

An Invitation to Surrender
David on the Run
Invitation to Leadership – Part 12
1 Samuel 21:1–23:29

Introduction

- Is God a Protector of His people?
 - Psalm 34 reflections - Today we are going to study about David on the run from King Saul and how scary it was and how God protected him in each scenario. *David recorded his thoughts and reflections about this period in the Psalms.* Specifically Psalm 34 & 56. In short Psalm 34 says, *"Let us praise God at all times...I sought the Lord, and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears...This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him and saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them...Blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!...those who seek the LORD lack no good thing...the eyes of the LORD are toward the righteous and his ears toward their cry. The face of the LORD is against those who do evil...When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears and delivers them out of all their troubles. The LORD is near the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all..."*
 - Is this true? – *do you believe this? Then what about all the bad things that have happened in your life? Doesn't this say that God will protect us from all of that pain and suffering? No, it doesn't. It says that God DELIVERS us from evil and is PRESENT with us in the suffering.* It says that God is against the bad guys and for His children. But it doesn't say that He stops all the pain or blocks all the abuse. It says that when everything is said and done, you will be here standing if you trust in the Lord and allow Him to defend you. It says that in retrospect you will see His hand of grace and protection when you may not have felt in the moment. It says that He will avenge His people. It says that He lifts us up when we are cast down and won't leave us down.
 - Insights from Psalm 56 – a balancing text to this that helps us understand *more about God's perspective on suffering is Psalm 56* written during this same time of David's life but more focused on the struggle. It says in part: *'Be gracious to me, O God, for man tramples on me; all day long an attacker oppresses me; my enemies trample on me all day long, for many attack me proudly. When I am afraid I put my trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can flesh do to me?...You have kept count of my tossings/wanderings; put my tears in your bottle. Are they not in your book?...This I know, that God is for me..."*
 - Stuff still happens but... - notice that *David still got trampled, oppressed, and attacked. He still was confused and wandered for help. He still cried. But, in the midst of it he knew that God would reconcile it and make it right. In the midst of it he put his trust in God and refused to believe that*

the current pain he was experiencing was the final word. He knew that when it was all done, God would win out and be glorified. If God has our eternal life protected in His hands then what can this temporary world really do to us? If God has our hearts and minds secure in His heart then what can a human being do to us?

- Make no mistake – But I do want to be clear on one key element: **This is how God treats His people, His kids, not just anybody.** When we trust in God and draw close to God, situations go differently. **When we are separated from Him, rebel against Him, shut Him out, the scenarios are different.** God still loves and covers His rebellious KIDS, but obedient kids have a different experience.

God PROTECTS His surrendered people

- Last Week – Pastor Heather
 - David got married to Saul's Daughter **Michal**
 - Saul's firstborn **Jonathan** became David's best friend
 - David was **successful** in everything he did
 - King Saul grew **jealous** of David and it turned into an obsession
 - **"Jealousy isn't about the other person, it's actually doubting God's goodness and provision for you."**
 - Saul launches a **murder plot** that Michal and Jonathan help David escape from.
 - And now...
- Today's Context – **David is on the Run.** He's being hunted by a mad king.

Lesson

- Holy Bread, Batman!
 - David gets holy bread from the priest
 - 1 Samuel 21:1–6 – *"Then David came to Nob,¹ to Ahimelech the priest.² And Ahimelech came to meet David, trembling, and said to him, 'Why are you alone, and no one with you?' ² And David said to Ahimelech the priest, 'The king has charged me with a matter and said to me, 'Let no one know anything of the matter about which I send you, and with which I have charged you.' I have made an appointment with the young men for such and such a place. ³ Now then, what do you have on hand? Give me five³ loaves of*

¹ "The modern site of Nob is probably el-'Isāwīyeh [MR173–134], just north of Jerusalem and south of Gibeah, Saul's capital. This apparently became "the priestly city" (22:19) after the death of Eli and his sons and the presumed destruction of Shiloh...A central temple or a national shrine was apparently situated in Nob under Saul. Thus, it is possible that Ahimelech was then the chief priest there; see 21:2. In any case Nob was certainly the major religious center, the city of the priests in Saul's kingdom where the ark of God could have been kept at least for a while; see 14:18." NICOT

² "Ahimelech appears for the first time. He was the son of Ahitub (1 Sam. 22:9; etc.), the brother of Ahijah, Saul's chaplain, and the great-grandson of Eli, the priest of Shiloh (see 14:2). He is the father of Abiathar (22:20; 23:6; 30:7). Some scholars think that Ahimelech could be the same person as Ahijah, the son of Ahitub (14:3), since melech may be a divine element like yah. However, it seems more likely that Ahijah and Ahimelech were brothers; see on 14:3 (cf. 1 Chr. 18:16). As for the phrase "In the days of Abiathar the high priest" (Mark 2:26), though Abiathar was not yet "the high priest" at that time, a historian could use this title proleptically. See 1 Sam. 17:52 on "prolepsis." NICOT

³ "The number five is one unit based on the number of fingers in one hand. Klein, following Stoebe, considers it to be a round number since it is "too much for one man and too little for a whole combat team." However, five would be enough for David and his two or three servants." NICOT

bread, or whatever is here.”⁴ ⁴ And the priest answered David, “I have no common bread on hand, but there is holy bread—if the young men have kept themselves from women.”⁵ ⁵ And David answered the priest, “Truly women have been kept from us as always when I go on an expedition. The vessels⁶ of the young men are holy even when it is an ordinary journey. How much more today will their vessels be holy?”⁶ ⁶ So the priest gave him the holy bread, for there was no bread there but the bread of the Presence,⁷ which is removed from before the Lord, to be replaced by hot bread on the day it is taken away.”

- Then David came to Nob, - Nob, although a stupid name in English, was the center of Yahweh worship in the South it seems. It's likely that there was at least a shrine to God and perhaps a makeshift permanent temple of sorts. There is evidence that the ark of the covenant may have been there. It was the center for the priests to minister to the people.
- to Ahimelech the priest. – the brother of Saul's chaplain (Ahijah), great grandson of Eli (thus priesthood). Father of Abiathar. He's the 'high priest' (seniormost religious official in the land – although there's no official 'high priest' at this time).
- And Ahimelech came to meet David, trembling, and said to him, “Why are you alone, and no one with you?” – It's assumed that everyone knew there was beef between Saul and David, two power players in the nation. You have the king vs. the giant killer going on. But, no one seems to know the details of what's happening. Now you have David coming alone into the holy area and it's freaking the priest out. He's not clear who is on who's team or if they have reconciled. There are no TV or phone news updates.
- And David said to Ahimelech the priest, “The king has charged me with a matter and said to me, ‘Let no one know anything of the matter about which I send you, and with which I have charged you.’ I have made an appointment with the young men for such and such a place.” – David lies and explains that he is on a mission from King Saul to calm the priest's

⁴ “Because Ahimelech was the brother of Saul's chaplain Ahijah, David was probably not sure whether he could trust Ahimelech and hence made up a story to explain why he was by himself. However, David's deception resulted in the disaster in 22:6–23.” NICOT

⁵ “The one condition was that David's servants were not ritually unclean through coitus; see Exod. 19:15; Lev. 15:18... Sexual abstinence was a common practice during military operations. “War was regarded as sacred; and the prohibition of women to men engaged in it is wide-spread.” Deut. 23:9–14 is concerned with the purity of the camp. The rule of sexual abstinence can be noted in the Qumran War Scroll (col. VII,1, 3). See 2 Sam. 11:11, where Uriah the Hittite did not go back home to sleep with his wife during the expedition.” NICOT

⁶ “There are two interpretations for the vessels (k'lel-[hann'ārīm]) (cf. “things” [NIV]): (1) weapons (Stoebe); (2) “vessels” — a euphemism for genitalia. The second position seems to be preferable, for why would David bring up literal “weapons”? That is not what Ahimelech is concerned about.” NICOT

⁷ “The Bread of the Presence (leḥem happānīm; lit., “the bread of the face(s)”) was set out “before the Lord,” that is, in his presence, in the holy place of the sanctuary each Sabbath. The reference to this “bread” might support the Jewish tradition (see B. Zeb. 118–19)²³ that the ark of God was in the temple of Nob at that time; see on 1 Sam. 22:19; also 14:18. Or, on the other hand, the tradition may have been caused by this passage. According to Lev. 24:5–9, the “Show Bread” consisted of twelve loaves of bread set in two rows on a table “before the Lord”; the twelve loaves symbolized the twelve tribes. Each loaf contained about three liters (12 cups) of flour; so, the loaves were larger than usual loaves. “This bread is to be set out before the LORD regularly, Sabbath after Sabbath” (v. 8). The old bread was to be eaten only by the priests “in a holy place” (v. 9). David and his men obviously would not qualify to eat the bread, but the rules may have been loosely applied during this period, and Ahimelech was probably bending even the current rules somewhat. But at least he did feel it must not be treated the same as common bread.” NICOT

nerves and set up a scenario where he can ask things from him. David is just making stuff up.

