

CONCERNING THE WAY

October 14, 2008



LESSON 34: ISRAEL: 1 SAMUEL

This next section of 1 Samuel is the persecution phase of David's life, and this lasts from chapters 21-27. This typifies the Church Age of Christ, we are in the time when Jesus Christ is being persecuted in Satan's world. The Church of Jesus Christ is not in control of the situation; Satan is declared in Ephesians to be the god of this world, and in 2 Corinthians. David wrote most of the Psalms in this part of his life. That's why they seem to connect for us, because David was in a parallel situation in history that we are in this moment. We share the persecution of Jesus Christ in Satan's world.

Now to back up for a moment, recall the major problem David is facing spiritually and you'll understand something about what's going to happen. We've got to go inside David's soul and understand him, and understand why he's acting the way he is. David is faced, for the first time in his life, with undeserved suffering. David has never really faced this before and it disturbs him a lot. We know this because of the remarks that he makes to Jonathan in 1 Samuel 20; we know also the remarks that he makes in Psalm 59 when he was having to escape from his home.

David is always put into a situation where he can't humanly struggle his way out of it; God has to deliver him. So David is in a unique place in history in that he attains his throne in the middle of a power struggle by doing absolutely nothing, the Lord does everything for him. And this is a marvelous picture of grace; this is politics by grace. And this is why David's life would be a tremendous source of inspiration to a Christian politician if it was read correctly. David offers a model of how to do it. If God wants you in an office of leadership you don't have to run all the gimmicks and brown-nose people with a bunch of promises.

Now we're going to deal with two passages; and we're going to skip a section. We're going to deal with 21:1-9 and then we're going to 22:6-23. We're going to leave out a section because these two portions of Scripture are related.

1 Samuel 21:1 David went to Ahimelech the priest in Nob. Ahimelech was shaking with fear when he met David, and said to him, "Why are you by yourself with no one accompanying you?"

Now let's get the geography down and look at this for a moment. Out in the northeast part of Jerusalem about a mile and a half there's a place called Nob; Nob is where the tabernacle is. Nob is where the tabernacle was brought from where it was stored after the Philistines sent it back. Bethlehem, just south of Jerusalem about four or five miles, is David's hometown. David has been at Ramah; Ramah is the place where Saul was rolling on the floor naked.

So Saul is still up in Ramah, David has come down from Ramah to some place around Jerusalem, we don't know exactly where, but wherever the camp was, he went to Jonathan and we saw him in chapter 20 making a pact with Jonathan. Now he moves from wherever he was with Jonathan over to Nob. It's right in the same area, and he goes to Nob to meet Ahimelech. Now Ahimelech is an interesting person and fits into the background of this book. Remember 1 Samuel 2:31, there was a curse upon the priesthood. The priesthood had become corrupt under Eli. Then in 3:12 God through Samuel reconfirms that prophecy. We know that Eli was killed, he died after he learned that his son Phinehas had died, but Phinehas had a son before he died called Ahitub; Ahitub had a son which is the one that we're studying here, Ahimelech.

So David, the chosen, the anointed king, the true crown prince comes to Ahimelech. Ahimelech was afraid; we don't know exactly why he was afraid except in the politics of the period it was dangerous to be associated with those people who are unpopular with the king.

Remember David is very disturbed by what's happening, and he wants to get some advice from a man of God, that's why he went to Ramah. But at Ramah he apparently doesn't have enough time to talk much with Samuel, because Saul has pursued him there. So now he comes to Ahimelech; this is the second place in the nation that's left where

you can get the Word. David is a man, in other words, who is baffled by a problem in his life and he goes to the place where he can get the Word of God. Now you say I don't see where he's searching for the Word of God here. You'll see that he was.

1 Samuel 21:2 *David replied to Ahimelech the priest, "The king instructed me to do something, but he said to me, 'Don't let anyone know the reason I am sending you or the instructions I have given you.' I have told my soldiers to wait at a certain place.*

Now why does he say that? Because in verse 1 David notices that the priest is afraid of him. And David is afraid that the priest will not give him what he needs. He's afraid that God will not provide what is needed. David is saying hmm, I've got to do something to lower this man's suspicion or I'm not going to get what I need. Do you think what David did was right in lying like this?

1 Samuel 21:3 *Now what do you have at your disposal? Give me five loaves of bread, or whatever can be found."*

Now the bread that is given here he thought would be the bread that the priests would have. See, this is a city of priests; actually there were 85 men in this village. And their job was to continually take care of the tabernacle and so on. David needed two things, he needed food and he needed weapons. He had to flee, he's been running ever since his wife dropped him out the window.

David thinks it is going to be the bread of the common priests, in other words, their daily bread. But there isn't any; he asked for five loaves, apparently he had four men with him. A loaf of bread wasn't the kind that you buy at the supermarket or something, the bread here was a big long thing. So David was wanting five loaves which would get him out of the Nob area and to some other safe place.

1 Samuel 21:4 *The priest replied to David, "I don't have any ordinary bread at my disposal. Only holy bread is available, and then only if your soldiers have abstained from sexual relations with women."*

What is the hallowed bread? It was the showbread that was kept in the holy place of the tabernacle. The showbread was changed every Sabbath day. Leviticus 24:6-9 says that the bread could only be eaten by the Levites, by the sons of Aaron. So normally when the old bread was taken out, it was eaten by the Levitical priests. That's one point of the Law. The next point of the Law is found in Leviticus 15:16, which has to do with uncleanness after sexual intercourse. So the priest has to improvise, he knows that the letter of the Law says only the priest can eat the bread. But he says is all right, David is on a mission of the king (which was not true); and so I say that you can eat it if you are ceremonially clean.

