FIRST SAMUEL

Chapter 22

*David at Adullam and Mizpah*

**David left Gath and escaped to the cave of Adullam. When his brothers and his father’s household heard about it, they went down to him there. 2 All those who were in distress or in debt or discontented gathered around him, and he became their leader. About four hundred men were with him. 3 From there David went to Mizpah in Moab and said to the king of Moab, “Would you let my father and mother come and stay with you until I learn what God will do for me?” 4 So he left them with the king of Moab, and they stayed with him as long as David was in the stronghold. 5 But the prophet Gad said to David, “Do not stay in the stronghold. Go into the land of Judah.” So David left and went to the forest of Hereth.**

**22:1** *cave of Adullam.* See 2Sa 23:13; Ge 38:1; Jos 12:15; 15:35; 1Ch 11:15 and note on Ps 142 title. (CSB)

**22:2** *four hundred men were with him.* David, officially an outlaw, was joined by others in similar circumstances, so that he began to develop the power base that would sustain him throughout his later years as king. (CSB)

**22:3** *Mizpah in Moab.* Precise location unknown. (CSB)

 *let my father and mother come and stay with you.* The king of Moab was a natural ally for David because Saul had warred against him (see 14:47) and David’s own great-grandmother was a Moabitess (see Ru 4:13, 22). (CSB)

**22:4** *stronghold.* Perhaps a specific fortress, but more likely a reference to a geographical area in which it was easy to hide (see 23:14; 2Sa 5:17; 23:14). (CSB)

**22:5** *prophet Gad.* The king-designate is now served also by a prophet. Later a priest would come to him (v. 20) and complete the basic elements of a royal entourage—and they were all refugees from Saul’s administration. This is the first appearance of the prophet who later assisted David in musical arrangements for the temple services (see 2Ch 29:25), wrote a history of David’s reign (see 1Ch 29:29) and confronted David with the Lord’s rebuke for his sin of numbering the Israelites (see 2Sa 24:11–25). *forest of Hereth.* Located in the tribal area of Judah. (CSB)

*Saul Kills the Priests of Nob*

**6 Now Saul heard that David and his men had been discovered. And Saul, spear in hand, was seated under the tamarisk tree on the hill at Gibeah, with all his officials standing around him. 7 Saul said to them, “Listen, men of Benjamin! Will the son of Jesse give all of you fields and vineyards? Will he make all of you commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds? 8 Is that why you have all conspired against me? No one tells me when my son makes a covenant with the son of Jesse. None of you is concerned about me or tells me that my son has incited my servant to lie in wait for me, as he does today.” 9 But Doeg the Edomite, who was standing with Saul’s officials, said, “I saw the son of Jesse come to Ahimelech son of Ahitub at Nob. 10 Ahimelech inquired of the Lord for him; he also gave him provisions and the sword of Goliath the Philistine.” 11 Then the king sent for the priest Ahimelech son of Ahitub and his father’s whole family, who were the priests at Nob, and they all came to the king. 12 Saul said, “Listen now, son of Ahitub.” “Yes, my lord,” he answered. 13 Saul said to him, “Why have you conspired against me, you and the son of Jesse, giving him bread and a sword and inquiring of God for him, so that he has rebelled against me and lies in wait for me, as he does today?” 14 Ahimelech answered the king, “Who of all your servants is as loyal as David, the king’s son-in-law, captain of your bodyguard and highly respected in your household? 15 Was that day the first time I inquired of God for him? Of course not! Let not the king accuse your servant or any of his father’s family, for your servant knows nothing at all about this whole affair.” 16 But the king said, “You will surely die, Ahimelech, you and your father’s whole family.” 17 Then the king ordered the guards at his side: “Turn and kill the priests of the Lord, because they too have sided with David. They knew he was fleeing, yet they did not tell me.” But the king’s officials were not willing to raise a hand to strike the priests of the Lord. 18 The king then ordered Doeg, “You turn and strike down the priests.” So Doeg the Edomite turned and struck them down. That day he killed eighty-five men who wore the linen ephod. 19 He also put to the sword Nob, the town of the priests, with its men and women, its children and infants, and its cattle, donkeys and sheep. 20 But Abiathar, a son of Ahimelech son of Ahitub, escaped and fled to join David. 21 He told David that Saul had killed the priests of the Lord. 22 Then David said to Abiathar: “That day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, I knew he would be sure to tell Saul. I am responsible for the death of your father’s whole family. 23 Stay with me; don’t be afraid; the man who is seeking your life is seeking mine also. You will be safe with me.”**

**22:6** *tamarisk tree.* See note on 14:2. (CSB)

 *Gibeah.* See note on 10:5. (CSB)

**22:7** *men of Benjamin.* Saul, a Benjamite (9:1–2; 10:21), seeks to strengthen his position with his own officials by emphasizing tribal loyalty. David was from the tribe of Judah (see note on 16:1; 2Sa 2:4). (CSB)

 *give all of you fields and vineyards.* Saul does exactly what Samuel had warned him that he would do—become as the kings of other nations (see 8:14). His actions are contrary to the covenantal ideal for kingship (see notes on 8:7; 10:25). (CSB)

 *commanders of thousands and of hundreds.* See 8:12. (CSB)

**22:10** *Ahimelech inquired of the Lord for him.* See note on 21:1. (CSB)

**22:17** *They knew he was fleeing.* How much the priests really knew is not clear. David himself had not told them (see 21:2–3, 8). (CSB)

**22:18** *linen ephod.* See note on 2:18. (CSB)

**22:19** *put to the sword Nob.* Thus the prophecy of judgment against the house of Eli is fulfilled (see 2:31). (CSB)

**22:20** *Abiathar … escaped and fled to join David.* See note on v. 5. Abiathar brought the high priestly ephod with him (see 23:6) and subsequently “inquired of the Lord” for David (see 23:2 and note; see also 23:4, 9; 30:7–8; 2Sa 2:1; 5:19, 23). He served as high priest until removed from office by Solomon for participating in the rebellion of Adonijah (see 1Ki 2:26–27). (CSB)