- **David's Deception – was it okay in this scenario for David to lie?**
Hmmm tough one. On one hand we know that the only way that missionaries have smuggled Bibles into closed territories is to lie. We know that the only way that Jews were protected from the Nazis was to lie. So, there seems to be some justification for lying if it's for the Lord's will. BUT, that's a very narrow channel. Usually lying is wrong and leads to terrible consequences. God is not a lying God. Here, David is desperate, but does desperation give us allowance to lie? No. **I would suggest that due to the outcome of this particular scenario (the murder of all the priests) that it was NOT okay and David was out of line here in a big way. Did God use it ultimately as part of His plan (fulfilling the prophecy against Eli)? Yes. Does that make it right for David to do so? No.**
- Now then, what do you have on hand? Give me five loaves of bread, or whatever is here." – David needed some **emergency food** since he was on the run. He knew at least one place that had bread, here.
- And the priest answered David, "I have no common bread on hand, but there is holy bread—if the young men have kept themselves from women." – the priest responds that he doesn't have any regular bread, he only has God-bread. See below for a description of what the God-bread was in detail. Notice that the priest puts a strange requirement on the 'young men'. Which by the way did you notice (I missed it the first time), the 'young men' are made up. They are not real. The priest just asked, 'why are you alone?' a second ago and the story doesn't indicate anyone was with him (although strangely enough when Jesus quotes this story in the NT He says there were people with David – Mk 2:26 – so I'm confused). David was saying that he needed extra bread because King Saul was having him set up a meeting with some soldiers in the area. And what was the requirement by the priest to have the soldiers eat the 'holy bread'? That they didn't have sex. What? Part of the ritual cleansing process for holy elements is cleansing after sex.
 - Le 15:16–18 - *"If a man has an emission of semen, he shall bathe his whole body in water and be unclean until the evening."¹² And every garment and every skin on which the semen comes shall be washed with water and be unclean until the evening."¹⁸ If a man lies with a woman and has an emission of semen, both of them shall bathe themselves in water and be unclean until the evening."*
 - Dt 23:9–11 - *"When you are encamped against your enemies, then you shall keep yourself from every evil thing."¹⁰ "If any man among you becomes unclean because of a nocturnal emission, then he shall go outside the camp. He shall not come inside the camp,"¹¹ but when evening comes, he shall bathe himself in water, and as the sun sets, he may come inside the camp."*
 - Ex 19:14–15 - *"So Moses went down from the mountain to the people and consecrated the people; and they washed their garments."¹⁵ And he said to the people, "Be ready for the third day; do not go near a woman."*

- And David answered the priest, “Truly women have been kept from us as always when I go on an expedition. The vessels of the young men are holy even when it is an ordinary journey. How much more today will their vessels be holy?” – David continues with his elaborate lie about the imaginary soldier group he is meeting. He says, ‘of course they haven’t had sex, we are on a military expedition and we don’t have sex during those.’ And then he adds info about their penises (seriously). He says, ‘the vessels’ (which we think of as souls or spirits, the bodies of the men – but the better translation is members/limbs in a sexual context) of the young men are extra pure right now. It sounds religious and clinical but if you think about it it’s a relatively funny addition. It wasn’t necessary or could have been said a different way.
- So the priest gave him the holy bread, for there was no bread there but the bread of the Presence, which is removed from before the Lord, to be replaced by hot bread on the day it is taken away. – the Bread of the Presence is the holy bread that is prepared for God. It’s 12 large loaves prepared every sabbath and laid in 2 stacks of six before the ark of the covenant in the holy place. Only priests are allowed to eat it after it’s ‘retired’ from God’s service and new bread is placed there. This is likely the ‘old bread’ that the priest is offering to David. David and the imaginary men wouldn’t normally be allowed to eat it but its tough to say no to a giant killer who is on a mission from the king.
 - **Is this God’s provision?** – again, this is a tough one. Technically only priests were supposed to eat it and it would make it a sin. However, **Jesus actually refers to this story in the New Testament and what He says is a bit confusing.** It’s told in 3 synoptic gospels (Matt, Mk, Lk). First of all, Jesus says David gave some of the bread to those who were with him. But this story is clear there is no one with him at the time (although perhaps there were some assistants that ran away with him and they were waiting outside in hiding). But secondly, and more importantly, Jesus seems to indicate that it was okay for David to do so, due to desperation, citing that the ritual laws of God were not to harm people. Apparently David’s situation qualified in desperation and it was the ‘old bread’ that was already done.’ So, **yes, it was God’s provision to care for David.**
 - Le 24:5–9 - “You shall take fine flour and bake twelve loaves from it; two tenths of an ephah shall be in each loaf. ⁶ And you shall set them in two piles, six in a pile, on the table of pure gold before the LORD. ⁷ And you shall put pure frankincense on each pile, that it may go with the bread as a memorial portion as a food offering to the LORD. ⁸ Every Sabbath day Aaron shall arrange it before the LORD regularly; it is from the people of Israel as a covenant forever. ⁹ And it shall be for Aaron and his sons, and they shall eat it in a holy place, since it is for him a most holy portion out of the LORD’s food offerings, a perpetual due.”
 - Ex 29:31–34 - “You shall take the ram of ordination and boil its flesh in a holy place. ³² And Aaron and his sons shall eat the flesh of the ram and the bread that is in the basket in the entrance of the tent of meeting. ³³ They shall eat those

things with which atonement was made at their ordination and consecration, but an outsider shall not eat of them, because they are holy. ³⁴ And if any of the flesh for the ordination or of the bread remain until the morning, then you shall burn the remainder with fire. It shall not be eaten, because it is holy."

- Le 22:10–16 - "A lay person shall not eat of a holy thing: no foreign guest of the priest or hired worker shall eat of a holy thing, ¹¹ but if a priest buys a slave as his property for money, the slave may eat of it, and anyone born in his house may eat of his food. ¹² If a priest's daughter marries a layman, she shall not eat of the contribution of the holy things. ¹³ But if a priest's daughter is widowed or divorced and has no child and returns to her father's house, as in her youth, she may eat of her father's food; yet no lay person shall eat of it. ¹⁴ And if anyone eats of a holy thing unintentionally, he shall add the fifth of its value to it and give the holy thing to the priest. ¹⁵ They shall not profane the holy things of the people of Israel, which they contribute to the LORD, ¹⁶ and so cause them to bear iniquity and guilt, by eating their holy things: for I am the LORD who sanctifies them."
- Mt 12:1–8 - "At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry, and they began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. ² But when the Pharisees saw it, they said to him, "Look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath." ³ He said to them, "Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, and those who were with him: ⁴how he entered the house of God and ate the bread of the Presence, which it was not lawful for him to eat nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests? ⁵Or have you not read in the Law how on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath and are guiltless? ⁶I tell you, something greater than the temple is here. ⁷ And if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless. ⁸ For the Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath."
- Mk 2:23–28 - "One Sabbath he was going through the grainfields, and as they made their way, his disciples began to pluck heads of grain. ²⁴ And the Pharisees were saying to him, "Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?" ²⁵ And he said to them, "Have you never read what David did, when he was in need and was hungry, he and those who were with him: ²⁶how he entered the house of God, in the time of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and also gave it to those who were with him?" ²⁷ And he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. ²⁸ So the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath."
- Lk 6:1–5 - "On a Sabbath, while he was going through the grainfields, his disciples plucked and ate some heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands. ² But some of the Pharisees said, "Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath?" ³ And Jesus answered them, "Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: ⁴how he entered the house of God and took and ate the bread of the Presence, which is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and also gave it to those with him?" ⁵ And he said to them, "The Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath."
- Did the Priest sin? – Again, see above for the confusion on the technicalities. Normally it would be a sin, but at this time the priesthood and worship of God was in a serious state of disarray and not formalized so it's likely that the priest thought that the old bread would be okay although he was clearly nervous about it citing 'celibacy' as a stipulation.

