



“REASONS TO REJOICE”

*“Your Words were found, and I ate them,
and Your Word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart.” Jeremiah 15:16*

I and II SAMUEL Lesson 11

We ended our lesson last week with the dramatic parting scene between Jonathan and David. Jonathan finally realizes how much his father actually despises his best friend. David now becomes a fugitive as he flees from Saul, taking refuge for months in the land of the Philistines, and then for months in the barren wilderness of southern Judah. As we read the next few chapters, we see David taking a nose-dive when it comes to moral ethics and responsibility. Our man of faith spends a time faltering in his faith. Although he makes mistakes, David learns a great deal about waiting on God from his experiences. God used this time dramatically in his life to mold and shape him even more into the man who was “after His heart.” Thank God that when we blow it, we can confess our sins to Him and receive forgiveness, just like David did.

First Day

- 1. Read I Samuel 21:1-15. List some of the important facts in this chapter. Are there any key words or phrases? What is the main point or thought of this chapter?*

- 2. What is your first impression of this chapter? Write your thoughts.*

David fled to the priestly city of Nob, which belonged to the tribe of Benjamin. The tabernacle, the table of consecrated bread, about ninety priests, the high priest, and his ephod were at Nob at this time. David always loved the house of God, so maybe he went there for one last visit before fleeing from the land. He meets Ahimelech, Eli's great-grandson, the high priest at the time.

3. *Why do you think David lied to Ahimelech?*
4. *What was the priest's response?*
5. *Why do you think David wanted a sword?*
6. *Do you think it was right or wrong for David to lie? Explain your answer. (If you think David was wrong, what could he have done?)*

The only bread that was available was the holy, or consecrated, bread. This bread was also called "The bread of the Presence" (Exodus 25:30, Leviticus 24:5-9), or "show bread." It consisted of twelve loaves that were placed weekly in the Holy Place in the tabernacle. This was considered a thank offering for the provision of daily bread. "Presence" refers to God's presence as the ultimate provider and Lord over all. When the loaves were replaced each week, they were to be eaten only by priests (Leviticus 24:5-9). Ahimelech had to go against the law to give this bread to David, but he put David's need ahead of the religious ceremony. This upheld a higher law of love (Leviticus 19:18). Jesus used this incident as an example when telling the Pharisees that human need supersedes all ritual and ceremonial laws (Matthew 12:1-8, Luke 6:1-5).

To partake of this holy bread you also had to be ceremonially clean by abstaining from sex, according to the law in Exodus 19:15, Leviticus 15:16-18, and Deuteronomy 23:9-11.

David's plan almost worked, except for one small hitch. There was a man in Nob who had "been detained before the Lord." This most likely

meant that he was ceremonially unclean and was going through a purification period. Doeg, one of Saul's men, saw David. Oops!

7. *From Nob, where did David go? (vs 10) Did they recognize David?*

Gath was one of the five major Philistine cities. They seemed to accept him into their city at first, but soon became nervous.

8. *Why did David become fearful? What did he do to escape?*

9. *How did King Achish respond?*

For some reason David ran into the hands of the enemy. David stoops as low as pretending to be crazy to protect himself. The old saying, "O what a tangled web we weave, when first we practice to deceive," applies here very well. David's first deceitful act led to another. David knew that it was not the custom of the people to harm mentally unstable or crazy people, so he took advantage of that.

10. *David wrote two Psalms during this time. Psalm 56 was written when he was afraid, and Psalm 34 was written after he fled from Gath. After David sinned, his heart seems to change and he cries out to God from the depth of his soul. Choose one of these Psalms to read and write your thoughts. List some phrases that particularly minister to your heart.*

11. *Before we judge David too harshly, think about this: Have you ever changed your behavior to get yourself out of a "sticky" position? Have you ever tried to escape the consequences of your own sin? Have you ever pretended to be something you're not? Think about it ...*

That's it for today. I pray that we learn from David's example what can happen when we lean on our own understanding. Even though David was deceitful, God still intervened and caused the king to want to get rid of him. Although David seemed to "get away" with his sin, we'll see the consequences of his sin in our next chapter.

Memory Verse of the Week: *"The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles." Psalm 34:17*

Second Day

Memorize your verse. Are you crying out to the Lord?