1 Samuel 21:5 *David said to the priest, "Certainly women have been kept away from us, just as on previous occasions when I have set out. The soldiers' equipment is holy, even on an ordinary journey. How much more so will they be holy today, along with their equipment!"*

David's claiming that his mission is so important that it warrants this kind of activity on behalf of his band. You may wonder why sexual intercourse is declared to be ceremonially unclean. One of the reasons for that has nothing to do with sex, it has to do with the distortion of sex by the Canaanites. In the Mosaic Law where sex is dealt with, it's a reaction to the Canaanites practices. The Canaanites would consecrate their soldiers by intercourse with prostitutes before they went to war. Of course that was a real popular thing. But it was all tied in theologically with a fertility cult that was part of the worship of Baal. So when God had His armies go out they had to avoid doing anything like that, even if it was a legitimate thing with their own wives. The word "equipment" refers to their clothing as per Leviticus 15:18.

Turn to Matthew 12 because Jesus explains this passage about the bread.

Matthew 12:1-4 *At that time Jesus went through the grain fields on a Sabbath. His disciples were*

hungry, and they began to pick heads of wheat and eat them. (2) But when the Pharisees saw this they said to him, "Look, your disciples are doing what is against the law to do on the Sabbath." (3) He said to them, "Haven't you read what David did when he and his companions were hungry — (4) how he entered the house of God and they ate the sacred bread, which was against the law for him or his companions to eat, but only for the priests?"

In other words Jesus said by the letter of the Law David was not qualified nor his men because they didn't fit Leviticus 15:18. But Jesus is arguing that the nature of the mission sanctifies it; David was all right, Jesus is citing this as precedence for His actions. He says David was on a holy sacred mission and that mission made it legal.

Now what's the implication of Matthew? This is just a footnote by way of understanding the New Testament. What Jesus is saying here and what gets the Pharisees frosted is the fact that this claim is I am so important that My disciples can break the Levitical Law. That's what He's claiming here; now you can understand why the Pharisees got upset. It wasn't just that they were breaking the Sabbath Law, the way Jesus is arguing from this David incident, He's saying look, I am so important that My disciples have the right to do what they want in those wheat fields. That's Christ's claim. We see this throughout the Gospels, Jesus makes such audacious claims that either He's a nut or He's who He claimed to be; there's no other option available. So Jesus isn't condemning David; we know that it was legitimate, David was hungry.

1 Samuel 21:6-7 So the priest gave him holy bread, for there was no bread there other than the bread of the Presence. It had been removed from before the LORD in order to replace it with hot bread on the day it had been taken away. (7) (One of Saul's servants was there that day, detained before the LORD. His name was Doeg the Edomite, who was in charge of Saul's shepherds.)

Now this Doeg we're going to meet later on. But Doeg was an Edomite; he was not a Jew to begin with; this immediately makes him suspicious. He probably is an unbeliever, but he's a religious unbeliever because he's a bureaucrat in Saul's administration. He apparently is the secretary of agriculture under Saul, because he's in charge of the herds and so on.

So he's part of Saul's administration, and "detained before the LORD," means he's done something wrong, that he was unclean, and he had to stay in the presence of the Lord until he could become ceremonially clean. Do you suppose that David recognized who that was that was standing over there? Sure he did; later on he's going to tell us he knew.

1 Samuel 21:8-9 David said to Ahimelech, "Is there no sword or spear here at your disposal? I don't have my own sword or equipment in hand due to the urgency of the king's instructions." (9) The priest replied, "The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you struck down in the valley of Elah, is wrapped in a garment behind the ephod. If you wish, take it for yourself. Other than that, there's nothing here." David said, "There's nothing like it! Give it to me!"

Here is where David officially takes up arms against Saul. At this point it becomes an official revolution. And who is there to watch it? Doeg. The sword that's brought to him was Goliath's. Now let's skip to chapter 22:6, and you will now see the horrible results that happened as a result of David's conversation with Ahimelech being overheard.

1 Samuel 22:6-8 But Saul found out the whereabouts of David and the men who were with him. Now Saul was sitting at Gibeah under the tamarisk tree at an elevated location with his spear in hand and all his servants stationed around him. (7) Saul said to his servants who were stationed around him, "Listen up, you Benjaminites! Is Jesse's son giving fields and vineyards to all of you? Or is he making all of you commanders and officers? (8) For all of you have conspired against me! No one informs me when my own son makes an agreement with this son of Jesse! Not one of you feels sorry for me or informs me that my own son has commissioned my own servant to hide in ambush against me, as is the case today!"

This might have been a very interesting scene, can't you just see him twirling his little javelin, and particularly after watching him spear David three times, after watching him throw the javelin in the middle of a great courtly occasion at Jonathan, his own son, and then he walks and points this javelin right under your nose and says to you, are you with me or against me? Now this is what Saul is doing here. Evidently by this time he's found out that Jonathan has made a treasonous agreement against him. Now look at his screwed up interpretation of the events, he's saying my son has turned my servant David into an assassin. In other words, David was all right until he got around Jonathan, and so he's blaming everything on Jonathan.

