

1st Samuel

Lesson 45

(4) David Flees to Gath (21:10-11)

David did not wait around once he had Goliath's sword, even though it was the Sabbath. David flees to Gath in the tribal area of the Philistines. Verse 10.

*"Then David arose and fled that day from Saul, and went to Achish king of Gath. ¹¹ But the servants of Achish said to him, 'Is this not David the king of the land? Did they not sing of this one as they danced, saying, 'Saul has slain his thousands,
And David his ten thousands'?"* (21:10-11)

Trouble awaited David in Gath, especially from Achish, the king of Gath. We must remember the Philistines did not have one king over all the tribes. Rather, each major town had a king. We would probably call them a mayor instead. But as kings of one of the five major cities, the five kings were considered the five lords of the Philistines, and they voted on the Philistine national issues to determine the direction of the tribes. Samson had killed all five lords, as well as the upper class and officials of the Philistines, when he pulled the temple down on them and himself. His death was about thirty years before this point in the story. With that, Achish might have been in power since the deaths of the five lords et al. More than likely, he was a second or third-generation king of Gath since the deadly event with Samson. One thing is for sure, the Achish and the Philistine people knew of David's victory over Goliath and the acclamation David acquired from the Israelite people after his victories over Goliath and the other Philistine skirmishes. They were wrong on one point. David was not the king of Israel, at least not yet. He will be king within the thirteen years between the death of Goliath and the death of King Saul. We are not exactly sure where we are in that timeline. We have no clues in Scripture.

(5) David Acts Like a Madman (21:10-15)

When David sees that Achish of Gath is leery of him, David acts like a madman. Verse 10.

"David took these words to heart and greatly feared Achish king of Gath. ¹³ So he disguised his sanity before them, and acted insanely in their hands, and scribbled on the doors of the gate, and let his saliva run down into his beard. ¹⁴ Then Achish said to his servants, 'Behold, you see the man behaving as a madman. Why do you bring him to me? ¹⁵ Do I lack madmen, that you have brought this one to act the madman in my presence? Shall this one come into my house?'" (21:10-15)

Achish had enough madmen in Gath that he did not need another one. David used the opportunity to escape away from Gath, at least for a time. We will see that in time, David will gain the friendship of some of the Philistines who will protect him, including this same Achish, king of Gath. Those stories will come later. As for now, David must leave Gath while the king thinks he is a slobbering madman.

David struck two musical notes at this time in two Psalms. Here they are.

A psalm of David, regarding the time he pretended to be insane in front of Abimelech, who sent him away. 1 I will praise the LORD at all times. I will constantly speak his praises. 2 I will boast only in the LORD; let all who are helpless take heart. 3 Come, let us tell of the LORD's greatness; let us exalt his name together. 4 I prayed to the LORD, and he answered me. He freed me from all my fears. 5 Those who look to him for help will be radiant with joy; no shadow of shame will darken their faces. 6 In my desperation I prayed, and the LORD listened; he saved me from all my troubles. 7 For the angel of the LORD is a guard; he surrounds and defends all

who fear him. 8 Taste and see that the LORD is good. Oh, the joys of those who take refuge in him! 9 Fear the LORD, you his godly people, for those who fear him will have all they need. 10 Even strong young lions sometimes go hungry, but those who trust in the LORD will lack no good thing. 11 Come, my children, and listen to me, and I will teach you to fear the LORD. 12 Does anyone want to live a life that is long and prosperous? 13 Then keep your tongue from speaking evil and your lips from telling lies! 14 Turn away from evil and do good. Search for peace, and work to maintain it. 15 The eyes of the LORD watch over those who do right; his ears are open to their cries for help. 16 But the LORD turns his face against those who do evil; he will erase their memory from the earth. 17 The LORD hears his people when they call to him for help. He rescues them from all their troubles. 18 The LORD is close to the brokenhearted; he rescues those whose spirits are crushed. 19 The righteous person faces many troubles, but the LORD comes to the rescue each time. 20 For the LORD protects the bones of the righteous; not one of them is broken! 21 Calamity will surely destroy the wicked, and those who hate the righteous will be punished. 22 But the LORD will redeem those who serve him. No one who takes refuge in him will be condemned. (Psalm 34)

