

Day 286 - FRIDAY: November 10th

1 Samuel 21, Psalm 56 & Psalm 34

1 Samuel 21:1-15 NKJV

Now David came to Nob, to Ahimelech the priest. And Ahimelech was afraid when he met David, and said to him, "Why are you alone, and no one is with you?" So David said to Ahimelech the priest, "The king has ordered me on some business, and said to me, 'Do not let anyone know anything about the business on which I send you, or what I have commanded you.' And I have directed my young men to such and such a place. Now therefore, what have you on hand? Give me five loaves of bread in my hand, or whatever can be found." And the priest answered David and said, "There is no common bread on hand; but there is holy bread, if the young men have at least kept themselves from women." Then David answered the priest, and said to him, "Truly, women have been kept from us about three days since I came out. And the vessels of the young men are holy, and the bread is in effect common, even though it was consecrated in the vessel this day." So the priest gave him holy bread; for there was no bread there but the showbread which had been taken from before the LORD, in order to put hot bread in its place on the day when it was taken away. Now a certain man of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before the LORD. And his name was Doeg, an Edomite, the chief of the herdsmen who belonged to Saul. And David said to Ahimelech, "Is there not here on hand a spear or a sword? For I have brought neither my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's business required haste." So the priest said, "The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you killed in the Valley of Elah, there it is, wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod. If you will take that, take it. For there is no other except that one here." And David said, "There is none like it; give it to me." Then David arose and fled that day from before Saul, and went to Achish the king of Gath. And the servants of Achish said to him, "Is this not David the king of the land? Did they not sing of him to one another in dances, saying: 'Saul has slain his thousands, And

David his ten thousands?" Now David took these words to heart, and was very much afraid of Achish the king of Gath. So he changed his behavior before them, pretended madness in their hands, scratched on the doors of the gate, and let his saliva fall down on his beard. Then Achish said to his servants, "Look, you see the man is insane. Why have you brought him to me? Have I need of madmen, that you have brought this fellow to play the madman in my presence? Shall this fellow come into my house?"

Psalms 56:1-13 NKJV

To the Chief Musician. Set to "The Silent Dove in Distant Lands." a Michtam of David When the Philistines Captured Him in Gath. Be merciful to me, O God, for man would swallow me up; Fighting all day he oppresses me. My enemies would hound me all day, For there are many who fight against me, O Most High. Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You. In God (I will praise His word), In God I have put my trust; I will not fear. What can flesh do to me? All day they twist my words; All their thoughts are against me for evil. They gather together, They hide, they mark my steps, When they lie in wait for my life. Shall they escape by iniquity? In anger cast down the peoples, O God! You number my wanderings; Put my tears into Your bottle; Are they not in Your book? When I cry out to You, Then my enemies will turn back; This I know, because God is for me. In God (I will praise His word), In the LORD (I will praise His word), In God I have put my trust; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me? Vows made to You are binding upon me, O God; I will render praises to You, For You have delivered my soul from death. Have You not kept my feet from falling, That I may walk before God In the light of the living?

Psalms 34:1-22 NKJV

A Psalm of David When He Pretended Madness Before Abimelech, Who Drove Him Away, and He Departed. I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make its boast in the LORD; The humble shall hear of it and be glad. Oh,

magnify the LORD with me, And let us exalt His name together. I sought the LORD, and He heard me, And delivered me from all my fears. They looked to Him and were radiant, And their faces were not ashamed. This poor man cried out, and the LORD heard him, And saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him, And delivers them. Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him! Oh, fear the LORD, you His saints! There is no want to those who fear Him. The young lions lack and suffer hunger; But those who seek the LORD shall not lack any good thing. Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD. Who is the man who desires life, And loves many days, that he may see good? Keep your tongue from evil, And your lips from speaking deceit. Depart from evil and do good; Seek peace and pursue it. The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their cry. The face of the LORD is against those who do evil, To cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears, And delivers them out of all their troubles. The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart, And saves such as have a contrite spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, But the LORD delivers him out of them all. He guards all his bones; Not one of them is broken. Evil shall slay the wicked, And those who hate the righteous shall be condemned. The LORD redeems the soul of His servants, And none of those who trust in Him shall be condemned.

