

1SAMUEL 22: 1 David therefore departed there, and escaped to the cave of Adullam. When his brothers and all his father's house heard it, they went down there to him.

David flees to the cave of Adullam, where he is joined by four hundred men of various descriptions, 1Sam 22:1, 1Sam 22:2. He goes afterwards to Moab; and by the advice of the prophet Gad, to the forest of Hareth, 1Sam 22:3-5. Saul, suspecting his servants of infidelity, upbraids them, 1Sam 22:6-8. Doeg informs him of David's coming to Nob; of his being entertained by Ahimelech; on which Saul slays Ahimelech and all the priests, to the number of eighty-five, and destroys the city of Nob, 1Sam 22:9-19. Abiathar, the son of Ahimelech, only escapes; he joins with David, by whom he is assured of protection, 1Sam 22:20-23.

Verse 1

The cave Adullam - This was in the tribe of Judah, and, according to Eusebius and Jerome, ten miles eastward of what they call Eleutheropolis.

1SAMUEL 22: 2 Everyone who was in distress, and everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was discontented, gathered themselves to him; and he became captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men.

Verse 2

And every one that was in distress - debt - discontented - It is very possible that these several disaffected and exceptionable characters might at first have supposed that David, unjustly persecuted, would be glad to avail himself of their assistance that he might revenge himself upon Saul, and so they in the mean time might profit by plunder, etc. But if this were their design they were greatly disappointed, for David never made any improper use of them. They are never found plundering or murdering; on the contrary, they always appear under good discipline, and are only employed in services of a beneficent nature, and in defense of their country. Whatever they were before they came to David, we find that he succeeded in civilizing them, and making profitable to the state those who were before unprofitable. It is not necessary to strain the words of the original in order to prove that these were oppressed people, and not exceptionable characters, as some have done.

1SAMUEL 22: 3 David went there to Mizpeh of Moab, and he said to the king of Moab, "Please let my father and my mother come out with you, until I know what God will do for me."

Verse 3

He said unto the king of Moab - David could not trust his parents within the reach of Saul, and he found it very inconvenient to them to be obliged to go through all the fatigues of a military life, and therefore begs the king of Moab to give them shelter. The king of Moab, being one of Saul's

enemies, would be the more ready to oblige a person from whom he might at least expect friendship, if not considerable services.

1SAMUEL 22: 4 He brought them before the king of Moab; and they lived with him all the while that David was in the stronghold.

1SAMUEL 22: 5 The prophet Gad said to David, "Don't stay in the stronghold. Depart, and go into the land of Judah."

Then David departed, and came into the forest of Hereth.

Verse 5

Get thee into the land of Judah - Gad saw that in this place alone he could find safety.

1SAMUEL 22: 6 Saul heard that David was discovered, and the men who were with him. Now Saul was sitting in Gibeah, under the tamarisk tree in Ramah, with his spear in his hand, and all his servants were standing about him.

Verse 6

Saul abode in Gibeah - Saul and his men were in pursuit of David, and had here, as is the general custom in the East, encamped on a height, for so Ramah should be translated, as in the margin. His spear, the ensign of power (see on 1Sam 18:11 (note)), was at hand, that is stuck in the ground where he rested, which was the mark to the soldiers that there was their general's tent.

And all his servants were standing about him - That is, they were encamped around him, or perhaps here there is a reference to a sort of council of war called by Saul for the purpose of delivering the speech recorded in the following verses.

1SAMUEL 22: 7 Saul said to his servants who stood about him, "Hear now, you Benjamites! Will the son of Jesse give everyone of you fields and vineyards, will he make you all captains of thousands and captains of hundreds,

1SAMUEL 22: 8 that all of you have conspired against me, and there is no one who discloses to me when my son makes a treaty with the son of Jesse, and there is none of you who is sorry for me, or discloses to me that my son has stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait, as at this day?"

Verse 8

There is none that showeth me - He conjectured that Jonathan had made a league with David to dethrone him, and he accuses them of disloyalty for not making the discovery of this unnatural treason. Now it was impossible for any of them to show what did not exist, no such league having ever been made between David and Jonathan.

1SAMUEL 22: 9 Then Doeg the Edomite, who stood by the servants of Saul, answered and said, "I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub."

