesus.
 - ii) On a related note, if I were to start a church, there is nothing I would want more than 400 men who were in debt, distress and discontented. I would rather have 400 "rebels" on fire for Jesus than 400 seminary graduates who trusted in their education more than God.
 - iii) This reminds me of a classic joke by William Buckley. He said, He would rather be governed by the first 2,000 names in the Boston phone book than the entire Harvard University faculty. His point was not to knock higher education, but the danger of those relying upon their education over their trust in God.
 - iv) OK, drifted off topic. Sorry about that. ☺
14. Verse 3: From there David went to Mizpah in Moab and said to the king of Moab, "Would you let my father and mother come and stay with you until I learn what God will do for me?" ⁴ So he left them with the king of Moab, and they stayed with him as long as David was in the stronghold.
- a) David now had a new problem: What to do with his relatives. (Many of us can relate to that problem! ☺) Here were his brothers and his father's household on the run with David. David needed a "safe harbor" for them.
 - i) David turned to the king of Moab. In the Book of Ruth, we learn that David's great grandmother was not Jewish, but from the neighboring country of the Moabites. (Ruth 4:17, 4:22).
 - ii) Therefore David figured "kin is kin" and figured the Moabites would help David.
 - iii) The King of Moab agreed to let the family live there, and so they stayed until Saul died and David became the King of Israel.

- b) Verse 3 has a great clause. It says, “until I learn what God will do for me”.
 - i) I’m convinced by Psalm 56 that when David “pleaded insanity” in front of the King of Gath, that was David’s turning point. Here in Verse 3, we read of David stating that he is trusting in God again.
 - ii) Remember that David is saying to the “pagan” King of the Moabites that he wants his extended family to stay with them until he gets further instructions from God! The Moabite king doesn’t believe in the God of Israel.
 - a) It is a subtle reminder of how God is working in the background and how David is trusting in God again.
15. Verse 5: But the prophet Gad said to David, "Do not stay in the stronghold. Go into the land of Judah." So David left and went to the forest of Hereth.
- a) I just talked a moment ago how David is not moving until he “learns what God will do for me”. The answer comes in Verse 5 where this prophet Gad shows up.
 - i) I guess that is why Gad is a prophet. He knew where to find David. ☺
 - b) David trusted in the message, took it as an answer to prayer and moved on.
 - i) This also gives an example of how God can answer prayer. Sometimes God uses others to bring answers to prayer to us.
 - ii) It took faith to respond to Gad’s request. The “stronghold” was a nice safe cave. The forest of Hereth was “out in the open” where Saul could find him.
16. Verse 6: Now Saul heard that David and his men had been discovered. And Saul, spear in hand, was seated under the tamarisk tree on the hill at Gibeah, with all his officials standing around him.
- a) It’s hard to hid 400 men lurking around, especially when there are “wanted dead or alive” posters everywhere. ☺ Saul got word of David’s location.
17. Verse 7: Saul said to them, "Listen, men of Benjamin! Will the son of Jesse give all of you fields and vineyards? Will he make all of you commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds? ⁸ Is that why you have all conspired against me? No one tells me when my son makes a covenant with the son of Jesse. None of you is concerned about me or tells me that my son has incited my servant to lie in wait for me, as he does today."
- a) Saul is currently in the territory of Benjamin, which is one of the 12 tribes of Israel.
 - b) For those who don’t know, imagine if the United States only had 12 states. The founder of each state was one of 12 brothers. Therefore, each state is a territory as well as a tribe of and for the descendants of that tribe. Judah and Benjamin are two examples named in this chapter. David is from the tribe and territory of Judah. Saul, who is king of all of Israel was a Benjamite and is from the territory of Benjamin.
 - c) Saul is trying to gather information about David’s whereabouts.
 - i) First of all, he is trying to bribe his servants. He is saying in effect, “Look at all the good stuff I the king provide for you. Can David do any of that stuff?”
 - ii) Notice all that Saul calls David, “The Son of Jessie”.
 - a) He doesn’t call him the son in law of the king or the man who killed Goliath. The title “Son of Jessie” is meant to be “a son of a nobody”.
 - iii) Next, you can almost sense Saul “whining” and trying to have a pity party for himself. He says, “None of you is concerned about me!”