1 Samuel 22:9-13 *But Doeg the Edomite, who had stationed himself with the servants of Saul, replied, "I saw this son of Jesse come to Ahimelech son of Ahitub at Nob. (10) He inquired of the LORD for him and gave him provisions. He also gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine." (11) Then the king arranged for a meeting with the priest Ahimelech son of Ahitub and all the priests of his father's house who were at Nob. They all came to the king. (12) Then Saul said, "Listen, son of Ahitub." He replied, "Here I am, my lord." (13) Saul said to him, "Why have you conspired against me, you and this son of Jesse? You gave him bread and a sword and inquired of God on his behalf, so that he opposes me and waits in ambush, as is the case today!"*

Of course there is no conspiring going on, David is just taking up arms in self defense. But notice in verse 13 he's complaining that the high priest is giving out the Word of God. He says you have no right to give the Word of God to David.

1 Samuel 22:14-16 *Ahimelech replied to the king, "Who among all your servants is faithful like David? He is the king's son-in-law, the leader of your bodyguard, and honored in your house! (15) Was it just today that I began to inquire of God on his behalf? Far be it from me! The king should not accuse his servant or any of my father's house. For your servant is not aware of all this — not in whole or in part!" (16) But the king said, "You will surely die, Ahimelech, you and all your father's house!"*

Ahimelech is saying look, hasn't David been faithful to you Saul? He isn't plotting against you; you yourself have let him come into your house at will. And then he says look, do you think this is the first time I ever inquired of God for David? What does that tell you about David's past life? He went to the tabernacle a lot of times; he went to the priests regularly. David is a man of the Word, always going where the Word was taught, to the prophets and to the priests. And so he's saying that's nothing unusual, David always does this, he dropped by and wanted to know the Lord's will for his life.

Now let's look at the last section. The king first speaks to his infantry or to his house guards, and here you have a case of the military disobeying an unjust order. These soldiers disobey; this was an unjust war against the priests of the city of Nob and the regular army would have nothing to do with it.

1 Samuel 22:17-18 *Then the king said to the messengers who were stationed beside him, "Turn and kill the priests of the LORD, for they too have sided with David! They knew he was fleeing, but they did not inform me." But the king's servants refused to harm the priests of the LORD. (18) Then the king said to Doeg, "You turn and strike down the priests!" So Doeg the Edomite turned and struck down the priests. He killed on that day eighty-five men who wore the linen ephod.*

And so Doeg does this hideous thing; and this is very similar to a situation in World War II when many of the regular army units of the German army refused to participate in certain actions. So, when Hitler couldn't rely upon his regular army, on whom did he rely? The SS troops, they were his elite guard, they'd do anything for the Fuhrer, and here you have the same kind of individual, without a conscience and he is going to do whatever the man who feeds him is going to order.

1 Samuel 22:19 *As for Nob, the city of the priests, he struck down with the sword men and women,*

children and infants, oxen, donkeys, and sheep – all with the sword.

Verses 18-19 actually is the principle of holy war, now look at how screwed up things are; holy war was when you eliminate every living thing by order of Jehovah. Here holy war has turned 180 degrees around and is being used to eliminate what Jehovah God has given to the nation, the priesthood. What does the priesthood do for the nation? Maintain its liaison with God. Where does the nation go to confess its sin? The priesthood. You've heard the expression, burning your bridges behind you; this is what Saul has done.

1 Samuel 22:20-23 But one of the sons of Ahimelech son of Ahitub escaped and fled to David. His name was Abiathar. (21) Abiathar told David that Saul had killed the priests of the LORD. (22) Then David said to Abiathar, "I knew that day when Doeg the Edomite was there that he would certainly tell Saul! I am guilty of all the deaths in your father's house! (23) Stay with me. Don't be afraid! Whoever seeks my life is seeking your life as well. You are secure with me."

This is what makes David such a great man in Scripture. David goofed and this is a tragic mistake, but he's not so proud that he can't take responsibility for it and move on. In other words, David, as he was taking the bread from the priest and looking over in the corner and seeing Doeg standing there, he must have been thinking, I should get out of here, I could get the sword another time. But he was in such a hurry, he panicked, he made the wrong decision. And he confesses that he was in the wrong, he accepts responsibility for that.

Now David didn't deserve what's happened, it wasn't his fault that Doeg saw him and then killed those priests, Doeg is responsible. But out of this something good has happened. The only priest left in authority is now with David. The priesthood has come over to David, and now you're going to see the shift in power begin; first the priesthood comes, then we're going to see how the prophets come over.

So God blesses him anyway. That adds further authentication as to which of the kings is the right king. Because the king in Israel has to have the support of the priests and the prophets. The prophets are the king-makers and the priests guide the nation. So if you can get the support of those two groups, that is an empirical evidence that he was the Lord's anointed. And remember this was all prophesied in 1 Samuel 2-3, the prophecy against Eli's house, that it would be brought down.

By the way, be sure and read Psalm 52 on your own, David wrote it at this time, and it is mainly about Doeg.

Now let's go back and pick up some of the text we missed. Beginning in 21:10 we find David fleeing; David is going to run to a place called Gath, and to use a proverb he jumped from the frying pan into the fire on this one. The battle lines with the Philistines had been established to the southwest of Jerusalem; we don't know exactly where, but to the southwest were the Philistines and to the east were the Jews. So David, again, keeps on rushing and he makes a second mistake. He decides, since he's under pressure in Saul's territory, he's going to take a long vacation in Philistia. He thinks he can get away from his problem by changing his location. There's only one problem, you move from one area to the next, you take your problems with you, you can't detach yourself from your own problems. And this is what happens here.

1 Samuel 21:10-12 So on that day David arose and fled from Saul. He went to King Achish of Gath. (11) The servants of Achish said to him, "Isn't this David, the king of the land? Isn't he the one that they sing about when they dance, saying, 'Saul struck down his thousands, But David his tens of thousands'?" (12) David thought about what they said and was very afraid of King Achish of Gath.