Daily Deep Dive:

1 SAMUEL 21:1 - 12

The UCG reading program states: “David is too inexperienced in political matters to comprehend just how deep the subterfuge was running in Saul's regime. He makes a huge tactical error that will cost many innocent lives. This incident ushers in the beginning of a vast sea of anguish that would so characterize David's life, providing him with great depth of feeling for the inspiration of so many of his psalms that would prefigure the sufferings of the innocent Christ.

David is on the run. Innocently enough, he flees to Ahimelech, who is serving as high priest at Nob. Ahimelech is fearful, perhaps having heard rumors of the breach between Saul and David and does not want to put himself and the other priests in jeopardy by getting in the middle of any conflict. David, sensing this, lies to Ahimelech to expedite his and his men's need for sustenance and to immediately be on their way: "I'm on a secret mission for the king" (compare verse 2). The lie works for David, but this will, though unintended by him, result in terrible tragedy for the priests.

Here we also see the interesting occasion when David and his men eat the holy bread, elsewhere called showbread, which was a special grain offering to God intended only for the priests (verses 3-5; compare Exodus 25:23-30; Leviticus 24:5-9). Ahimelech is willing to feed them with it only if they are ritually pure. Perhaps this hearkens back to God's original intent that the whole nation of Israel was to be a kingdom of priests (Exodus 19:6) who were to be pure in this way before their presentation before God (verse 15). David affirms the ritual purity of his men and, furthermore, argues that the bread is effectively common anyway because new bread had already replaced it before God.

Reassured, Ahimelech gives them the bread. While "the Talmud explains this apparent breach of the law on the basis that the preservation of life takes precedence over nearly all other commandments in the Law" (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on 21:6), this is not entirely correct—as we cannot lie, steal or commit adultery to protect human life. But preserving the lives of others clearly *is* part of the intent of God's law (compare Romans 13:10; Proverbs 24:11-12), and this *did* take precedence over the *ceremonial* laws God gave, which He intended to be observed for a limited time (compare Hebrews 9:9-10; Galatians 3:19-25). Christ explained on more than one occasion that saving life even took precedence over the general prohibition against

work on the Sabbath. In its same note on David and the showbread, *The Nelson Study Bible* continues: "Jesus referred to this incident in Matt. 12:2-4; Mark 2:25, 26, in His discussion with the Pharisees concerning the Sabbath. The spirit of the Law was kept by Ahimelech's compassionate act." That much certainly *is* true, for Christ *upheld* the feeding of David with the bread.

Doeg, an Edomite loyal to Saul, sees Ahimelech give David food and Goliath's sword (verses 7-9). The account says that Doeg is there "detained before the LORD," i.e., under a spiritual vow. Subsequent events will make his religious piety questionable, however, and it is entirely possible that he undertook the vow for a wrong reason, perhaps to act as a spy among the priests. In any case, his witnessing of these events will result in severe consequences when he later passes the information on to Saul.

Though it was acceptable for David to eat the showbread, it was certainly not right for him to lie. It is even worse when we later find out that David suspected Doeg would relay what happened to Saul (22:22). But David was operating out of fear. Goliath's sword should have been a reminder of God's deliverance—but fear can cause a man to forget his priorities. (God's human servants can go from high points of strong faith to lows of fear and doubt.) David is so fearful of Saul that he flees the country into enemy Philistine territory, reasoning that he has a better chance of survival there even though he is still held in contempt by the Philistines because of his former victories over them (verses 10-11)."

Verse 5 – This bread was no longer on the table and now belonged to the priest and his family, but still was not for others, however, it was appropriate for the priest's family to give of their food for David and his men's lives.

Verse 6 – John Gill's commentary includes the following: "from off of the shewbread table; and it seems to have been just taken off, it being

sabbath day, and not as yet carried to the house of the priest, and divided among the other priests as usual; and which was then removed, to put hot bread, in the day that it was taken away; that is, new bread, twelve fresh cakes; for when the twelve, that had stood a week on the shewbread table were removed, twelve more were immediately put in their room, and it seems by this they were put hot there; but here arises a difficulty, how they could be put hot there, when it was not lawful to bake on a sabbath day. About this the Jews are divided; some say they were baked on the sabbath day, but the greater part say that baking did not drive away the sabbath, or it was lawful on the sabbath day; but others say that they were baked on the evening of the sabbath, and kept in the oven until the time of their being set upon the table; and, as Abarbinel observes, the mouth of the oven might be stopped up till that time to keep in the heat;” [END]