 - iv) Finally, Saul tells a lie. He says in effect that his own son Jonathan is encouraging David to kill his father.
 - v) We read of Saul sinking lower and lower with each statement. It shows his fear and the fact he’ll lie and say anything to get his way.

- d) Let's compare David's downfall in Chapter 21 with Saul's little speech in Chapter 22:
 - i) In both cases, David and Saul lied. David had to go on the run and innocent people got hurt by what David did.
 - ii) So what makes David any better than Saul?
 - a) The difference is David is dedicated to serving God. Saul is dedicated to serving himself. David makes mistakes, and then turns to God. Saul makes mistakes, and then turns to his own wits to correct them, or tries to motive a pity party for himself and finally lie to get sympathy.
 - b) Saul is a model of "the flesh", which is our old human nature. That nature will do anything and everything to get themselves and others away from God's will. Like Saul, that includes lying, that includes having a pity party, and that includes looking for someone who will betray David.
18. Verse 9: But Doeg the Edomite, who was standing with Saul's officials, said, "I saw the son of Jesse come to Ahimelech son of Ahitub at Nob. ¹⁰ Ahimelech inquired of the LORD for him; he also gave him provisions and the sword of Goliath the Philistine."
- a) Doeg the Edomite was mentioned back in Verse 7 of the previous chapter.
 - i) Remember I called him the "Judas of the Old Testament"?
 - ii) Here is Doeg willing to take a stand and say, "Yeah, I saw David talking to the high priest. That high priest prayed for David and gave him Goliath's sword. Now about my reward money" ☺
 - b) Doeg said, "Ahimelech inquired of the LORD for him".
 - i) If you read Chapter 7 carefully, it never states the High Priest prayed on David's behalf for him. When Ahimelech gets accused of these accusations, he stated that he not deny any of these charges. Therefore, it is probably true.
 - ii) You get the impression Doeg hated the high priest more than David. He didn't focus on David's escape. Instead, he told of the High Priest's "crimes". In a few verses we are going to read of Doeg killing the High Priests and lots of others. For whatever reason, Doeg had a hatred for these men.
 - iii) Remember Doeg was an "Edomite". These were not Jews, but a nearby tribe and the descendants of Esau. The Herod family we read of in the New Testament were also Edomites. I wonder if "feudal hatred" that caused Doeg to kill the priests.
 - c) This leads us to another Psalm David wrote. That is Psalm 52.
 - i) The introduction to that Psalm reads, "To the chief musician. A contemplation of David when Doeg the Edomite went and told Saul, and said to him, "David has gone to the house of Ahimelech."
 - ii) David found out about this event and wrote this Psalm based on what transpired.
 - a) The Psalm has lines like "You love evil rather than good, falsehood rather than speaking the truth". (Psalm 52, Verse 3, NIV)
 - b) The last part of the Psalm speaks of David's trust in God and not the rewards of life. It is as David is contrasting his own desires verses that of Doeg the Edomite.
 - iii) In Chapter 21, we learned that Doeg was "Saul's head shepherd".
 - a) On the king's payroll staff, head shepherd is not high on the list. ☺
 - b) Maybe Doeg had a jealousy problem with the high priests taking a lot of his sheep to sacrifice to a God he didn't believe in.
 - c) Doeg apparently knew how to manipulate Saul's anger and use it against those he was really mad at, which were the High Priests.

- d) In the world, we do have “our share” of Doeg the Edomites living today.
 - i) Most nonbelievers are neutral on religion and just want to ignore God. There is a small percentage that are violently opposed to any worship of God and do what they can to thwart it.
19. Verse 11: Then the king sent for the priest Ahimelech son of Ahitub and his father's whole family, who were the priests at Nob, and they all came to the king. ¹² Saul said, "Listen now, son of Ahitub." "Yes, my lord," he answered. ¹³ Saul said to him, "Why have you conspired against me, you and the son of Jesse, giving him bread and a sword and inquiring of God for him, so that he has rebelled against me and lies in wait for me, as he does today?"
- a) So here we have the inquiry of Saul in front of the High Priest and his family. The verses repeat the accusation of Doeg the Edomite directly to the High Priest and his family.
