



CAPITOL COMMISSION

Success by God's Word and Prayer (I Samuel 22-23)

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Capitol Commission state directors are missionaries who teach weekly verse-by-verse Bible studies for legislators, lobbyists, and staff members. These Bible studies are hand-distributed to each legislative office, emailed, and made available throughout the Capitol community. The love and grace of God compels us to proclaim the truth of the Gospel with a heartfelt compassion for the Capitol community, to faithfully teach and apply the Word of God, and it is our desire to build meaningful relationships that bear fruit for an eternity to come.

With the Bible as our foundation and authority, the mission of Capitol Commission is obedience to the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20) within the Capitol communities of the world. We are not a lobbying group attempting to garner votes or reform society. Our mandate is to see the hearts and lives of elected officials transformed with the Word of God. Capitol Commission is a ministry of the church seeking to proclaim the gospel message, and to help believers mature through the verse-by-verse teaching of Scripture. In the Bible, we see God's great love for the world, especially for those who have been placed in authority. This is the foundation for our ministry to you.

The church is instructed to submit and to honor government leaders (Rom 13:1-7), and as a matter of first importance, to pray for their salvation (1 Tim 2:1-4). Our desire is witness God transform the hearts and lives of elected officials, lobbyists, and staff members. We apply this mandate to four major areas of making disciples: (1) *evangelize* those who have not experienced saving faith in Jesus Christ; (2) *establish* those who desire to grow in their faith and knowledge of Scripture; (3) *equip* those called to spiritual leadership; and, (4) *encourage* churches to participate with us in ministry.

Introduction

First Samuel 21 records the beginning of David's life as a fugitive. During this time, David would learn even greater trust in the Lord. According to the superscription, Psalms 34 and 56 were written during and after his time in Gath (21:10-15), and reflect David's hope for God's protection and provision. The historical account in 1 Samuel 21 helps to understand the correct and incorrect actions of David, but his psalms reflect the proper response of God's people whenever opposition becomes overwhelming. He was certainly confused during this time, but David needed to trust God and seek His protection and provision. In the lonely cave of Adullam (lit. "refuge"), David would certainly have much time to think deeply with regard to trust in God.

WHOSE AUTHORITY?

(22:1-5) Adullam was a rocky mountain stronghold in a valley between Philistia and Hebron, southwest of Jerusalem. The cave was within the tribal territory of Judah. In addition to approximately four hundred Israelite men, David's "brothers

and all this father's household" joined him in Adullam. They certainly came to comfort David, but his family may have also felt unsafe from Saul in Bethlehem. If Saul would attack his own family, he would certainly do so to David's (cf. 20:33).

THOSE WHO ARE TEMPTED AND TESTED FIND REFUGE IN THE SAVIOR (CF. LUKE 19:10; HEB 2:18).

David now became the leader of a group of men who were outlaws from society. "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" (22:2). It is impossible to read this verse without being mindful how those who are now in distress seek refuge in David's greatest son, the Lord Jesus Christ. The present day is the time of the Lord's rejection. The unbelieving world rejects and opposes God's people (cf. 1 Cor 2). Just as Saul pursued David as his enemy, so Satan pursues God's people as "a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" (1 Pet 5:8). During these times when those who obey God's word are opposed and rejected, God continues to call a people from this world by His grace and for His glory. Those who are tempted and tested find refuge in the Savior (cf. Luke 19:10; Heb 2:18).

The increasing number of outlaws who supported David against Saul's injustice, iniquity, and oppression would eventually lead to David's crowning as king of all Israel. It is often that God's people need to learn trust in times of difficulty and in blessing. God is faithful (2 Sam 22:31-32), and difficulties can strengthen trust in Him and be reminders of His grace. David's trust in God would lead to his coronation. "Some *boast* in chariots and some in horses, but we will boast in the name of the LORD, our God" (Ps 20:7).

David departed from Adullam to Mizpah (lit. "watchtower") of Moab. There he requested asylum for his family, which was reasonable since his great-grandmother was a Moabitess (Ruth 4:13-22). They were to stay with the Moabite king until David knew what God would do for him (1 Sam 22:3). In times of adversity and difficulty, it is challenging to trust God not only for our provisions, but also for those of our families. Trust must be directed entirely to the Lord for His provision.

(22:6-23) Verse 6 directs attention to Saul's activities, which are in obvious contrast to David's faith and trust in God. Saul

CAPITOL COMMISSION BIBLE STUDIES ~ GEORGIA

LEGISLATORS AND LOBBYISTS: TUESDAYS @ 7:30AM, 514 CLOB (DURING THE LEGISLATIVE SESSION)

STAFF: TUESDAYS @ NOON, 514 CLOB (CURRENTLY IN FURLOUGH)

held court under a tamarisk tree, with his spear in his hand. He had given fields and vineyards to members of his own tribe (22:7), which was exactly the type of actions that Samuel warned the people when they requested a king (8:11-18). Saul appealed to the tribal loyalties of his Benjamite warriors, which was a godless action that would contribute to ruinous divisions among the tribe following his death. Appeals to fleshly and temporal desires are always devastating (1 John 2:16).