PSALM 56: The UCG reading program states: “When captured by the Philistines in Gath, David composes Psalm 56 as a prayer for relief from tormentors, his experiences on the run providing its inspiration. We see some beautiful word pictures here. God remembering David's sacrifices in His book of remembrance is described as David's tears being put into God's bottle. The American national motto, "In God We Trust"—a shortened form of the longer Pilgrim motto, "In God We Trust, God with Us"—finds its origins in verse 11, "In God I have put my trust." And David touches on the ever-present biblical theme of "walking with God." “Psalm 56 is the first of five Davidic psalms in a row bearing the title mikhtam (56-60). As explained in the Beyond Today Bible Commentary on Psalm 16 (another mikhtam), the meaning of this word is uncertain. It may mean a writing or inscription--and could perhaps denote something first written as a poem (though we know from the examples here that these were set to music, at least at some point, and

some express a desire to play instruments or sing). As noted previously, these mikhtams are all written in the face of great danger.

David complains that his enemies are many and that they hound him all day (Psalm 56:2). Having been on the run from Saul, it is likely that David was thinking a great deal about him and his forces and not just the Philistines--though they were certainly included.

David talks through his fears in prayer: "Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You.... In God I have put my trust; I will not fear. What can flesh do to me?" (verses 3-4; compare the same basic refrain in verses 4 and 10-11; see also Psalm 118:6). It was fear of Saul that had driven David from Israel and into Philistine territory. So he was clearly learning some lessons here.

David then once more describes the actions of his enemies (Psalm 56:5-7) before again expressing trust in God to help him. The Nelson Study Bible says that "alternating passages of pain and faith are a characteristic of the lament psalms...[and] the poet typically complains about lies, the misuse of language, and deceit" (notes on Psalm 56:3-4 and verse 5).

Thinking about his life on the run and all his suffering, David knows that God is aware and keeps track of it (verse 8). David realizes God is for him--on his side (verse 9; compare Romans 8:31). God has been faithful to him in saving and helping him (Psalm 56:13)--and David will be faithful to God (verse 12)." [END]

1 SAMUEL 21:13-15: The UCG reading program states: "David reasons that it would be safer with the enemy than with Saul. But he almost gets in over his head with the Philistines. They would probably have tortured him for useful military information against Israel. By pretending to be insane, however, David renders himself not only useless to the Philistine cause, but even offensive in the royal presence of Achish (verses 12-15). The superscription at the beginning of Psalm 34 tells us how this episode ends, with the king driving David away and

him departing. In this same superscription, however, it should be noted that Achish is referred to as Abimelech—this being the dynastic title of Philistine rulers for centuries, meaning "My Father Is King" (compare Genesis 20:2; 26:1). [END]

PSALM 34: The UCG reading program states: "In Psalm 34, David writes of God setting His angels about him and saving him from Achish. His words are intended to encourage others to take inspiration from these events to look to God's deliverance in all seemingly impossible trials (verses 8-14). David is essentially saying to us today that just as God saved him, He will likewise save us too. Notice verse 6: "This poor man [David] cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.

Those who trust in God will find true and ultimate happiness, as David basically assures us. Indeed, we are to put God's way of life to the test (verse 8). However, some would take verse 9 ("There is no want to those who fear Him") and read into it a "prosperity gospel," thinking that God promises to shower us with the riches of this world. Yet the word "want" here really means "lack"—and clearly implies lack of any absolute need. Indeed, our spiritual needs and our physical wants are two separate things. Verse 9 is not promising uninterrupted comfort, but that God will meet every ultimate need.

The circumstances confronting David as he wrote these words confirm this truth. A refugee from his own country because of a death sentence from his king, he found himself far from comfort—in the land of his lifelong enemies! Yet God was with him.

Consider that our *spiritual* welfare is most important. And spiritual strength can be increased when we are in physical need. The apostle Paul put it this way: "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Corinthians 12:10). Of course,

God is faithful to meet even our physical needs until He decides that it is time for our physical life to come to an end.” [END]