 - b) The verse mentions that “Ahimelech (is the) son of Ahitub”. Back in Chapter 14, we learn that Ahitub was the grandson of Eli the Priest. Remember that Eli’s sons were corrupt and a prediction was made that one day their whole family would no longer be priests.
20. Verse 14: Ahimelech answered the king, "Who of all your servants is as loyal as David, the king's son-in-law, captain of your bodyguard and highly respected in your household? ¹⁵ Was that day the first time I inquired of God for him? Of course not! Let not the king accuse your servant or any of his father's family, for your servant knows nothing at all about this whole affair."
- a) Ahimelech’s first words were to praise David as the king’s son in law.
 - i) Obviously, Ahimelech didn’t know of Saul’s jealousy, or his rage.
 - ii) Ahimelech didn’t deny any of the charges, just that his motivation was not to rebel against Saul but to help him.
 - iii) Remember that David lied to Ahimelech and told him that he was on a secret mission for Saul. Ahimelech assumed Saul knew this and didn’t bring it up.
 - iv) Because Ahimelech thought it was a “secret” mission, and I suspect out of loyalty to both David and Saul, he didn’t mention that part.
21. Verse 16: But the king said, "You will surely die, Ahimelech, you and your father's whole family."
- a) I suspect Saul decided to kill Ahimelech the second he heard him praise David. The fact that Ahimelech denied the charges of treason became irrelevant. In Saul’s mind, Ahimelech praised David and that made him guilty of treason.
 - b) Going back to my word-picture of Saul as “a type of the flesh” remember that Jesus said, “If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first.” (John 15:18 NIV). When we stand in support of Jesus, He promises that will cause hatred.
 - i) Why does that happen? Guilt!. People don’t want to feel guilty over what they do, so they want to kill the messenger. Jesus said, “the world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify that what it does is evil.” (John 7:7 NIV)
22. Verse 17: Then the king ordered the guards at his side: "Turn and kill the priests of the LORD, because they too have sided with David. They knew he was fleeing, yet they did not tell me." But the king's officials were not willing to raise a hand to strike the priests of the LORD.
- a) The military officials around Saul refused to kill the priests.
 - i) In the military, you are trained to “act, and not think”. These soldiers risked their own life because they would not commit murder.
 - ii) This verse also shows the weakness of Saul as a leader when his own soldiers refuse to obey an order. It shows their lack of respect for Saul.
 - b) Remember that Samuel told Saul that he would lose his kingship because he refused to kill the enemies of Israel (The Amalekites). Further, Saul himself had fear facing the Philistines. Yet Saul is willing to give the order to kill innocent priests.
 - i) Going back to page 1, my title for this section of Scripture was “don’t let this happen to you”. That title didn’t just refer to David, but also to Saul.

- ii) Saul is an example of turning one's heart away from God. Saul lived in fear and spiraled downward and downward with each key moment of his life.
 - iii) Now we will read of Saul ordering mass murder on innocent people because he has such a fear of losing power he was willing to kill to keep his throne.
 - iv) Saul's power as a king became his "idolatry". He worshipped that kingship more than God. He sunk to a point where it consumed his life.
 - v) The lesson to us is to watch for anything and everything that commands our attention more than God. A simple test is, "If God asks you to give up (fill in the blank), are you willing to do so for Him?" It doesn't mean you have to give up your hobbies and interest, it is about priorities in life and what is important.
23. Verse 18: The king then ordered Doeg, "You turn and strike down the priests." So Doeg the Edomite turned and struck them down. That day he killed eighty-five men who wore the linen ephod. ¹⁹ He also put to the sword Nob, the town of the priests, with its men and women, its children and infants, and its cattle, donkeys and sheep.
- a) Here is the moment where Doeg executed 85 priests, the townsfolk in Nob, including their wives, children, and animals. I've always wondered how Doeg did this by himself, of if he had help. I'll have to ask God that question one day. ☺
 - b) First thought: Is this "fair" of God to allow this to happen?
 - i) This ties to the question of, "Why does God allow the innocent to suffer?"