1. *Read I Samuel 22:1-23. Briefly summarize the main thought of this chapter. What would you title it? Are any new characters introduced?*
2. *What kinds of men gathered with David to form his band of "merry men," so to speak? How big did this group get? (23:13)*
3. *How does this description relate to the kind of people who can come to Christ?*
4. *During this time, what was David seeking, according to verse 3?*
5. *Read Psalm 142, which David wrote during the time he was hiding in the cave. What do you think God was teaching him during this lonely time?*

Charles Swindoll said this about David: "Humanly speaking, he had little to live for. The glitter of fame and fortune had turned to dross. His life as Israel's hero had left him with nothing but a stone pillow and a heart full

of turmoil. Yet he held on to God through his despair and found refuge in Him as his only true hiding place. From David's example, we learn that being a person after God's own heart doesn't mean never experiencing the darkness of the cave. Rather, it means being able to trust that God's light is there and that He is the God of all hope!"

6. Have you been finding your refuge in God? Have you been experiencing the darkness of a cave? God's light is there! Make a run for it!

7. Who was David concerned about in verse 3? Why?

Although Moab was usually hostile towards Israel, David was allowed entry into Moab, probably because his great-grandmother, Ruth, was a Moabitess (Ruth 4:13,22). David's concern for his family during this dangerous time is very touching. The fact that he was thinking of the needs and safety of others was commendable.

8. Do you think of others during your times of crisis? What does Paul say about this in Philippians 2:4? (What changes do you need to make?)

The prophet Gad advised David to depart and flee to the wilderness of Judah. David obeys the counsel and goes to the forest of Hereth. The scene now changes and we get an interesting snapshot of Saul, in verse 6.

9. What is Saul whining about in verses 7 and 8?

Doeg, the man who saw David in Nob, now enters the stage. He tells Saul everything he had seen.

10. How does Saul respond? What conclusion did he jump to?

11. *How does Ahimelech respond in verses 14-15? How does he describe David?*

Saul was so unstable at the time that he seems to go crazy, demanding that his servants kill all the priests. They wouldn't do it, so Doeg steps in and does the job. He not only killed the priests, he utterly destroyed everything and everybody in the city. By doing this he was placing the city under the ban described in Deuteronomy 13:12-17. This ban was only supposed to be used for idolatry or rebellion against God. He also broke the law in Deuteronomy 19:15-21 concerning the number of witnesses needed to establish the matter. Again, Saul's pride causes him to react impulsively and act against God's law.

12. *Saul jumped to conclusions and condemned the priests of Nob. We often do the same. Do you believe the worst about someone when you hear something? Are you quick to judge and condemn? Read 1 Corinthians 13. What kind of love should we show towards others? List some significant phrases that relate to the subject at hand.*

13. *Contrast Saul's behavior here with his actions toward the Amalekites in chapter 15. What seems to motivate Saul?*

14. *How did power seem to affect Saul? How can a leader guard against this? (How does power affect you?)*

We'll end here for today. The description of David's new band of men is significant because it describes those of us who seek to find our refuge in Christ. We are all in debt to Him because of our sin. These people were

outcasts, but eventually produced many “mighty men” (2 Samuel 23:8) who became leaders under David’s command. I praise the Lord that He still calls sinners and outcasts to Himself, because that certainly describes me! That’s a “Reason to Rejoice!”

Third Day

Practice your memory verse.

1. Read I Samuel 22 again.

David seems to have emerged from the cave with a new heart. From Psalm 142, we see that David was hurting enough to admit his deep need before the Lord. In Psalm 57, David seemed to be honest enough to cry out to God for help. In Psalm 34, as we read David’s words, we can see that he was humble enough to learn from God. God taught David some important lessons, and David had a heart that was ready to learn.

David’s cave seemed to be his secret place where he experienced God’s protection, comfort, and guidance. David’s despair turned into praise as he poured his heart out before the Lord. Have you found your “secret place” in Him?

2. Why is God our safest place of refuge?

3. Moving back to our text, what was David’s reaction when he heard about what happened in Nob?

4. Do you think David was responsible for the destruction of Nob? Why or why not? How does Galatians 6:7-9 relate here?

5. What does David promise Abiathar in verse 23?

We'll see you tomorrow. Make sure you seek the Lord's guidance before making any decision. Don't move ahead until you do!