- Big Problems; Big Sword
 - David gets Goliath's sword
 - 1 Samuel 21:7–9 – *"Now a certain man of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before the Lord.⁸ His name was Doeg the Edomite,⁹ the chief of Saul's herdsmen. ⁸ Then David said to Ahimelech, "Then have you not here a spear or a sword at hand? For I have brought neither my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's business required haste."⁹ And the priest said, "The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you struck down in the Valley of Elah, behold, it is here wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod.¹⁰ If you will take that, take it, for there is none but that here." And David said, "There is none like that; give it to me."*
 - Now a certain man of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before the Lord. His name was **Doeg the Edomite**, the chief of Saul's herdsmen. – servants of Saul would likely be more like lower level officials of Saul and not just regular servants would wouldn't normally be named. This guy was 'chief' of the herdsman, so he was a leader of some sort. It mentions multiple times that he was not an Israelites but had come from Edom (Edomites – were descendants of Jacob's twin brother Esau, sons of Isaac) which was at this time a friendly nation (it went on and off through history). That he was a foreigner will come into play later in the story. The only point here is that Saul has eyes in the temple shrine and he doesn't know it yet.
 - Then David said to Ahimelech, "Then have you not here a spear or a sword at hand? For I have brought neither my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's business required haste." – David then asks for a weapon citing that he left so quickly that he forgot his weapon. This should have been a HUGE red flag because first of all David is a national hero warrior who wouldn't do that in normal situations, and the he is saying he's meeting with other soldiers soon. He's actually not very good at lying. Why would the priest have a weapon? Probably because at this point in history it was kind of the wild west out there and it would be for self-defense.

⁸ "The term kept away (ne'šār) or "detained" (NRSV; NIV; JPS) means detention "for religious reasons, at the temple or a festival" in postbiblical Hebrew.²⁹ It is probably "for some ceremonial purpose," because it was before the Lord. Various suggestions have been given for the reason why he was there: (1) for making a vow (Mowinckel); (2) for an act of penance (Hertzberg); or (3) for observing a day free of work.³¹ Kutsch explains it as to "hold one's self back from work" (Ni. *šr) = "take a holiday." It may be that Doeg, like Saul in 10:8 and 13:8, had been waiting on God (before the Lord) without doing any ordinary work. His retreat could be related to the "seven-day" period for waiting; see on 13:8. For one thing, the fact that the Bread of the Presence had been removed from before the Lord (v. 6) has something to do with the Sabbath, that is, the special day of the seven-day period." NICOT

⁹ "Doeg (Dō'ēg) the Edomite may have become Saul's servant after his victory over Edom (14:47). As R. P. Gordon notes, "it was possible for Edomites to "enter the assembly of the Lord" (Deut. 23:7[8]), and there may even be hints, in the Old Testament, of common cultic ties between Israel and Edom." NICOT

¹⁰ "On the term ephod, see on 2:28. If the sword is "behind the ephod," it seems that this ephod was not a garment, as the ephod in 14:3 seems to be. It may have been some kind of image such as the golden ephod made by Gideon (Judg. 8:24–27), which became a snare. The Ephraimite Micah made an ephod and teraphim (Judg. 17:5) (apparently different items from his "graven image and molten image" 18:14–20), and Hos. 3:4 says Israel will live "without ephod or teraphim." NICOT

- And the priest said, “The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you struck down in the Valley of Elah, behold, it is here wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod. If you will take that, take it, for there is none but that here.” – The priest doesn’t have any weapons other than the relic of the giant fight which David specifically was involved in. They had Goliath’s sword, which must have been massive. They had it in safekeeping. When it says ‘behind the ephod’ it sounds odd to some of us who think of an ephod as a garment. It could be that the garment was hung up and it was behind it, but some scholars think that the ephod can also mean a holy box similar to the TORAH that the Jews use which is a box holding the Torah scriptures and both are called Torah. Either way the sword was back there out of sight.
- And David said, “There is none like that; give it to me.” – David is excited to get it. It’s a well-forged sword, likely the best in the land. Not sure how David feels like he can hide that sword, it’s kind of famous. But he’s desperate so at least it’s a sword.
- Have You Gone Mad?
 - David pretends to be insane in Gath
 - 1 Samuel 21:10–15 – *“And David rose and fled that day from Saul and went to Achish the king of Gath.¹¹ ¹¹ And the servants of Achish said to him, “Is not this David the king of the land? Did they not sing to one another of him in dances, ‘Saul has struck down his thousands, and David his ten thousands’?”¹² And David took these words to heart and was much afraid of Achish the king of Gath. ¹³ So he changed his behavior before them and pretended to be insane in their hands and made marks on the doors of the gate and let his spittle run down his beard. ¹⁴ Then Achish said to his servants, “Behold, you see the man is mad. Why then have you brought him to me? ¹⁵ Do I lack madmen, that you have brought this fellow to behave as a madman in my presence? Shall this fellow come into my house?”*
 - And David rose and fled that day from Saul – David goes on the run and is on the run for many chapters to come. It was a lengthy period and God did a lot of prep in David through this time. It was a terrible time for David: lonely, scary, confusing, etc. Psalms 34 and 56 specifically mention that they were written during and about David’s time on the run specifically about this initial part with Achish the king of Gath.

¹¹ “The question has been often asked: why did David go to Achish? Gath was the very hometown of Goliath (see 17:4); no clear reason can be given why he chose that city. One possible reason may be geographic; Gath is just beyond the Valley of Elah, and it is the Philistine city nearest to Bethlehem, his hometown. Topographically David escapes from the ridge of the hill country to the Philistine Plain, some 800 m. (2,600 ft.) down. This horizontal and vertical distance from Saul’s territory (see v. 10: “before Saul”) eventually leads to David’s settling among the Philistines in ch. 27. However, his initial attempt to seek refuge in Gath is unsuccessful. This episode shows how urgent and unprepared his escape was and how bold he was to go there by himself (cf. 27:2; with 600 men), with Goliath’s sword! One thing was clear: David and the Philistines now share a common enemy, Saul, king of Israel. David may have been thinking that Achish might hire him as a mercenary (see on v. 15). Psalms 34, 56 are associated by their superscriptions with this difficult time of David’s life. In the midst of the deep trouble, David begins his psalm with the confession “I will bless the Lord at all times” (Ps. 34:1). Such is the confession of the one who trusts in the Lord regardless of the external situation.” NICOT

- and **went to Achish the king of Gath**. – this is a radical move. David was most famous for killing **Goliath of Gath**. This is Goliath's hometown! The king's name or title was Achish (each of the five Philistine towns had its own king). Why in the world would David go there of all places? The key reason is that it was close and he was on the run. He had to get OUT of Israelite territory where Saul's eyes were everywhere.
- **Insights from Psalm 34** – the title says, "Of DAVID, WHEN HE CHANGED HIS BEHAVIOR BEFORE ABIMELECH, SO THAT HE DROVE HIM OUT, AND HE WENT AWAY." Abimelech and Achish can either be names or titles like Pharaoh. So it's talking about this specific scenario. What's so fascinating about that is **you would never know if the title didn't tell you**. There are no references to the details. **It's only talking about God's protection and provision. It's a praise Psalm. I would assume that it was written AFTER the situation was resolved and David was reflecting** on the goodness of God because during David was super scared. See above (intro) for some of the content.
- Insights from Psalm 56 – again, see the introduction for some of the content. The gist is that this Psalm, as opposed to 34, has **a lot more fear and trouble in it**. It highlights how difficult things were and how much trouble, fear and pain that David was in during this time of his life. For example he says, 'Be gracious to me, O God, for man tramples on me; all day long an attacker oppresses me; my enemies trample on me all day long, for many attack me proudly. When I am afraid I put my trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can flesh do to me?...You have kept count of my tossings/wanderings; put my tears in your bottle. Are they not in your book?...This I know, that **God is for me...**'
- And the servants of Achish said to him, "Is not this David the king of the land? Did they not sing to one another of him in dances, 'Saul has struck down his thousands, and David his ten thousands'?" – David is immediately recognized, and rightfully so. What's fascinating is that they even heard the songs that were popularly sung about David (interestingly the same songs that irritated Saul). They called David the 'king of the land' due to his warrior champion status. They didn't care about Saul or the politics of Israel. They cared about war and fighting. David is outed.
- And David took these words to heart and was much afraid of Achish the king of Gath. – David knew he was outed and freaked out. He was in enemy territory and surrounded. He had to think of something to do immediately to stop them from killing him and at least stop them from seeing him as a threat.
- So he changed his behavior before them and **pretended to be insane** in their hands and **made marks on the doors of the gate and let his spittle run down his beard**. – David acts quickly and pretends that he is insane. Why would a normal guy come into an enemy territory where he is

famous? He wouldn't, right? So, I'm insane. And David went all in with his acting. He was scratching at things and foaming at the mouth. Desperate times = desperate measures I suppose. Again this highlights that David was alone during this initial part (otherwise all the guys would have had to act insane).