In spite of his gifts to them (22:7), Saul accused his men of disloyalty because none provided him with the help he needed to kill David. Following his tirade, Doeg the Edomite informed Saul that David sought help from Ahimelech, the priest at Nob. It is evident that David sought to know the will of God, whereas Saul rebelled with selfish ambition from the will of God (22:10). David continually demonstrated that he was a man after God's own heart, while Saul continually submitted to his own selfish desires.

When Saul learned that the priests at Nob helped David, he ordered them to appear before him at court. Saul accused Ahimelech and the priests with helping David lead a revolt against him. Ahimelech admitted that he helped David but denied that there was any sort of rebellion against the throne. Indeed, he stated that David was his loyal subject. The fact that four hundred men joined David indicates the loss of confidence in Saul's leadership. A significant force was joining David (cf. 13:15), which may have been a temptation for him to seek the overthrow of the Lord's anointed. In order to indicate his qualifications as leader of Israel, he had to learn the necessity of resisting such temptations and to honor Saul.

Saul had become so overcome with his own ruthless desires that he could no longer respond to reasonable persuasion (22:16). His disregard for the will of God is evident by his command to kill the priests that had been appointed to serve the Lord. Saul pronounced the entire city of Nob to be guilty of treason, and ordered the immediate execution of every priest of the Lord at Nob. Saul's soldiers, however, respected the priesthood and would not execute those who were anointed as servants of the Lord (22:17). The foreigner Doeg the Edomite obeyed Saul's command entirely (22:19). Saul did not obey God's command with regard to the Amalekites (15:9), but was willing to slaughter the Nobites without God's authorization. The slaughter was terrible and Saul was responsible for his action (22:21), even though it was a fulfillment of God's curse against Eli's family line for their sinfulness (2:27-36). Only the priest Abiathar escaped with his life, and fled to David for refuge with him in the desert.

The episode is a reminder to not seek revenge or vindication, but to trust God who will avenge and repay (Deut 32:35; cf. Ps 52; Rom 12:19). Moreover, it is an exhortation to

seek first the will of God. Neither Saul nor Eli submitted to God's authority, and therefore God refused them and their family lines (2:33; 13:14). Conversely, those who submit to God's authority will experience life "abundantly" (John 10:10). Consider who controls your life: God or self? Do you inquire of God's Word for the decisions you make, or do you make decisions without seeking God's will? The question I ask myself in studying this section is also whether I submit to God's authority or disobey it by not making God's Word and prayer the means of blessing and success in life.

... THOSE WHO SUBMIT TO GOD'S AUTHORITY WILL EXPERIENCE LIFE "ABUNDANTLY" (JOHN 10:10). CONSIDER WHO CONTROLS YOUR LIFE: GOD OR SELF?

WHOSE HAND?

(23:1-29) It is noteworthy to consider all the uses of "hand" in this chapter. Saul hoped that David would be delivered into his hand (23:7). The men of Keilah planned to surrender David and his men "into the hand of Saul" (23:12). God, however, "did not deliver them into his hand" (23:14). In 18:10-11, Saul held the spear in his hand, whereas David played the harp with his hand. The one holding the spear could not seize the one holding the harp. Eventually, the one holding the spear will have everything taken from his hands, but the one holding the harp will possess a kingdom. The theme will even continue into the next chapter (24:6). "Hand" is a figure for power throughout these chapters. The point is obvious: what is in your hand, or whose hand sustains you?

While living in the desert regions of Judah, David learned that the Philistines were looting the threshing floors of the nearby Judahite city of Keilah. David was not hasty in his desire to help, but sought the will of the Lord. Once God's will was revealed through Abiathar, David led his forces in victory, and thereby saved the people of Keilah (23:1-6). Once Saul learned of the victory, he amassed his forces (23:7-8). David sought God again for guidance (23:9-14).

THE POINT IS OBVIOUS: WHAT IS IN YOUR HAND, OR WHOSE HAND SUSTAINS YOU?

David obeyed God and led his troops to safety in the desert strongholds near the Judahite city of Ziph. To encourage him and renew his pledge of loyalty to David, Jonathan visited David at Horesh. The Ziphites informed Saul that David was staying near the city, but God delivered David by sending a Philistine threat, which demanded Saul's response. David responded to God's authority by not retaliating, and the Lord blessed him for his restraint.