 - ii) The initial answer is God allows free will and he allows sin to exist. Let's suppose that every time someone wanted to commit murder, an angel stepped in. Let's suppose that every time someone wants to say, tell a lie, an angel steps in and covers our mouth. We would then be complaining how God never gives us a chance to prove ourselves on our own. In that sense, "mankind is on trial" before God. God wants to show the world just how much we need him and the evil that exists when God allows free will to happen." (Illustration source: Greg Koukl)
 - c) One also has to remember that God made the prediction that the family of the priests would be "cut off". That prediction is literally coming true here, and the one survivor has his death with David's son Solomon on the throne.
 - i) I also take comfort in the fact there is a God and that God will judge people perfectly. Some people are atheists because they think life is unfair because the innocent suffer. If there was no God and there was no judgment day, then, yes, it would be unfair. I only take comfort in the fact that everyone lives forever, some in hell and some in heaven, and we are judged fairly. The innocent priests and their children are in heaven today. Their lives are a living witness of the sin that exists in the world and the consequences thereof.
 - ii) It is "unfair" that many children had to die and they never experienced life as we know it. One has to take comfort that heaven is a much better place than anything here on earth and they are in a much better place.
 - d) This is the last we read of Doeg the Edomite.
 - i) There is no mention of David avenging him. That is another reason we have to take comfort in the "God of Justice". I am sure Doeg is in hell right now.
 - e) What about Saul? Is Saul burning in hell for this? I don't know and I debated that issue many lessons ago. We'll have to find out one day. I do also know he is accountable

24. Verse 20: But Abiathar, a son of Ahimelech son of Ahitub, escaped and fled to join David.
- a) This is the one family member who escaped. He became the High Priest until 1st Kings Chapter 2, when Solomon had him removed in 1st Kings 2:27. That officially ended the reign of the sons of Eli and fulfilled God's prediction about his children.
 - b) In 2nd Samuel, when David was king, we will read of the loyalty of Abithar to David.
 - i) You can't blame Abithar for being loyal to David, after what Saul did!
25. Verse 21: He told David that Saul had killed the priests of the LORD. ²² Then David said to Abiathar: "That day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, I knew he would be sure to tell Saul. I am responsible for the death of your father's whole family. ²³ Stay with me; don't be afraid; the man who is seeking your life is seeking mine also. You will be safe with me."
- a) Abithar escaped and told David what happened. This is the time when Psalm 52 was penned, which speaks of this event. David tells Abithar that he will give him refuge.
 - b) The key phrase in these last two verses is David saying, "I am responsible for the death of your father's whole family".
 - i) David didn't blame Saul. David didn't blame Doeg the Edomite.
 - ii) Compare that attitude to Saul's pity-party a few verses back. That is a wonderful example of David's leadership. He knew that his lies lead to this event.
 - iii) At the beginning of Chapter 21, David could have said, "Look, Saul wants to kill me because he thinks I want to kill him and take over his throne. It's not true, but I'm on the run. Will you help me or not?" The High Priest could have then told David to buzz off, ☺ and the priests would probably still be alive.
 - a) In that sense, it was David who was responsible.
 - b) Remember David was being trained as a king. Kings have lots of power. Therefore the words David said would affect the lives of thousands. David had to learn that here.
26. Back to my introduction: "Don't let this happen to you".
- a) The great lessons to learn in 1st Samuel are about contrasting the lives of David and Saul.
 - b) In these two chapters, they both sink to low points.
 - c) The difference is that David realized his mistakes late in Chapter 21 and changes. We discussed three Psalms (Psalm 34, 52 and 56) written by David during this time era that showed he had a heart for God despite his errors.
 - d) Saul is a man who trusted in his wits. He was given power by God and cherished the power itself and not God. That led to his downfall.
 - i) The lesson to us is that if we do dedicate our lives to God and become "Holy", no matter how low we sink, God is always willing to help pull us out of the mess that we got ourselves into.
 - ii) What we can learn from Saul is to check for aspects of our lives that we cherish more than God. Like Saul it can consume us and bring us to great lows.
27. Let's pray: Heavenly Father, we thank you for the lessons about David and Saul. Like both of these men, we focus on our fears and get our minds and hearts off of you. Help us to realize that You want the best for us and You are guiding our lives. Help us to see the areas of our lives that we have not turned over to you. Help us to make every aspect of our lives "holy" to you. We can't do this through our own strength, but only by Your power working within us. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.