- Then Achish said to his servants, "Behold, you see the man is mad. Why then have you brought him to me? Do I lack madmen, that you have brought this fellow to behave as a madman in my presence? Shall this fellow come into my house? – it worked! The king saw it and commented that he had enough weird people in his kingdom to deal with and didn't want another one. He wanted David out of there but since he was 'insane' there was no harm or threat so he let David go. Although David messed up by going there, God rescued him out of it.
 - **Divine Protection Through Unconventional Means** - God's protection can come in unexpected forms, allowing David to escape danger through an unconventional strategy. No one tends to think of God protecting through acting insane, but it happened. There are a lot of stories in the Bible of miracles that happen through the weirdest of means.
- Motley Crue
 - David draws a crowd of riff raff
 - 1 Samuel 22:1–23:29 – *"David departed from there and escaped to the cave of Adullam. And when his brothers and all his father's house heard it, they went down there to him. ² And everyone who was in distress, and everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was bitter in soul, gathered to him.¹² And he became commander over them. And there were with him about four hundred men."*
 - David departed from there and escaped to the cave of Adullam. – David had to get out of there fast and ran to the nearest secret location. It's famous by the time this was all written down since David hid there but it was a cave near a place called Adullam. It wasn't likely an official spot, but more of a hideout location that many travelers had used through the centuries.
 - And when his brothers and all his father's house heard it, they went down there to him. – when word got back to David's family, who were also in danger during this feud between David and Saul (Saul tends to attack and destroy anyone he thinks is in connection with his enemies like David), they came to see him and get him necessary provisions.

¹² "There, to David, gather some four hundred men. The phrase every man in straits (kol-ʾiš māšôq) refers to every man "in a hard-pressed situation." Creditor means "professional moneylender." For the phrase a bitter spirit (mar-nepeš), see on 1:10; cf. "was discontented" (NRSV; NIV). It is used for people like Hannah (1:10), the men of Ziklag (30:6), the homeless Danites (Judg. 18:25), David and his followers fleeing from Absalom ("fierce, enraged" in 2 Sam. 17:8), etc. Thus, David becomes the leader of everyone who had suffered some kind of loss or deprivation and were discontented, disenchanted, and mistreated in the society. Therefore, they are passionate for change and were willing to share David's fate and do anything for David." NICOT

- And **everyone who was in distress, and everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was bitter in soul, gathered to him.** – while David was there, some local word got out and people who didn't like how the nation was going (or their lives were going), gravitated toward the giant killer and his new "stronghold." It's interesting that God designed up an army for David among the riffraff. They weren't great people. They were disenfranchised, and angry, and bitter, and upset at everything. They were the ones that hated everyone. But that made them a group of misfits that were willing to risk it all and be a part of David's ragtag group.
- And he became commander over them. And there were with him about **four hundred men.** – they became David's new army. There was a LOT of them (400-600 depending on which manuscript you read). How you get provisions for all of those people and how you keep that big of a group in hiding is a mystery to me. Perhaps they were far enough out in the wilderness of anyone to care.
- Whiner Boy
 - Saul complains about his issues
 - 1 Samuel 22:3–8 – *"And David went from there to Mizpeh of Moab.¹³ And he said to the king of Moab, 'Please let my father and my mother stay with you, till I know what God will do for me.'⁴ And he left them with the king of Moab, and they stayed with him all the time that David was in the stronghold.⁵ Then the prophet Gad said to David, 'Do not remain in the stronghold; depart, and go into the land of Judah.' So David departed and went into the forest of Hereth.¹⁴ Now Saul heard that David was discovered, and the men who were with him. Saul was sitting at Gibeah under the tamarisk tree¹⁵ on the height with his spear in his hand, and all his servants were standing about him.⁷ And Saul said to his servants who stood about him, 'Hear now, people of Benjamin; will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards, will he make you all commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds,⁸ that all of you have conspired against me? No one discloses to me when my son makes a covenant with the son of Jesse. None of you is sorry for me or discloses to me that my son has stirred up my servant against me,¹⁶ to lie in wait, as at this day."*

¹³ "And David went from there (= v. 1) is again a transition in the flow of discourse. David went with his elderly parents from Adullam to Mizpeh of Moab presumably by going up to the ridge, down to the Dead Sea, up to the plateau of Moab, and then to the fortress of Mizpeh. This would involve a movement of 0.6 miles down and another 0.6 miles up. The location of Mizpeh of Moab is unknown; probably it was a Moabite royal city. Since Ruth, David's great-grandmother, was a Moabite woman (cf. Ruth 4:13–22), David thought that his elderly parents would be safer here than with him. Compare David with Idrimi of Alalakh, who fled to the people of Emar, his mother's relatives. Note that Moab was one of Saul's enemies (see 1 Sam. 14:47) and would be willing to support any split that would weaken him. However, later, when David became king of Israel, he defeated Moab; see 2 Sam. 8:2." NICOT

¹⁴ "The Forest of Hereth is an unknown place. It may be compared with "Kharas," the name of a modern village near Khirbet Qilā, which preserves the name of ancient Keilah. Wellhausen and others suggest that Hereth is an Aramaic variant of Horeh (23:15). If this is correct, it is probably modern Khirbet Khoreisa [MR 162–095], about 2 miles from Tel Zīp." NICOT

¹⁵ "The tamarisk is "a deciduous tree up to 20 feet in height with small, feathery leaves that excrete salt through special glands The pink flowers are followed by minute seeds. The wood was used for construction and as charcoal. The bark was used for tanning and the leaves as fodder." Abraham planted one at Beersheba and called on the name of "the Lord, the everlasting God" in Gen. 21:33." NICOT

¹⁶ "Saul's suspicion is getting extreme: conspired against me (q̄šartem ... 'ālay). There is certainly no indication that Jonathan had caused David to rise up against Saul. On Absalom's revolt and conspiracy, see on 2 Sam. 15:12." NICOT

- And David went from there to Mizpeh of Moab. – Moab is another nation. Israel and Moab have a very bizarre and tumultuous relationship. The people group was started from an incest incident with Lot, Abraham's nephew/cousin, so they were quasi-Jewish and linked. But they were usually enemies of Israel and didn't get along. The key link here with David is that his grandma is Ruth, a Moabitess. So, when we are talking about family lineage David has as much access to people there as in Israel.
- And he said to the king of Moab, "Please let my father and my mother stay with you, till I know what God will do for me." – the family connection becomes clear here. David is trying to find safe haven for his family (parents and siblings) whom Saul would try to kill. Saul wouldn't go into Moabite territory because that would be a national war signal. David is asking for temporary asylum until he knows more about what is going to happen to him and Saul.
- And he left them with the king of Moab, and they stayed with him all the time that David was in the stronghold. – They were safe in one location but David needed to get out of there and stay in Israel to handle his stuff and be with his team (otherwise why wouldn't he just live in Moab?).
- Then **the prophet Gad** – this is the first time we are meeting this guy: Gad. There is an Israelite tribe named Gad, so it was likely a popular male name at the time. However, this guy is a prophet and will become one of David's two most trust prophetic companions (the other is Nathan). When David sought God or 'heard' from God, it was usually through one of these two and not directly. At this point it's not clear where Gad came from and they are not yet fully linked. Remember, a prophet is someone who hears from God and conveys His will to people.
- said to David, "Do not remain in the stronghold; depart, and go into the land of Judah." – Gad had some insight information from God about David's safety. He said, 'you have to get out of here. You need to go back into Israelite territory.' The cave of Adullam was just outside the territory on the fringes.
- So David departed and went into the forest of Hereth. – David went into a forest area near the city of Keilah. It was a large enough forest area that they could hide 400 men. It would provide cover and likely provide some sustenance. There was probably water there and game to hunt.
- Now Saul heard that David was discovered, and the men who were with him. – of course any time you move 400 men around it's going to be seen and that news is going to be sent back to the king. Saul heard about it and that David had a makeshift army now.
- Saul was sitting at Gibeah under the tamarisk tree on the height with his spear in his hand, and all his servants were standing about him. – Saul was sitting in a royal capacity with a weapon of war in his hand that acted like a kingly staff. His crew was all around him in both protection and service. This was a royal scene while David was in a forest.