So David is on the move; watch that in your life. The times when Satan can rush you into making some bad decisions are when Satan keeps putting the pressure on, keep you moving; keep you from getting settled down in the Word of God. I can't read today because I've got something to do. I can't come Sunday night because I've got something to do. I've got this to do and that to do. Remember Psalm 59: 8-10 to remind yourself what David did when he was thinking.

Psalms 59:8-10 But you, O LORD, laugh in disgust at them; you taunt all the nations. (9) You are my

source of strength! I will wait for you! For God is my refuge. (10) The God who loves me will help me; God will enable me to triumph over my enemies.

That was the way David thought when he was in the Word. But now David is not thinking; he's all screwed up at this point. We're not saying this to condemn David in any way; the Holy Spirit has recorded this event for our benefit. He could record any of our lives, plaster us on the pages of history; wouldn't we love that, have some minister talking about you ten centuries from now. Look at this guy, now doesn't that illustrate a stupid believer, etc. David was human and he had moments of weakness just like we all do.

Why of all the Philistine cities he should decide to go to Gath? Of all the cities to go to to try to disappear, where does he go? Goliath's home town, just where you'd know he'd be perfectly welcome after he crunched the town hero. Now David actually is trying to disappear, he's doing the same thing I'm sure all of you have felt at one time or another, I'd just like to move away and just drop out, change my name and start all over some place. Well, David is trying to do that. And guess what he's wearing? Goliath's sword.

There must have been a gap of time between verses 12 and 13. What happened in that time? God's Word has the answer for us in Psalm 56. Psalm 56 was written between verse 12 and verse 13. And this Psalm shows how David finally got things worked around. This is an individual lament Psalm and it repeats itself. In other words, it goes through that cycle of lament, confidence, petition, praise, twice; so an outline of the Psalm would be like this: verses 1-4 is one section; here's where David petitions God for deliverance and then verses 5-11 is another petition, David petitions God again for deliverance in a different way. And then verses 12-13 is the praise section of this Psalm. So it is an individual lament Psalm.

The footnote to the Psalm says, "For the music director; according to the yonath-elem-rechovim style; a prayer of David, written when the Philistines captured him in Gath", so you can see that David wrote the Psalm during this time.

Psalms 56:1-13 *Have mercy on me, O God, for men are attacking me! All day long hostile enemies are tormenting me. (2) Those who anticipate my defeat attack me all day long. Indeed, many are fighting against me, O Exalted One. (3) When I am afraid, I trust in you. (4) In God — I boast in his promise —in God I trust, I am not afraid. What can mere men do to me? (5) All day long they cause me trouble; they make a habit of plotting my demise. (6) They stalk and lurk; they watch my every step, as they prepare to take my life. (7) Because they are bent on violence, do not let them escape! In your anger bring down the nations, O God! (8) You keep track of my misery. Put my tears in your leather container! Are they not recorded in your scroll? (9) My enemies will turn back when I cry out to you for help; I know that God is on my side. (10) In God — I boast in his promise —in the LORD — I boast in his promise — (11) in God I trust, I am not afraid. What can mere men do to me? (12) I am obligated to fulfill the vows I made to you, O God; I will give you the thank-offerings you deserve, (13) when you deliver my life from death. You keep my feet from stumbling, so that I might serve God as I enjoy life.*

David recognizes at this point that he is all fouled up. You can just see David sitting there, how the heck did I get down here? And you can just see him banging his head on the wall, how dumb can anybody get, sitting down here in Goliath's hometown with his sword. And at this point David responded, Lord, I need grace.

Now just take that as an exhortation; some of you still walk around with guilt over something you've done years ago. Who cares what you did in the past? It is what God thinks of your life that counts, not what some other man thinks. So just look at your life from the divine viewpoint; if God has forgiven you, if you have confessed your sin, that's it. Don't weigh yourself down with your past, it doesn't mean anything except what you've learned from it; that's all. If you go reliving your life in the past or the future you'll wind up on the funny farm. There's only one place to live your life and that is in the present. Worry is the sin of trying to live in the future; there's no way you can live in the future so just cut it out. Live in the present. And there's no way you can go back and change history.

You can't change history, but you can change the way you look at it. How? To accept the grace of God; an act that you or I have done in history can be transformed in history by God's grace. Now how does this work? Because grace turns sin into an object lesson and it changes the whole character of that historic act. There's only one way of doing it, by trusting in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ and to appropriate that moment by moment in your life.

So David thought about it and said you know, I am kind of stupid, here I fled all the way down to Gath to get away from Saul and what has God just done for me over and over? He caused me to be delivered from Saul. If You saved me all those times from Saul, then You're going to save me from the Philistines. And David appropriates the knowledge that God has a plan for his life and he works backwards. And he says now look, if it's God's plan for my life to be king, I don't have to worry about these dumb Philistines. Next we're going to find out what a funny and ingenious plan David came up with.

Now visualize the situation first or you won't understand what he is doing. He is a POW at this point, David has been detained. They've got the goods on him, yeah, he's David, he's the guy that killed our Goliath. God, however, in His sovereignty has said David, you're going to sit on the throne, and even though David screws up and suffer for it, when God promises to get you to point B from point A you'll get there. And this is something you can fall back on when disaster hits in the Christian life. Romans 8:29, you are predestined to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. And I don't care how many times you drop the ball, how many times you get out of fellowship, how many times you miss the boat, God has sovereignly decreed you will arrive at point B from point A, point A being where you started the Christian life, point B being when you are ultimately sanctified, totally, positionally, experientially and ultimately.