Fourth Day

Practice your memory verse. Learn it in your heart, not just your head!

In yesterday's lesson, we find David protecting God's people, even while he is fleeing from Saul! In our section today, David continues to run from him, ending up in En Gedi. (David must be getting very tired, don't you think?)

- 1. Begin by reading I Samuel 23:13-29. By how much had David's army increased?*
- 2. What is the main point of this section?*
- 3. How did God encourage David when he needed it?*
- 4. What are some ways that we can encourage or strengthen one another in the Lord?*
- 5. Maybe the Lord wants to use **YOU** to be an encourager to someone today. Pray and ask the Lord to show you who that somebody is.*
- 6. What was Jonathan's attitude about David being king instead of him? Do you think you would be able to have that same attitude?*

7. *How did the Ziphites help Saul?*
8. *How did God save David's life this time? (What perfect timing He has, don't you think?)*

David and his men find themselves hiding in the strongholds in En Gedi. According to Webster, a "stronghold" is a strong, fortified place with strong defenses. According to Unger's Bible Dictionary, "En Gedi was a town situated about 30 miles S. E. from Jerusalem, on the edge of the wilderness and on the west shore of the Dead Sea. It is full of rocks, caves, and caverns, some with wells suitable for watering sheep. En Gedi means "the fountain of the wild goat," and the source of that fountain is on the mountain side about six hundred feet above the sea. The wilderness of En Gedi (I Samuel 24:1) is doubtless the wild region west of the Dead Sea, which must be traveled to reach its shores."

On a personal note, the hills of En Gedi are one of my favorite places to visit in Israel. They are beautiful! Occasionally you can see some of the wild goats roaming the hills. There are some beautiful waterfalls that are easy to get to. It was so awesome to picture David and his men hiding in the caves while running from Saul. It made these Scriptures so incredibly real!

9. *Write out Nahum 1:7. How is the Lord our "stronghold"?*
10. *Read Psalm 54, which David wrote after the Ziphites told Saul that David was hiding there. How do you think David felt? What encouragement can you take from this Psalm?*

David was an incredible songwriter, wasn't he? I pray that we would learn how to pour out our hearts openly and honestly before the Lord. Even when he was running from his enemies, he put his hope in the Lord, the only one who could deliver him. Ladies, let's place our hope in Jesus, our Deliverer!

Fifth Day

Write your verse from memory.

1. *Read I Samuel 24:1-22. Briefly summarize this chapter. What is one application you already see for yourself?*

Saul continues to pursue David in the Wilderness of En Gedi. Unknowingly, Saul went into a cave that David and his men were already in. While he was sleeping, David cut off a piece of Saul's robe. He could have easily taken that opportunity to kill Saul and end this running race, but he didn't.

2. *Why didn't David kill Saul? Why was he convicted of cutting off a piece of his robe?*

3. *What did David promise in verse 12?*

4. *Describe Saul's response? What did he ask David for?*

5. *What do you learn about David in this chapter?*

6. *What do you think God was teaching David during this hard time?*

I picture Saul's men's standing guard outside of the cave so he could have some privacy while he slept. Little did they know David was inside, watching his every move. After he cut off part of Saul's garment, he regretted what he had done. J. Vernon McGee comments, "Imagine what would happen when Saul awakened, stood up, and found out he was wearing a mini-skirt!" No wonder David's heart troubled him.

David knew that it was wrong to touch God's anointed. He believed he was still supposed to be in submission to Saul because he was the king. How humbling this must have been, to respect the authority of someone who was hateful. David knew revenge was not the Lord's way. He knew he should let God handle his enemies. Romans 12:19 tells us vengeance is the Lord's, not ours.

7. *How do you handle your enemies? Are you willing to commit them to the Lord and allow Him to deal with them?*

8. *Was David taking any risks by handling the situation like he did?*

9. *What do you think it means to be "God's anointed"? How are we supposed to treat them? How is it possible to be guilty of "stretching out our hand against the Lord's anointed" in today's world?*

10. *What do we know about David's view of God in verses 12 and 15?*

This concludes our study for today. Next week we are going to meet a very special lady named Abigail, who God uses to save David's life again. God is obviously protecting His man. God is protecting you, too. Don't ever forget that! See you next week!