- And Saul said to his servants who stood about him, "Hear now, people of Benjamin; - Saul is a whiner and is about to do official whining about his situation. He is bitter and angry and jealous and he's going to unleash on his team.
- will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards, will he make you all commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds, that all of you have conspired against me? – First thing he says is, 'why are you wanting to side with David against me? What can he offer you that I can't? What, is he going to give you land? He doesn't own any land. Is he going to promote you in the army? He doesn't have but a ragtag bunch of 400 losers. What is it that is so tempting and valuable to you that he has to offer that you would turn against me?' This is a whine session. None of those people are against King Saul in favor of what David can offer them. We will see that a lot of them are disappointed in Saul and know that he's losing his mind. They don't support him in everything but they haven't turned against him. But he can't see that clearly. He's so lost in anger and jealousy.
- No one discloses to me when my son makes a covenant with the son of Jesse. – the first attack is that no one told him about the connection with Jonathan, his son, helping David out. Obviously, it's his kid. If anyone would or should know about their connection it should be the dad. He's blaming them for not outing his own kid.
- **None of you is sorry for me** – this is the most embarrassing line. He's in a pity party. None of you is feeling sorry for me. I'm the victim. I'm the one that people are against. But in fact, Saul is the one who started all of this. He is his own worse nightmare.
 - **The extreme danger of victim-mentality** – when we get into a victim mentality it bends reality. We start to think that it's everyone else's fault and that allows us not to work on our stuff. If we are the victim then we don't carry any responsibility in our minds. But this is self-delusion. In most situations there are parts we need to see and own and parts that aren't ours to carry. But once we slip into victim mentality it's tough to get out of it because everything is seen through that lens. It's one of the key signs of mental illness.
- or discloses to me that my son has stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait, as at this day. – Now he's making up more stuff. He is convinced that Jonathan is conspiring against him to kill him. He thinks that Jonathan is stirring up David to kill him. That's simply not true and has no bearing in truth. Jonathan is a stand up kid and solid. He hasn't harmed his dad other than to help David get away from his insanity.
- Doeg-E-Doeg
 - Saul orders the killing of priests

- 1 Samuel 22:9–23 – *“Then answered Doeg the Edomite, who stood by the servants of Saul, “I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub,¹⁰ and he inquired of the Lord for him and gave him provisions and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine.”¹⁷ ¹¹ Then the king sent to summon Ahimelech the priest, the son of Ahitub, and all his father’s house, the priests who were at Nob, and all of them came to the king. ¹² And Saul said, “Hear now, son of Ahitub.” And he answered, “Here I am, my lord.” ¹³ And Saul said to him, “Why have you conspired against me, you and the son of Jesse, in that you have given him bread and a sword and have inquired of God for him, so that he has risen against me, to lie in wait, as at this day?” ¹⁴ Then Ahimelech answered the king, “And who among all your servants is so faithful as David, who is the king’s son-in-law, and captain over your bodyguard, and honored in your house? ¹⁵ Is today the first time that I have inquired of God for him? No! Let not the king impute anything to his servant or to all the house of my father, for your servant has known nothing of all this, much or little.” ¹⁶ And the king said, “You shall surely die, Ahimelech, you and all your father’s house.” ¹⁷ And the king said to the guard who stood about him, “Turn and kill the priests of the Lord, because their hand also is with David, and they knew that he fled and did not disclose it to me.” But the servants of the king would not put out their hand to strike the priests of the Lord. ¹⁸ Then the king said to Doeg, “You turn and strike the priests.” And Doeg the Edomite turned and struck down the priests, and he killed on that day eighty-five persons who wore the linen ephod.¹⁸ ¹⁹ And Nob, the city of the priests, he put to the sword; both man and woman, child and infant, ox, donkey and sheep, he put to the sword.¹⁹ ²⁰ But one of the sons of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar,²⁰ escaped and fled after David. ²¹ And Abiathar told David that Saul had killed the priests of the Lord. ²² And David said to Abiathar, “I knew on that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul. I have occasioned the death of all the persons of your father’s house. ²³ Stay with me; do not be afraid, for he who seeks my life seeks your life. With me you shall be in safekeeping.”*

¹⁷ “In 21:2–10 there is no reference to Ahimelech’s consulting the Lord for David; hence, Doeg may be lying here. But he is accusing Ahimelech of helping David with the Lord, by inquiring presumably how he could achieve his aim. Not only does Doeg claim that Ahimelech inquired of God’s will for David, but he calls the holy bread “provisions,” and refers to “the sword of Goliath” — each statement more “military” than the next, increasing the listener’s tension, provoking the suspicion that the priest was aiding David in military preparations against who else but Saul.” NICOT

¹⁸ “Nobody except Doeg obeys the king and murders the priests. It may be that “Doeg, as a foreigner and (presumably) a non-Yahwist, has no religious scruple to prevent him from slaying the priests of Nob.” But then, why was he “detained before the Lord”? See on 1 Sam. 21:8. It is possible that Doeg’s religiosity was only liturgical and formal and that he had neither a respect for the priests nor a fear of God.” NICOT

¹⁹ “Saul treated Nob like some enemy city that had been put under the “ban” (cf. 15:3). Thus, Saul carried out “total destruction” on the priests’ city, while neglecting to put the Amalekites under a ban in ch. 15. See also Judg. 20:48; Deut. 13:16–17. When they reject God and his “justice,” human beings can become cruel, totally destroying innocent people, and at the same time become tolerant toward the evil, letting them live on whether in war or in peace.” NICOT

²⁰ “Abiathar (‘ebyātār) or “Ebyathar” is the son of Ahimelech; see on 14:3. This priest of Yahweh will be associated with David throughout the remainder of his fugitive days (23:6, 9; 30:7; 1 K. 2:26) and for the rest of his life. He will eventually share the position of high priest with Zadok during David’s reign; see 2 Sam. 20:25; also 15:24–36; 1 K. 4:4. But, later, Solomon will banish him “from being priest to Yahweh” and send him to Anathoth, because he sided with Adonijah over the succession issue (1 K. 1:7); “thus fulfilling the word of the Lord that he had spoken concerning the house of Eli in Shiloh” (2:27b; NRSV). He is the “only one man” who the Lord promised Eli in 1 Sam. 2:33 would not be cut off from Yahweh’s altar.” NICOT

- Then answered Doeg the Edomite, who stood by the servants of Saul, - Doeg sees an opportunity to get on Saul's good side. If Saul is so concerned about people standing up for him, he can share what he knows. Remember, this is the guy who was at the temple when David showed up to get bread.
- "I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, and he inquired of the Lord for him and gave him provisions and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine." – Doeg outs David and Ahimelech the high priest. He tells on them. He even casts doubt on Ahimelech by saying he consulted God for David – which there is no evidence of in our account, although later Ahimelech doesn't deny it. We just don't know what he inquired about. But the other parts are clearly true: gave him food and a weapon. Unfortunately, Saul will interpret that as aiding and abetting and arming an enemy. Saul already feels attacked.
- Then the king sent to summon Ahimelech the priest, the son of Ahitub, and all his father's house, the priests who were at Nob, and all of them came to the king. – as expected Saul can't handle this information and wants to immediately handle it. He calls up the high priest and all the priests that worked in Nob at the shrine and there was a LOT of them. They all obediently came wondering what the problem was. They all thought they were simply helping the king out by helping David. They didn't have anything to feel guilty about.
- And Saul said, "Hear now, son of Ahitub." And he answered, "Here I am, my lord." – Saul addresses the high priest, whom he should have had more respect for as a man of God, but didn't.
- And Saul said to him, "Why have you conspired against me, you and the son of Jesse, in that you have given him bread and a sword and have inquired of God for him, so that he has risen against me, to lie in wait, as at this day?" – Immediately Saul attacks the high priest and makes him guilty. He didn't ask questions. He didn't seek the truth. He was angry and wanted to vent on someone. Saul takes every action the priest did as against him including saying that he helped David specifically to get in position to kill Saul. Only part of this is right.
 - When jealousy turns to conspiracy – Last week we heard a fantastic message from Pastor Heather talking about how Saul allowed jealousy to set up shop in his mind. We are now seeing what happens with that. The longer jealousy lingers it morphs into all out conspiracy theories and it's not just wanting what others have but believing everyone is out to get you. That's a bad place to be.
- Then Ahimelech answered the king, "And who among all your servants is so faithful as David, who is the king's son-in-law, and captain over your bodyguard, and honored in your house? – Ahimelech defends himself and David. He counters: who is more faithful to you than David? David has been YOUR guy. He works in YOUR office. He comes to YOUR house.

He's married to YOUR daughter. He is a senior leader in YOUR army. What are you saying? David is a good guy. You've authorized him personally.

- Is today the first time that I have inquired of God for him? No! – Ahimelech says, 'I've consulted God for him a bunch of times, usually FOR YOU. There was no reason I wouldn't do that for him again. I have no idea what is going on between you two. Don't blame me for this.'
- Let not the king impute anything to his servant or to all the house of my father, for your servant has known nothing of all this, much or little." – The high priest continues. 'Don't blame me for this. I didn't do anything wrong. David told me that it was all in alignment with you and you were cool with it. I've never stood against you.'
- And the king said, "You shall surely die, Ahimelech, you and all your father's house." – Saul can't listen to reason. He was already convinced of the priest's wrongdoing and intentions BEFORE the priest showed up. He moves immediately to punishment and judgment. But the danger increases: now it's not just Ahimelech but all of the priests and lineage of Eli! This turn deadly fast.
- And the king said to the guard who stood about him, "Turn and kill the priests of the Lord, because their hand also is with David, and they knew that he fled and did not disclose it to me." – Saul of course didn't want to get his hands dirty and demands, like a spoiled brat, for his soldiers standing nearby to kill the priests. He charges them with conspiring with David against Saul and not sharing information that they were supposed to know was pertinent to this issue.
- But the servants of the king would not put out their hand to strike the priests of the Lord. – the soldiers refused. That's incredible because you don't refuse a king and especially a king that's insane and worked up. But they did. They were not going to personally kill a priest of Yahweh whom they had been trained and raised to respect and take seriously. They know you don't lay your hand on the Lord's anointed unless you want God coming after you. They also weren't sure or okay with Saul's beef with David. They weren't sure they were on the right side of this debate.
 - Appropriate times to defy leadership – below you will see my take on war soldiers but for here I want to say that there is a time when we must defy leadership: when it's in direct violation to God's truth and principles and word. We must obey God rather than men. But we better be SURE that we are defying for the right reason or we may be seen as divisive and rebellious and will suffer at God's discipline.
- Then the king said to Doeg, "You turn and strike the priests." – in desperation Saul turns from his soldiers to the one guy he knew was motivated to earn his respect: Doeg. He commands this guy to kill the priests. It's helpful that Doeg is a Moabite who, although was recently in

the temple, likely grew up with a different worship structure and didn't care as much for Israelite priests.