Now remember God's attributes, when God faces a situation where in His sovereignty He has promised to do something specific, and we have violated His plan for our life, the issue is, can God vindicate His character, because Satan will say aha, now David is down there and he's dropped the ball, he's out of it, and you said you were going to get him to the throne, now how You gonna do it? God has got to work in history in such a way that he doesn't coerce volition. This is a great mystery which cannot be understood by the finite mind. But God has said David is going to sit on that throne, yet Satan has got David down right where he wants him, right in Satan's stronghold. David is all by himself, and if Satan can get David outside of the plan of God, what has he shown about God's character? God is not sovereign, or He's not omnipotent, He is unable to deliver on what He promises.

Now let's understand David uses this survival tactic. In the ancient world people who were crazy were looked upon as protected by the gods; they were not molested in certain cultures, and from what we can gather, it appears that in Philistia it was part of the culture of the ancient world that when somebody went nuts, they just stayed away from them, they did not harm them, because it was felt that these people were being dealt with by the gods, and if you harmed somebody who was being dealt with by the gods, you would be harmed by the gods. And so there was a cultural thing here. It is that the Philistines apparently believed that the insane must be treated and handled with care, you just leave them alone.

1 Samuel 21:13-15 He altered his behavior in their presence. Since he was in their power, he pretended to be insane, making marks on the doors of the gate and letting his saliva run down his beard. (14) Achish said to his servants, "Look at this madman! Why did you bring him to me? (15) Do I have a shortage of fools, that you have brought me this man to display his insanity in front of me? Should this man enter my house?"

So David begins to put into effect his plan for survival and escape. Obviously this is a humiliating thing that he has to go through, and it's forever preserved by the Holy Spirit in Scripture so that no one in Israel can ever forget it, but God had a sense of humor. God has the circumstances engineered so that David, who will one day become the greatest king of the world, is walking around with spit drooling off the end of his beard acting like a total lunatic.

And consider this - don't you suppose the Philistines had heard what was going on with Saul; he was nuts too. Here's the guy that's going to be Saul's successor, you'd expect him to be crazy, all those Jewish kings are nuts. And so David just let them entertain their delusion. And so it was a very clever tactic.

And they take him through the gates to the palace, so when he gets to the gates, he scratches on the door, and this

was a sign also in the ancient world, in ancient literature this was often a sign of the insane, they'd just go around and draw pictures of idiotic things on the boards. Of course we have people do that today and they aren't crazy, or maybe they are. But David grabbed something, a piece of charcoal or something, and right on Achish's royal gates he started scribbling. Achish didn't want to have anything to do with him, he didn't want to incur the wrath of the gods that are dealing with this guy, get him out of here, and so they left him alone. David survived.

Chapter 22

1 Samuel 22:1-2 So David left there and escaped to the cave of Adullam. When his brothers and the rest of his father's family learned about it, they went down there to him. (2) All those who were in trouble or owed someone money or were discontented gathered around him, and he became their leader. He had about four hundred men with him.

We don't know exactly how he did it but somehow he escaped and he came to the cave of Adullam. These men he gathered were basically outlaws, so you can imagine what a motley crew they were. But these four hundred men become the nucleus of a great army. Those men are later on going to become officers in David's army, and here is the beginning of the armies that conquer all the way up to the Tigris-Euphrates valley and all the way down almost to the Nile River, within a generation they conquered every nation in that area.

Now Psalm 34 was their first chapter in military training and it was written for these kinds of men.

Psalms 34:1 Written by David, when he pretended to be insane before Abimelech, causing the king to send him away.

Let's look at Psalm 34. Psalm 56 was an individual lament Psalm stressing petition and trouble. Psalm 34 is an individual declarative praise Psalm that stresses thanksgiving for an historic deliverance. Psalm 56 looked forward to the answer to his prayer; Psalm 34 looks backward to the answer to prayer.

The declarative praise of the Old Testament always has reference to a specific thing that God has done. So praising God means to relate a historic work that God has done. Actually, if you think of it for a moment, if you have witnessed Jesus Christ to an unbeliever you have praised God because you have declared His works, that is if you have witnessed properly, you have declared His works, not your experience.

- (1) I will praise the LORD at all times; my mouth will continually praise him.*
- (2) I will boast in the LORD; let the oppressed hear and rejoice!*
- (3) Magnify the LORD with me! Let's praise his name together!*

In verses 1-3 David invites the downtrodden to join him in praise. The "oppressed" are the four hundred men in the cave. He's escaped now, and he begins to train the soldiers. David trained them spiritually to understand the cause for which they are fighting. And if you don't do that you can forget all the weapons training and so on because it's a waste of time. These men were not pros when they came to the cave, they were all amateurs. And so Psalm 34 is tremendous because this is a glimpse of how the first training started. There are going to be many, many times when those four hundred men are going to be glad that they sang this Psalm in the cave of Adullam and learned these lessons. David is developing a unity of spiritual purpose in the soldiers.

Now beginning with verse 4 running through verse 10 we have David's exhortation to his army to become joyous and to learn to trust. In verse 4 he summarizes his experience in Gath.