For the choir director: A psalm of David, regarding the time the Philistines seized him in Gath. To be sung to the tune “Dove on Distant Oaks.” 1 O God, have mercy on me, for people are hounding me. My foes attack me all day long. 2 I am constantly hounded by those who slander me, and many are boldly attacking me. 3 But when I am afraid, I will put my trust in you. 4 I praise God for what he has promised. I trust in God, so why should I be afraid? What can mere mortals do to me? 5 They are always twisting what I say; they spend their days plotting to harm me. 6 They come together to spy on me— watching my every step, eager to kill me. 7 Don’t let them get away with their wickedness; in your anger, O God, bring them down. 8 You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in your bottle. You have recorded each one in your book. 9 My enemies will retreat when I call to you for help. This I know: God is on my side! 10 I praise God for what he has promised; Yes, I praise the LORD for what he has promised. 11 I trust in God, so why should I be afraid? What can mere mortals do to me? 12 I will fulfill my vows to you, O God, and will offer a sacrifice of thanks for your help. 13 For you have rescued me from death; you have kept my feet from slipping. So now I can walk in your presence, O God, in your life-giving light. (Psalm 56)

Chapter 22

(1) David Escaped to the Cave of Adullam (22:1-2)

From Achish, the king of Gath, David escaped to the cave at Adullam, where, in time, he was joined by his brothers and everyone in Saul's kingdom who were in distress, debt, and discontent. Chapter 22, verse 1.

“So David departed from there and escaped to the cave of Adullam; and when his brothers and all his father’s household heard of it, they went down there to him. 2 Everyone who was in distress, and everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was discontented gathered to him; and he became captain over them. Now there were about four hundred men with him.” (22:1-2)

From being alone at Nob and Gath, at Adullam, a mass of four hundred men joined him on their own and made him their captain. This number does not include the women and children who came along with the men. The interpretation here is clear. Saul's kingdom was not a happy place to live. Saul's people were becoming more and more ready for a new leader and they found it in David. Not only that, but more than likely, Saul had broken his word to David concerning his gift for killing Goliath. We should not be surprised. Saul had hardly kept any of the rest of his promises to David for the victory over Goliath. Nevertheless, David's family had joined him in Adullam for a reason. The reason was probably the threats from Saul to Jesse, his wife, and their children.

The cave of Adullam is in the valley of Elah, where David killed Goliath. It is about thirteen miles west of Bethlehem and not far from Gath. It is about two miles from the scene of Goliath's

death. The hill where the cave sits reaches about five hundred feet above the valley's floor, and it is filled with numerous caverns. It has been found and is large enough to hold the newfound army of David and their families.

(2) David Escaped to Mizpah of Moab

(a) David's Parents Protected in Moab (22:3-4)

With his army in Adullam and his family with him, David realized he needed to protect his parents. David escaped to Mizpah of Moab, and the writer tells us that David's parents were protected in Moab. Vere 3.

“And David went from there to Mizpah of Moab; and he said to the king of Moab, ‘Please let my father and my mother come and stay with you until I know what God will do for me.’”⁴ Then he left them with the king of Moab; and they stayed with him all the time that David was in the stronghold.” (22:3-4)