Verse 9

Doeg the Edomite, which was set over the servants of Saul - In 1Sam 21:7 he is said to be the chiefest of the herdmen that belonged to Saul, and the Septuagint intimate that he was over the mules of Saul. Probably he was what we call the king's equery or groom.

1SAMUEL 22: 10 He inquired of the LORD for him, gave him food, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine."

Verse 10

And he inquired of the Lord for him - This circumstance is not related in history; but it is probably true, as David would most naturally wish to know where to direct his steps in this very important crisis.

1SAMUEL 22: 11 Then the king sent to call Ahimelech the priest, the son of Ahitub, and all his father's house, the priests who were in Nob: and they came all of them to the king.

1SAMUEL 22: 12 Saul said, "Hear now, you son of Ahitub." He answered, "Here I am, my lord."

1SAMUEL 22: 13 Saul said to him, "Why have you conspired against me, you and the son of Jesse, in that you have given him bread, and a sword, and have inquired of God for him, that he should rise against me, to lie in wait, as at this day?"

1SAMUEL 22: 14 Then Ahimelech answered the king, and said, "Who among all your servants is so faithful as David, who is the king's son-in-law, and is taken into your council, and is honourable in your house?"

Verse 14

And who is so faithful - The word נאמן neeman, which we here translate faithful, is probably the name of an officer. See the note on Num 12:7.

1SAMUEL 22: 15 Have I today begun to inquire of God for him? Be it far from me! Don't let the king impute anything to his servant, nor to all the house of my father; for your servant knows nothing of all this, less or more."

Verse 15

Did I then begin to inquire of God - He probably means that his inquiring now for David was no new thing, having often done so before, and without ever being informed it was either wrong in itself, or displeasing to the king. Nor is it likely that Ahimelech knew of any disagreement between Saul and David. He knew him to be the king's son-in-law, and he treated him as such.

1SAMUEL 22: 16 The king said, "You shall surely die, Ahimelech, you, and all your father's house."

1SAMUEL 22: 17 The king said to the guard who stood about him, "Turn, and kill the priests of the LORD; because their hand also is with David, and because they knew that he fled, and didn't disclose it to me." But the servants of the king wouldn't put out their hand to fall on the priests of the LORD.

Verse 17

But the servants of the king would not - They dared to disobey the commands of the king in a case of such injustice, inhumanity, and irreligion.

1SAMUEL 22: 18 The king said to Doeg, "Turn and attack the priests!" Doeg the Edomite turned, and he attacked the priests, and he killed on that day eighty-five people who wore a linen ephod.

Verse 18

And Doeg - fell upon the priests - A ruthless Edomite, capable of any species of iniquity.

Fourscore and five persons - The Septuagint read τριακοσιους και πεντε ανδρας, three hundred and five men; and Josephus has three hundred and eighty-five men. Probably the eighty-five were priests; the three hundred, the families of the priests; three hundred and eighty-five being the whole population of Nob.

That did wear a linen ephod - That is, persons who did actually administer, or had a right to administer, in sacred things. The linen ephod was the ordinary clothing of the priests.

1SAMUEL 22: 19 He struck Nob, the city of the priests, with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and nursing babies, and cattle and donkeys and sheep, with the edge of the sword.

Verse 19

And Nob - smote he with the edge of the sword - This is one of the worst acts in the life of Saul; his malice was implacable, and his wrath was cruel, and there is no motive of justice or policy by which such a barbarous act can be justified.

1SAMUEL 22: 20 One of the sons of Ahimelech, the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped, and fled after David.

Verse 20

Abiathar, escaped - This man carried with him his sacerdotal garments, as we find from 1Sam 23:6, 1Sam 23:9.

1SAMUEL 22: 21 Abiathar told David that Saul had slain the LORD's priests.

1SAMUEL 22: 22 David said to Abiathar, "I knew on that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul. I am responsible for the death of all the persons of your father's house."

Verse 22

I knew it that day - When I saw Doeg there, I suspected he would make the matter known to Saul.

I have occasioned the death of all the persons - I have been the innocent cause of their destruction.

1SAMUEL 22: 23 Stay with me, don't be afraid; for he who seeks my life seeks your life. For with me you shall be in safeguard."

Verse 23

He that seeketh my life seeketh thy life - The enmity of Saul is directed against thee as well as against me, and thou canst have no safety but in being closely attached to me; and I will defend thee even at the risk of my own life. This he was bound in duty and conscience to do.