- And Doeg the Edomite turned and struck down the priests, and he killed on that day **eighty-five persons** who wore the linen ephod. – Doeg went off and killed 85 guys who were unarmed and didn't know how to fight. It was a blood bath. I don't know if they were all held down or they ran and it was a melee. But it was terrible. Right here we see the slaughter of a whole family line (Eli's family line). This is a fulfillment of prophecy as you will see in a moment (below).
 - **He was just at the priests holy place (temple/shrine)** – It's always telling when what we do on Sunday doesn't match what we do during the week. Doeg was just in the temple doing something religious but clearly his heart was not with the Lord nor his respect for the church. He was willing to murder all of them to gain the respect for mankind.
- **And Nob, the city of the priests,** he put to the sword; both man and woman, child and infant, ox, donkey and sheep, he put to the sword. – And then Doeg led an army (by Saul's command) to go into the city of Nob where the priests families were living and kill every man, woman and child and infant so none remained. They even killed the animals so it was all destroyed.
 - **What we do for ourselves vs. God** – Saul compromised on God's stuff (Amalekites) but completed his own tasks (Nob). It's interesting how we take our stuff serious but not God's. We think it's no big deal and we got the 'gist'. What a violation!
- But **one of the sons of Ahimelech** the son of Ahitub, **named Abiathar, escaped and fled after David.** – One got away. One remaining family member of the lineage of Eli got away. His name was Abiathar.
 - **Abiathar** – who is he? He is going to be a key figure in David's team. He will be David's primary priest and will serve for a long time with David. He's a good guy. Unfortunately he is part of the wrong family line (see below)
 - **The fulfillment of Eli's curse from God** – Abiathar is the 'remaining one'. When God brought judgment on Eli's family for disobedience, He said that the whole family line would be killed with the sword AND that one would escape only so that they would mourn the family line all the days of their life. See 1 Samuel 2:27-36 below.
 - 1 Sa 2:27-36 – "And there came a man of God to Eli and said to him, "Thus says the LORD, 'Did I indeed reveal myself to the house of your father when they were in Egypt subject to the house of Pharaoh?'²⁸ Did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to go up to my altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? I gave to the house of your father all my offerings by fire from the people of Israel. ²⁹ Why then do you scorn my sacrifices and my offerings that I commanded for my dwelling, and honor your sons above me by fattening yourselves on the choicest parts of every offering of my people Israel?"
³⁰ Therefore the LORD, the God of Israel, declares: 'I promised that your house and the house of your father should go in and out before me forever,' but now

the LORD declares: 'Far be it from me, for those who honor me I will honor, and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed. ³¹ Behold, the days are coming when I will cut off your strength and the strength of your father's house, so that there will not be an old man in your house. ³² Then in distress you will look with envious eye on all the prosperity that shall be bestowed on Israel, and there shall not be an old man in your house forever. ³³ The only one of you whom I shall not cut off from my altar shall be spared to weep his eyes out to grieve his heart, and all the descendants of your house shall die by the sword of men. ³⁴ And this that shall come upon your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, shall be the sign to you: both of them shall die on the same day. ³⁵ And I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who shall do according to what is in my heart and in my mind. And I will build him a sure house, and he shall go in and out before my anointed forever. ³⁶ And everyone who is left in your house shall come to implore him for a piece of silver or a loaf of bread and shall say, "Please put me in one of the priests' places, that I may eat a morsel of bread." ' ' "

- And Abiathar told David that Saul had killed the priests of the Lord. – Abiathar fled to David's team because that was the only safe space and he had suffered for David's choices.
 - **My view on soldiers** – soldiers carry out instructions of their leaders. The leaders are responsible for those instructions and the impact of those instructions. The soldier is held accountable for what he/she does OUTSIDE of those instructions. But the acts of the commands do not lay on their heads OTHER THAN the desire to sign up in the first place or if it's a complete violation against God and they don't resist or take a stand against injustice.
- And David said to Abiathar, "I knew on that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul. I have occasioned the death of all the persons of your father's house. – David takes responsibility for all of it. He knew that day when one of Sauls' guys were there that it would eventually get back to Saul and Saul would attack. He had no idea that Saul would kill all of them, but then again you can't put anything past Saul at this point in his life. But bottom line David felt horrible. This is the situation where I explained that David lying and getting the priest's involved was no okay. Yes, God had to fulfill a prophecy through it, but that doesn't excuse David's lying.
 - **David takes responsibility** – great men/women/leaders take responsibility for their actions. David knew that it was his actions and involvement of the priests (when Doeg was lurking) that killed them ultimately. He doesn't just pass it off on others, but takes full responsibility for what he instigated.
- Stay with me; do not be afraid, for he who seeks my life seeks your life. With me you shall be in safekeeping. – David swears to protect the priest after all that has happened. Interestingly, I'm not sure David always felt safe enough to promise protection to others, but I think the point was that he would do his best with his team.

- Mo Problems

- David attacks the Philistines in Keilah
 - 1 Samuel 23:1-6 – *“Now they told David, “Behold, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah²¹ and are robbing the threshing floors.” ² Therefore David inquired of the Lord, “Shall I go and attack these Philistines?” And the Lord said to David, “Go and attack the Philistines and save Keilah.”²² ³ But David’s men said to him, “Behold, we are afraid here in Judah; how much more then if we go to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines?” ⁴ Then David inquired of the Lord again.²³ And the Lord answered him, “Arise, go down to Keilah, for I will give the Philistines into your hand.” ⁵ And David and his men went to Keilah and fought with the Philistines and brought away their livestock²⁴ and struck them with a great blow. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah. ⁶ When Abiathar the son of Ahimelech had fled to David to Keilah, he had come down with an ephod in his hand.²⁵”*
 - Now they told David, “Behold, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah and are robbing the threshing floors.” – **David is already in/near Keilah** (he’s in the forest by Keilah). He’s not looking at defending the country for no reason. It’s the city he’s hiding in. The fight was brought to his doorstep. He has to make the call on whether to do something about it. People would know that a massive group of David’s mercenaries are with him there. He can’t just avoid it. But is it a good thing to fight this fight or should he just move on?
 - Therefore David inquired of the Lord, “Shall I go and attack these Philistines?” – David needs to know if he should get involved or just run away. He’s in the forest near Keilah and likely got supplies from there. He knew that Keilah was in Israelite territory so it was his people being attacked. But on the other hand does he really need to get involved in more fighting at this point? He doesn’t need to put himself out from hiding.
 - **Guidance in Decision-Making** - The importance of seeking divine guidance in making decisions. David didn’t want to do anything without checking with God first. This demonstrates both a respect/fear of God and a desire to be in alignment and connected to God. David knew that if he was going to get through this season of life it would have to be God’s protection.