- (4) I sought the LORD's help and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears.*
- (5) Those who look to him for help are happy; their faces are not ashamed.*
- (6) This oppressed man cried out and the LORD heard; he saved him from all his troubles.*
- (7) The LORD's angel camps around the LORD's loyal followers and delivers them.*
- (8) Taste and see that the LORD is good! How blessed is the one who takes shelter in him!*
- (9) Remain loyal to the LORD, you chosen people of his, for his loyal followers lack nothing!*
- (10) Even young lions sometimes lack food and are hungry, but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.*

Through these words David is training his army to get oriented to trusting God. “Taste and see” is a picture of getting to know, to trust gradually, it’s developing faith. Verse 9 is another principle that he teaches his men, respect for authority. And in the Christian life you have to have respect for Christ’s authority before you can love Him. People do not love the Lord when they become Christians. It’s impossible; the word “love” when it is used in Scripture in that context means loyalty.

You always have to have respect before you can have love; it always goes that way. That holds true whether it’s in an organization, whether it’s in marriage, whether it’s in the Christian life, whether it’s in your relationship with the Lord, whatever it is respect precedes love. Children are not taught in the commandments to love their parents. They’re taught to respect them. Why? Because you have to respect them first before you can love them, and generally no one loves their parents until they’re 25 or 30, in all honesty; you spend 25 years getting the respect of your children and then somewhere down the line they might reciprocate and love you.

These are immature believers, and he doesn’t tell them to love the Lord. He tells them “fear the Lord,” respect Him. Verse 9-10, that’s a promise, there is no want, you’ll never lack anything if you respect, and that promise is fantastic. Then the rest of the Psalm, as declarative praise Psalms often do, just goes off into instruction.

- (11) *Come children! Listen to me! I will teach you what it means to fear the LORD.*
- (12) *Do you want to really live? Would you love to live a long, happy life?*
- (13) *Then make sure you don't speak evil words or use deceptive speech!*
- (14) *Turn away from evil and do what is right! Strive for peace and promote it!*
- (15) *The LORD pays attention to the godly and hears their cry for help.*
- (16) *But the LORD opposes evildoers and wipes out all memory of them from the earth.*
- (17) *The godly cry out and the LORD hears; he saves them from all their troubles.*
- (18) *The LORD is near the brokenhearted; he delivers those who are discouraged.*
- (19) *The godly face many dangers, but the LORD saves them from each one of them.*
- (20) *He protects all his bones; not one of them is broken.*
- (21) *Evil people self-destruct; those who hate the godly are punished.*
- (22) *The LORD rescues his servants; all who take shelter in him escape punishment.*

And the gist of the instruction is that David tells his men to avoid evil and seek good because of the kind of God they serve. In other words, if they’re to be the army of Jehovah, they must conform to Jehovah’s character. Notice he starts out, “Come children”. Even though the relationship is one between a commander and his soldiers, when he goes to instruct it is like the father/son relationship.

Verse 19 - how does David know this, and how would this be credible to his soldiers? Because it happened personally to David. Now look at this principle, it’s going to apply in a wonderful way to the Lord Jesus Christ. David, as it were, went through hell for his army; not one of his soldiers will ever have to face the pressure David had to face down in Gath. And the principle is if David made it from Gath, I can make it from whatever my situation is.

Now the same principle holds, if David is a type of Christ, what did Christ have to live through? Every possible satanic attack that could be tossed his way; Jesus Christ had to face Satan eyeball to eyeball; Jesus Christ had to take every sin that you have ever thought, committed or will ever do and He has gone through hell; Jesus Christ has gone through the worst. You and I are never asked to go through what Christ went through, and this will change some of your Christology, some of your understanding of Jesus Christ, because some people get the idea, oh well, Jesus didn’t have a sin nature, Jesus was perfect, Jesus had an easy time. He did not! Jesus Christ had to go through trial and pressure and things that you will never even think of. The trials that Christ handled on the cross are unknown, no human being could ever see what His Son had to endure for those three hours.

But before that, in the Garden of Gethsemane, Christ’s pressure was so great, remember when He prayed in Gethsemane, the sweat coming out with blood. Now that was the kind of pressure Christ was under. No human has ever been asked to do that; no Christian throughout twenty centuries of church history, facing all the brutality and the martyrdom that has gone on, no one can ever say I faced a trial Christ didn’t face.

Verse 20 became a prophecy of Christ, but here in the Psalm it's directed to armies and protection. It doesn't mean that his men aren't going to die in the future, but it's a principle that they're not going to die by accident. The only way a man on positive volition is ever going to die in battle is because his ministry is finished before the Lord and that is the only way he can ever be destroyed in battle. No man who is a Christian, who is trusting the Lord actively, is ever going to die in battle by a "stray bullet". Never! He is going to die because that is the end of his ministry. However, the truth of protection applies ideally to Jesus Christ. When the Roman soldiers came by they saw Christ had already died, so the centurion didn't break His bones. It fulfilled another principle because in Exodus 12:46 the lamb could not have his bones broken. They had to have a perfect sacrifice.

So verses 11-22 is the survival manual for his army. Now we're going to jump ahead a bit in 1 Samuel. In chapter 23 David takes his new army out for a spin. After being assured by the Lord that he should, David leads his army to a victory over the Philistines. Saul again finds out where he is and chases him, but David stays one step ahead of him.

Chapter 24

Now we come to 1 Samuel 24. Now David is going to learn something that is very valuable and I'm afraid not too many of us learn this lesson the easy way. David learned that the best way of handling treachery is to do nothing about it, to leave it completely in the Lord's hands, that you do not try on your own to discipline another believer who you think is out of line. Now there's one person that's got the authority to do it in the New Testament, that's an elder, a pastor-teacher, but most of the time it's best to back off and let the Lord handle the problem.