If you will remember, we spoke of Mizpah of Gilead before. It sat on the east side of the Jordan River. It was there that Saul gathered the men in the year he became king to defeat Nahash the Ammonite who was attempting to take over the Promised Land captured on the east side of the Jordan by Moses before Joshua took over. We also spoke of Mizpah of Benjamin, a village in the tribal area of Benjamin of which forces of Israel gathered to wage civil war against the sinful tribe of Benjamin in the book of Judges. We now come to the third Mizpah in the land. It was called Mizpah of Moab and it sat on the east side of the Dead Sea in the tribal area of Moab. The origin of the tribe of Moab began with Lot, Abraham's nephew who chose the good land in the lower Jordan River Valley and left Abraham (then called Abram) in the rocky, hilly land to the west (Genesis 13:10-12). In the year of Isaac's birth, the LORD decided to destroy the wicked cities in the beautiful Jordan River Valley where Lot and his family were living. The reason for the destruction was because of the one sin of homosexuality in Sodom and Gomorrah. Lot escaped with his wife and two daughters, pushed out of the city by one of the destroying angels. Lot's wife died when she turned to look back at the height of the destruction. Arriving on a hill called Zoar, the destruction was over. Water was flowing into the crater that would become the Dead Sea. Lot and his daughters thought the whole world had been destroyed and no one was left. The daughters came up with a plan to get Lot drunk and rape him in order to have children. The son born in that debasement to one daughter was named Moab; the son born to the other daughter was named Ammon. The Moabites and the Ammonites were distant cousins of Israel through Terah, the father of Abraham and Haran. Haran was the father of Lot. Lot was the father of Moab and Ammon. When Moses led the nation of Israel to the east side of the Jordan River, Moses led the attack on the Amorite (not Ammonite) tribes of King Og and King Zihon. Their land was taken and given to Rueben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh as their share in the Promised Land. Moses was careful not to take any of the land that belonged to Moab or Ammon. Nevertheless, by this time in the story of Saul and David, the Ammonites had attacked Israel and tribe to control the land in Jabesh-Gilead and Nahash was defeated. The pre-cursor to the defeat of Nahash caused the nation to ask Samuel for a king and that is how Israel ended up with Saul. The Moabites had actually taken over and controlled Israel in the days of the Book of Judges under their king, Eglon. He was defeated by one of the judges named Ehud (Judges 10).

David's great grandmother, Ruth, was half Moabite. Ruth's son with Boaz was Obed and he would have been a quarter Moabite. Obed's son Jesse would have been an eighth Moabite. That made David a sixteenth Moabite. Perhaps that connection is the reason David sought protection for Jesse and his mother with the king of Moab. We do not know. The king of Moab agreed and David left his mother and father in Moab. According to this passage, they remained there as long as David was in the stronghold. That would be the stronghold in Moab.

(b) Gad Warns David to Leave Moab (22:5a)

While at the stronghold in Moab, the prophet Gad warns David to leave Moab. Verse 5a.

"The prophet Gad said to David, "Do not stay in the stronghold; depart, and go into the land of Judah." (22:5a)

We have mentioned the prophet Gad many times in this study because he is one of the authors of the record of Saul and David in the Bible. This verse is the first mention of the prophet Gad in the Bible. How do we know that Gad is an author? The Bible tells us so. 1st Chronicles 29:29.

"Now the acts of King David, from first to last, are written in the chronicles of Samuel the seer, in the chronicles of Nathan the prophet and in the chronicles of Gad the seer, with all his reign, his power, and the circumstances which came on him, on Israel, and on all the kingdoms of the lands." (1st Chronicles 29:29)

The writings of Samuel, Gad, and Nathan will be combined into the books of 1st Samuel, 2nd Samuel and the beginning of 1st Kings. Each wrote their record from their eyewitness accounts and focused on important events that needed to be recorded. It is for that reason that I have indicated in our study of 1st Samuel when there was a change in the writing style and thus a different authors work was inserted. Samuel focused on his birth and life at the Tabernacle with Eli and the capture, return, and storage of the Ark, which spanned into Saul's reign as king; however, Samuel did not mention Saul and his story. Gad focused on Saul, the reason for his selection as king and his interaction with Samuel and David. Nathan focused primarily on David and will record the last years of Saul and the full reign of David. In this place in the story, I believe Nathan is writing because I believe we are in the last years of Saul's reign with his intent on killing David in order for Jonathan to become the next king of Israel. We will see in the last chapter of this book that the LORD will make sure Jonathan does not have the opportunity to be placed as king by the Israelite people.