²¹ “Keilah is probably modern Khirbet Qilā [MR 150–113], which is located about 3 miles south of Adullam (see 22:1), some 8 miles northwest of Hebron, and due east of Gath; it seems to appear as “Kelti” in the Amarna letters. Though Keilah is listed among cities of Judah (Josh. 15:44), at that time it was at least near enough the Philistine border to be contrasted with Judah. Also, it is possible that the town is at least Israelite, if not Judahite, because David probably would not have inquired about saving it if it had been unrelated to Israel. He certainly doesn’t mind raiding non-Israelite places in ch. 27.” NICOT

²² “In Keilah, with Abiathar and the oracular ephod (see on 14:3), David has now “a more sure means of ascertaining the will of Yahweh.” One might assume that the Urim and Thummim (see 14:41) are employed here, since the answers in vv. 11b and 12b are essentially of the “yes” or “no” type.” NICOT

²³ “David inquires of the Lord for the second time. Here again signifies that the same inquiry is made twice in order to make it sure that it was indeed the Lord’s direction. The same double inquiry was made by Gideon (Judg. 6:36–40), who needed reassurance with regard to the will of the Lord.” NICOT

²⁴ “Here property means “cattle”; see “livestock” (NRSV; NIV). The presence of Philistine cattle at Keilah has puzzled the exegetes. It may be that the cattle were brought along “to forage for what was left on the threshing floors” or “to transport the grain.”²⁵ No real solution is possible.” NICOT

²⁵ “We learn from 23:6 that Abiathar brought the ephod with him. Thus, the true priesthood and priestly counsel and the divine oracle have officially moved from Saul to David.” NICOT

- And the Lord said to David, "Go and attack the Philistines and save Keilah." – The Lord authorized the attack. God had initially raised up Saul to destroy the Philistines and now that He had shifted to David the mission was the same but God was using all of the fighters in the cause. 'Yes, go get involved.' God said.
 - But David's men said to him, "Behold, we are afraid here in Judah; how much more then if we go to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines?" – David tells the guys (soldiers with him) what God said and they push back. They remind him that they are already in trouble and in danger why would they want to get into trouble with the Philistines too?
 - **God's voice vs human counsel** – the Bible is clear that both God's voice and human counsel are critical to success. But what if they contradict? Which one do you go with? It seems easy to say, God, but what if you are fuzzy on whether it's the Lord or not? What if you are not self-aware and tend to call a lot of things 'God's will' when in fact they are your ideas? Shouldn't we heed counsel of others who can help us discern the voice of the Lord and see what we cannot see? Yes, but we must ask WHY they are counseling they way they are. Is it in their own self-preservation that they do so? Are they being bent by humanness just like us? Ultimately if there is enough clarity that God is speaking then we go with God despite pressures from people.
 - Then David inquired of the Lord again. And the Lord answered him, "Arise, go down to Keilah, for I will give the Philistines into your hand." – David heard the point of his team and took it under advisement. Since it differed from God he needed to check again.
 - **It's not wrong to ask twice** – notice that it was a very high stakes question and David wanted to make sure it was God's plan so he asked twice. That's not an unfair doubt. It's verifying the will of the Lord.
 - And David and his men went to Keilah and fought with the Philistines and brought away their livestock and struck them with a great blow. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah. – David's team won over the raiding party of the Philistines and the Philistines took another blow. This was a bigger plan of God going on and David was in and out of it at the time. The Israelite town was saved even though the Keilahites didn't really like David and his ragtag team.
 - When Abiathar the son of Ahimelech had fled to David to Keilah, he had come down with an ephod in his hand. – As a side note about HOW they were consulting God, there is an addition here to let us know that when Abiathar the priest ran away he grabbed the ephod with the Urim and Thummim in it to discern the voice of the Lord.
- Broken Record
 - God rescues David from Saul...Again

- 1 Samuel 23:7-14 – *“Now it was told Saul that David had come to Keilah. And Saul said, “God has given him into my hand, for he has shut himself in by entering a town that has gates and bars.”⁸ And Saul summoned all the people to war, to go down to Keilah, to besiege David and his men.²⁶ ⁹ David knew that Saul was plotting harm against him. And he said to Abiathar the priest, “Bring the ephod here.”¹⁰ Then David said, “O Lord, the God of Israel, your servant has surely heard that Saul seeks to come to Keilah, to destroy the city on my account.¹¹ Will the men of Keilah surrender me into his hand? Will Saul come down, as your servant has heard? O Lord, the God of Israel, please tell your servant.” And the Lord said, “He will come down.”¹² Then David said, “Will the men of Keilah surrender me and my men into the hand of Saul?” And the Lord said, “They will surrender you.”²⁷ ¹³ Then David and his men, who were about six hundred, arose and departed from Keilah, and they went wherever they could go. When Saul was told that David had escaped from Keilah, he gave up the expedition.¹⁴ And David remained in the strongholds in the wilderness, in the hill country of the wilderness²⁸ of Ziph.²⁹ And Saul sought him every day, but God did not give him into his hand.”*
 - Now it was told Saul that David had come to Keilah. – Saul of course heard about the battle with the Philistines and David, so he’s going to use that to his advantage.
 - And **Saul said, “God has given him into my hand, for he has shut himself in by entering a town that has gates and bars.”** – Saul ignorantly thinks that God is on his side (don’t we all) and this is an opportunity to kill and trap David. The town happened to be one that can lock to keep out raiders so it can also make it hard for David to escape,.
 - **When two sides think God is on theirs** – notice that Saul is thinking that God is on his side and helping him get David. We are so prone to self-delusion. It’s like two sports teams praying for a win and thinking God is on their side. God is on God’s side. The better question is who’s side we are on (our own or God’s)? Saul sees everything through a selfish lens and it distorts his reality. How much are we doing that? I’ve never been approached for prayer about a court case where the person was praying for the other side to win because it was justice.

²⁶ “The term summoned (*šm’: Pi.; lit., “cause s.o. to hear,” “to assemble”) appears only here and 1 Sam. 15:4. In the latter Saul summoned “two hundred thousands = foot soldiers and ten thousands = the men of Judah.” Here too we can see Saul’s overreaction to David. He summoned the entire people, that is, two hundred thousands (?), against David’s six hundred men (see v. 13) to besiege them in Keilah and destroy the city (see v. 10).” NICOT

²⁷ “Why would the citizens of Keilah act so ungratefully towards David? Saul had destroyed Nob on a much lesser pretext, and so he was certainly willing and presumably able to destroy Keilah. From their standpoint, David had gotten them into much more trouble than he had saved them from. The Philistines, after all, had only gone after grain.” NICOT

²⁸ “The phrase in Horesh (baḥōršāh) means “in the Wood.” It is probably modern Khirbet Khoreisa, about 2 miles from Tel Ziph. A smaller “woods” or “a grove” was possible around there.” NICOT

²⁹ “Ziph is usually identified with Tell Ziph [MR 162–048], situated about 5 miles south-southeast of Hebron, about 12 miles southeast of Keilah. From Keilah to the wilderness of Ziph, David went up eastward toward Hebron on the ridge, and then beyond, toward the more hilly country, which drops down sharply toward En Gedi (see 24:1).” NICOT

- And Saul summoned all the people to war, to go down to Keilah, to besiege David and his men. – Saul gathers a massive army to go get David and to force Keilah to hand them over.
 - **Saul's overreaction** – this is so personal to Saul that he's overreacting and getting everyone involved in his personal vendetta against David. The last time the phrase, 'all the people' was used it was 120,000 soldiers. Against David's 600? Why? (Or it can mean all the soldiers that were already with Saul – his small standing army). My guess is that regardless of killing David Saul knew he was going to wipe out the whole city of Keilah anyway in anger for housing David.
 - David knew that Saul was plotting harm against him. And he said to Abiathar the priest, "Bring the ephod here." – Again, David consults with the Lord to find out his next move. You can see the difference is stark between David and Saul.
 - Then David said, "O Lord, the God of Israel, your servant has surely heard that Saul seeks to come to Keilah, to destroy the city on my account. Will the men of Keilah surrender me into his hand? Will Saul come down, as your servant has heard? O Lord, the God of Israel, please tell your servant." – David has a couple questions for God but with the Urim and Thummim (a yes or now exercise) he had to ask one at a time. The first was if Saul was going to come down to try to kill him.
 - And the Lord said, "He will come down." – God said, 'yep, he's on his way.'
 - Then David said, "Will the men of Keilah surrender me and my men into the hand of Saul?" And the Lord said, "They will surrender you." – the second question is whether or not in light of the serious army Saul was bringing and the odds being too much, will the city hand David and his team over to Saul? And God said, 'yep, you're as good as handed over. Don't trust them.'
 - Then David and his men, who were about six hundred, arose and departed from Keilah, and they went wherever they could go. – David's team had grown another 200 since last time and it was 600 now, so he heads out of the city and runs into the surrounding area.
 - When Saul was told that David had escaped from Keilah, he gave up the expedition. – Saul found out that David escaped and called off the attack.
 - And David remained in the strongholds in the wilderness, in the hill country of the wilderness of Ziph. – David remained out in the wilderness for a long time. He had no home to go to and the search was always on.
 - And Saul sought him every day, but God did not give him into his hand. – Saul wouldn't give up but neither would God. **As determined as our enemies are to destroy us God is more determined to protect us.**
- Like a Brother
 - Jonathan encourages David