In this chapter, David begins to sin and then recognizes it and does something about it. Saul tries but isn't too successful. That's the story of this chapter in a nutshell. One man is an idiot spiritually, that's Saul. David stops short because he recognizes what's happening. Now there's a believer in the process of sanctification, he's learning something. David's learning, yeah, he's responsible for his sin, but David's learning while he's sinning. And that's also part of sanctification. Some of your lessons are going to be when you're out of fellowship or when you're coming back in.

1 Samuel 24:1-2 When Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, they told him, "Look, David is in the desert of En Gedi." (2) So Saul took three thousand select men from all Israel and went to find David and his men in the region of the rocks of the mountain goats.

David has six hundred men, Saul has three thousand. Saul has the best trained, the best armed men in the Hebrew army, and what does David have? The group that have emerged from Adullam, the six hundred raw recruits that began military training with Psalm 34, and yet men that have come a long way.

At this point, somewhere between verses 2-3 I place Psalm 57. This is a prayer that David prays because he knows Saul is coming to get him again. Psalm 57 is a Psalm that technically could have occurred in 1 Samuel 22 or 1 Samuel 24, I interpret Psalm 57 as occurring in 1 Samuel 24. This is an individual lament Psalm.

The first part of the Psalm emphasizes petition or the lament. David confidently expresses his trust in Jehovah; that's an expression of his trust, verses 1-5. Verse 6-11 are all praises for what God has already done. Verses 1-5 are written before God's deliverance; verses 6-11 are written after God's deliverance. So there are two halves to this Psalm. The first part ahead of the event; the last part after the event.

Now let's turn back to 1 Samuel 24. Saul closes in, and then we have one of those passages where we see God's humor again. From the hemorrhoids of the Philistines, to the foreskins for Michal, to Saul lying naked on the seminary floor, we find God has very humorous ways of handling proud self-righteous believers. Now Saul is going to get taken down a notch right here; let's look at verse 3.

1 Samuel 24:3 He came to the sheepfolds by the road, where there was a cave. Saul went into it to relieve himself. Now David and his men were sitting in the recesses of the cave.

In the front of this cave the shepherds would place their flocks, during a thunderstorm or rain and so on, it was a long

deep cave. David's got six hundred men, maybe not all in this one cave, but David and some of his men are there. Saul wasn't sleeping like you see in the Sunday School literature, taking a snooze and David comes up and cuts off part of his garment. No, it's more embarrassing than that, and Saul is caught, this time literally with his pants down, and David has him in the cave. And this is the deliverance and answer to Psalm 57. Now what more humiliating position can the King of Israel be in; imagine being assassinated in that situation.

1 Samuel 24:4 *David's men said to him, "This is the day about which the LORD said to you, 'I will give your enemy into your hand, and you can do to him whatever seems appropriate to you.'" So David got up and quietly cut off an edge of Saul's robe.*

Think about the pressure that David is under at this point. These are men who have fought for him; some have died, some have lost their best friends fighting, loyal to David. They hate Saul with a passion. Right now David, with one swift spear thrust, could terminate the whole conflict and be king, they say. And it seems like God has worked it out so Saul is in David's hands. They are wrong, and after he starts to act on their advice, he is going to straighten them out. This is a picture of believers who operate on the basis of circumstances alone without using the principles of the Word of God. Oh, the Lord has "opened the door". Not necessarily, Satan can open doors, too. And in this case Satan has opened the doors; Satan has allowed David to be in a situation where he could slaughter him and if he did he'd be completely out of the will of God.

The sovereign decrees that God had made about David said that David would be king and Saul would be eliminated. But the decrees did not say anything as to how this would come to pass, and so the insinuation of the men is David, you can help God out. Now this is a lesson; we don't have to help God's decrees by means that are contrary to the Word of God. God's decrees will help themselves, all our responsibility is to adhere to the Word of God. So David momentarily comes under the influence of this bad advice of his men, and he creeps forward, but as he swings his sword, instead of swinging to Saul, which he could have, David chopped part of Saul's robe off; probably Saul had left his robe some distance from where he was and David just simply crept up and cut a piece and took it.

This is significant. Remember back in 1 Samuel 15:27; after Samuel had pronounced the curse, that Saul would be cut off from being king, Saul reacted violently, he grabbed Samuel and tore his garment. There is something strange here to our western minds, but in the times of the Ancient Near East apparently the garment meant something far more than we think it does today. Samuel was the king-maker; grabbing his garment secured the kingdom. And that's why when Saul tears it, he tries to hold on to Samuel's garment like he tries to hold onto the kingdom, and Samuel keeps on moving, and as he does the garment rips. And Samuel turns and says "The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you this day".

Another incident of the tearing of a garment, 1 Kings 11:29-32, this is later in time to around 930 BC, close to the time of the civil war. There's a jerk by the name of Rehoboam on the throne of Israel; he is Solomon's son, a disobedient rebellious son who had been taught the book of Proverbs from childhood up, but he never learned. He probably just simply watched his father, because his father was out of it and so Rehoboam just followed his out-of-it father, and he came to be an out-of-it person. He had a lot of young people in his administration that lacked wisdom, and so he blew it and he caused a civil war. The other person in this drama is Jeroboam, who is going to be king of the northern kingdom, so it's Jeroboam in the north, Rehoboam in the south, two tribes are going to go with Rehoboam, ten tribes are going to go with Jeroboam. Go ahead and read these verses, and you'll see here that ten pieces are torn from the king's garment, they have to do with the kingdom, just like we saw in 1 Samuel 15.

So now let's see if we understand why David cut Saul's garment. David is not trying to kill Saul in the cave; he resists the temptation to kill Saul. Nevertheless, he can't resist the temptation to express something to Saul. And so when David reaches up and he slices the garment, he is saying to Saul I'm going to take your kingdom away, Saul. Now David's wrong here for several reasons. Number one, Samuel told him the Lord would do it and David had no right to presuppose that he would be the means for the fulfillment of those decrees. He's out of line. This could have been the method, but David had not yet been informed by the prophets to do this. And also, tearing a piece off of Saul's robe is representative of only taking a piece of his kingdom, and that's not right, either.

1 Samuel 24:5-7 *Afterward David's conscience bothered him because he had cut off an edge of Saul's*

robe. (6) He said to his men, "May the LORD keep me far away from doing such a thing to my lord, who is the LORD's chosen one, by extending my hand against him. After all, he is the LORD's chosen one." (7) David restrained his men with these words and did not allow them to rise up against Saul. Then Saul left the cave and started down the road.

Notice that David had to restrain his men from killing Saul. It was hard for David to do this personally because he couldn't stand Saul like his men couldn't stand Saul. But he had to do it if he was to be loyal to God's Word. So this shows you the tremendous leader David was once again. So when the chips are down, David can control himself and he can control those under him.

1 Samuel 24:8-11 Afterward David got up and went out of the cave. He called out after Saul, "My lord, O king!" When Saul looked behind him, David kneeled down and bowed with his face to the ground. (9) David said to Saul, "Why do you pay attention when men say, 'David is seeking to do you harm?' (10) Today your own eyes see how the LORD delivered you — this very day — into my hands in the cave. Some told me to kill you, but I had pity on you and said, 'I will not extend my hand against my lord, for he is the LORD's chosen one.' (11) Look, my father, and see the edge of your robe in my hand! When I cut off the edge of your robe, I didn't kill you. So realize and understand that I am not planning evil or rebellion. Even though I have not sinned against you, you are waiting in ambush to take my life.

The way David bowed is how they saluted the king, it's not that he's worshiping Saul, he is saluting, and that is the way an ancient oriental king would be saluted. So again David respects for the office, he can't stand the man, but he respects the office.

And now he begins to complain to Saul; and here is a confrontation between one believer and another believer; please notice this is a one on one type situation; it is not done in public, it is done in private, and that's where this kind of confrontation always should be done. This is what James means, "confessing your faults one to another," does not mean to have somebody get up and say how many sins they have committed in front of a group. It does not mean to get in some sensitivity session where you let it all hang out.

David is saying I have revealed my character to you Saul, by my works toward you, which is the only way you can read someone's character. You can't do that until you've been around them to listen to their words and see their works. That's why you can't fall in love with somebody overnight, you have to be around them for a while.

1 Samuel 24:12-15 May the LORD judge between the two of us, and may the LORD vindicate me over you, but my hand will not be against you. (13) It's like the old proverb says: 'From evil people evil proceeds.' But my hand will not be against you. (14) Who has the king of Israel come out after? Who is it that you are pursuing? A dead dog? A single flea? (15) May the LORD be our judge and arbiter. May he see and arbitrate my case and deliver me from your hands!"

Some time in your life you're going to be in a conversation, it may be in your home, it may be in business, it may be on the street, it may be in the classroom, but someday someone is going to pull this one on you: well, the God of the Old Testament was a God of wrath because look at all those prayers where they prayed God destroy the enemy, and so therefore God is a bad God. This verse will show you what was going on in their minds. Notice, "May the LORD judge between me and you," in other words, the request had God's character in mind, not personal vengeance in mind. The point was, God is going to judge by His righteousness and His justice. David at this point is surrendering himself not to his own standard of justice, but to Yahweh's standard of justice, and he's appealing to it. I appeal to His sense of justice, and may He destroy you, for I'm not going to, it's not a case, David's saying, of my personal vengeance toward you Saul, it's that you violated God's righteousness, and you stand judged for it. In verse 13 David quotes a proverb; that's interesting because Saul is going to quote one back to him, it shows you how they used proverbs in daily conversation in the ancient world.

1 Samuel 24:16 When David finished speaking these words to Saul, Saul said, "Is that your voice, my

son David?" Then Saul wept loudly.

Here's the final lesson of chapter 24, this is going to teach you something about certain believers that inevitably you're going to run across. These are not just phony tears. He perceives the truth, and he responds emotionally to it. Do you think he's going to sincerely repent?

1 Samuel 24:17-22 *He said to David, "You are more innocent than I, for you have treated me well, even though I have tried to harm you! (18) You have explained today how you have treated me well. The LORD delivered me into your hand, but you did not kill me. (19) Now if a man finds his enemy, does he send him on his way in good shape? May the LORD repay you with good this day for what you have done to me. (20) Now look, I realize that you will in fact be king and that the kingdom of Israel will be established in your hand. (21) So now swear to me in the LORD's name that you will not kill my descendants after me or destroy my name from the house of my father." (22) David promised Saul this on oath. Then Saul went to his house, and David and his men went up to the stronghold.*

Notice verse 20, Saul knows that David's going to be king. From this we now can see something about how a compound carnal believer operates. In their heart they know the truth. That's their problem. The compound carnal person; you'd think these people are confused, they don't know the truth. No, the Word of God says they do know the truth. Saul has been on negative volition for so long; that though he can recognize something as true, he has almost lost his ability to do anything about it.

A person in compound carnality will feel sorry, will go through the emotions, but there will be no genuine repentance. There is no change of heart. You can have all of the emotional hysterics, you can have the vow, you can have the rededications, if Saul was in a fundamentalist church he would have come forward for rededication. And everybody would say oh, Saul, he rededicated his life last night, man!!! And I think David recognized, no, that's a lot of phony stuff.