- 1 Samuel 23:15-18 – *“David saw that Saul had come out to seek his life. David was in the wilderness of Ziph at Horesh. ¹⁶ And Jonathan, Saul’s son, rose and went to David at Horesh, and strengthened his hand in God. ¹⁷ And he said to him, “Do not fear,³⁰ for the hand of Saul my father shall not find you. You shall be king over Israel, and I shall be next to you. Saul my father also knows this.”³¹ ¹⁸ And the two of them made a covenant before the Lord. David remained at Horesh, and Jonathan went home.”*
 - David saw that Saul had come out to seek his life. David was in the wilderness of Ziph at Horesh. – David was hiding in wilderness areas and likely moving around to avoid detection.
 - And **Jonathan, Saul’s son, rose and went to David at Horesh, and strengthened his hand in God.** – Jonathan, David’s best friend, shows up. How he found him but Saul couldn’t suggest that other people knew that Jonathan was on David’s side. Jonathan knew that his buddy would be stressed out and freaked out. He went to support him. The phrase, ‘strengthened his hand in God’ means deep encouragement for someone who is afraid.
 - **Do you have a friend like this?** – do you have someone who can pray with you, for you, check in on you during your toughest times? If you don’t, you need one. But these are usually friends that you have to cultivate BEFORE something happens bad. Friendships are a two way road of investment. But we all need someone who will do this for us.
 - And he said to him, **“Do not fear,** - you never have to tell someone this who isn’t afraid. **David was afraid.** David was tough. David was hardcore. But even those folks get afraid sometimes. It’s fascinating that **David could be so bold to kill Goliath, but not here. It’s like when Elijah** was so bold against King Ahab on Mt. Carmel but the next moment was running for his life and depressed in a cave. We are fickle people with rising and falling emotions.
 - for the hand of Saul my father shall not find you. – My dad won’t find you. You are great at hiding buddy and God is on your side. This evading will work.
 - **You shall be king over Israel, and I shall be next to you.** – Ultimately brother, you will be king over all of Israel, I know this. And when you are, I want to be your second in command. I get it, I’m the rightful next king, but you my friend, are the one called. I stand with you. I’ve got your back. The sad reality is that Jonathan will never live to see that day. He will die in battle with his dad and brothers.
 - **Saul my father also knows this.”** – Even my dad knows that you are going to be king some day and that God has chosen you. He is trying to fight against God in all of this and deep down he knows he’s going to lose. That is part of what is driving him. He’s trying to force a destiny.

³⁰ “The expression encouraged him (wayhazzēq ‘et-yādô; lit., “strengthened his hand”; see Neh. 6:9; Job 4:3; Ezek. 13:22; etc.) is used for encouraging the fearful.” NICOT

³¹ “Saul, my father, knows so: this is confirmed by Saul himself later, in 1 Sam. 24:21[20].” NICOT

- **Why Satan keeps fighting** – I don't know how much Satan believes of what he knows. It's very clear in Scripture and from the mouth of the Lord, and Satan has heard it and knows it, The demons know it, how it all ends. So why is Satan still fighting against God if he's doomed to lose? I would suggest the same as Saul's perspective mentioned above. I think that he refuses to accept defeat no matter what and is trying to shape his own destiny and it's the anger about all of that which keeps him driving forward.
 - And the two of them made a covenant before the Lord. – they both agree and committed to one another that they would get each other's backs and in the end wind up together in the palace ruling together.
 - David remained at Horesh, and Jonathan went home. – David remained in hiding but Jonathan had to go home.
- Here We Go Again
 - God protects David...again...and again
 - 1 Samuel 23:19-29 – *"Then the Ziphites went up to Saul³² at Gibeah, saying, 'Is not David hiding among us in the strongholds at Horesh, on the hill of Hachilah, which is south of Jeshimon?'²⁰ Now come down, O king, according to all your heart's desire to come down, and our part shall be to surrender him into the king's hand."²¹ And Saul said, "May you be blessed by the Lord, for you have had compassion on me."²² Go, make yet more sure. Know and see the place where his foot is, and who has seen him there, for it is told me that he is very cunning."²³ See therefore and take note of all the lurking places where he hides, and come back to me with sure information. Then I will go with you. And if he is in the land, I will search him out among all the thousands of Judah."²⁴ And they arose and went to Ziph ahead of Saul. Now David and his men were in the wilderness of Maon,³³ in the Arabah to the south of Jeshimon."²⁵ And Saul and his men went to seek him. And David was told, so he went down to the rock and lived in the wilderness of Maon. And when Saul heard that, he pursued after David in the wilderness of Maon.²⁶ Saul went on one side of the mountain, and David and his men on the other side of the mountain. And David was hurrying to get away from Saul. As Saul and his men were closing in on David and his men to capture them,²⁷ a messenger came to Saul, saying, "Hurry and come, for the Philistines have made a raid against the land."²⁸ So Saul returned from pursuing after David and went against the Philistines. Therefore that place was called the*

³² "Psalm 54 [title verse] refers to this occasion. The Ziphites were to David "the insolent and ruthless ones" (see Ps. 54:3); for his part he could say "God is my helper" (v. 4).

³³ "Maon (Mā'ôn) is the hometown of Nabal (25:2) and is situated on top of a hill surrounded by glazing fields. It is identified with Tell Ma'in [MR 162-090], about 7 miles south of Hebron, 5 miles south of Ziph, and 9 miles from Arad. It is in the southeastern mountain district of Judah, together with Ziph (Josh. 15:55)." NICOT

Rock of Escape.²⁹ And David went up from there and lived in the strongholds of Engedi.³⁴

- Then the Ziphites went up to Saul at Gibeah, - Again, people out David to Saul. They are trying to earn a hearing and good favor with the king. They have no idea that they are on the wrong side of the argument.
- saying, "Is not David hiding among us in the strongholds at Horesh, on the hill of Hachilah, which is south of Jeshimon? – they tell Saul exactly where David is.
- Now come down, O king, according to all your heart's desire to come down, and our part shall be to surrender him into the king's hand." – they brag about being willing to hand David over to Saul to have him killed. They are doing it as an offering to get good favor.
- And Saul said, "May you be blessed by the Lord, for you have had compassion on me. – Saul feigns humility and thanks them for watching out for him. I would imagine he is looking around at his other guys who didn't give him inside information in a glaring way. Also it's interesting that Saul is still using religious God-language when he is so far from God. He may not think so. He may be that delusional.
- Go, make yet more sure. Know and see the place where his foot is, and who has seen him there, for it is told me that he is very cunning. – Saul said, I've been told info before and David always gets away. He's a tricky one, that David.
- See therefore and take note of all the lurking places where he hides, and come back to me with sure information. Then I will go with you. And if he is in the land, I will search him out among all the thousands of Judah." – Saul says, find out all his locations and mark them down so that even if he tries to run away I can find him. I don't want to go on a fool's errand so make sure the info is legit.
- And they arose and went to Ziph ahead of Saul. – They went back home to fulfill their orders from Saul.
- Now David and his men were in the wilderness of Maon, in the Arabah to the south of Jeshimon. And Saul and his men went to seek him. – Sure enough they found out where David was and Saul and his team went to go kill him.
- And David was told, so he went down to the rock and lived in the wilderness of Maon. And when Saul heard that, he pursued after David in the wilderness of Maon. Saul went on one side of the mountain, and David and his men on the other side of the mountain. – **Saul's team had him pinned down.** There is a high rocky place and Saul's teams were on both sides going around to pinch him. David was never going to get out of that one. There was nowhere to hide or escape to.

³⁴ "En-gedi ('ên-gedî), meaning "spring of the young goat," is the modern 'Ain Jidi [MR187–096], which is situated on the western shore of the Dead Sea about 20 miles east-southeast of Hebron and 12–20 miles northeast of the wilderness of Maon (23:24). Being an oasis, it was a good place for a temporary refuge, and there were caves in the vicinity (see 24:3)." NICOT

- And David was hurrying to get away from Saul. As Saul and his men were closing in on David and his men to capture them, - this looked like it was it. David had escaped from tight places before but there was no escaping this one.
- **a messenger came to Saul, saying, "Hurry and come, for the Philistines have made a raid against the land."** – And just at that moment Saul got a telegram that the Philistines were raiding Israel and he would have to let this go for another time and get back. It was an emergency. That is the only type of information (loss) that would get Saul to abandon this task, especially as close as he believed he was getting to David.
 - **Protection Through Distraction and Timing** - Saul's diversion to fight the Philistines provides David with the opportunity to escape. This illustrates how God can use external circumstances and timing to ensure the protection and preservation of His people. God uses timing all the time to get His stuff done. We call it coincidence. God calls it, His brilliance.
- So Saul returned from pursuing after David and went against the Philistines. Therefore that place was called the Rock of Escape. – David got away that day, miraculously. They ended up changing the name of the location (after David was a hero again) to the Rock of Escape. God saved David again.
- And David went up from there and lived in the strongholds of Engedi. – David shifted location to another hideout and hung out there for a while. **It sets up the next story which is a powerful one. David will come 'face to face' with Saul. How is that going to go?**

Conclusion

- **God protects His people – it may not be how we want it. We want protection from discomfort, from pain, from fear, from uncertainty, but God doesn't promise that. God promises to protect all the important things: our soul, our spirit, our afterlife, our connection with Him, our hope, our vision. This means that in our difficulties and troubles we know that he is still there and has a plan. In the end it will be redeemed.**