

• *David recovers his sense of responsibility and begins to act like a future king*

### 1. Responsibility for the needy

God knows how to give us a break when we are desperate. David was given a short time where things were relatively easier for him. Adullam was not the palace, but it gave David a time to recover. At Nob and at Gath David was at his worst but he has now got back his poise after the terrible days when he felt close to losing his life and had no idea where to run to. He now recovered his sense of responsibility and began to act like a future king.

1. **A future king will take responsibility for the needy.** This is the very essence of what the Bible means by 'kingship'. David begins with his own family. They have joined him<sup>□1</sup>, because they are in danger. Saul is likely to get at him through his family. They had been critical and scornful of him in days gone by<sup>□2</sup>, but he does not hold that against them. He is likely to be in danger for a while yet so he must find some place for them to be safe.

□1 22:1

□2 16:11; 17:28

### 2. Learning to lead a very varied company of people

• *Later, David was a brilliant king, soldier and politician*

2. **A future king must learn to lead a very varied company of people.** The people who joined David were an unplanned army of supporters<sup>□1</sup>. Some were in trouble and debt and no doubt thought it useful to 'disappear'. Some had perhaps suffered under Saul's tyranny. Some were dissidents. Some were good men like the prophet Gad and priest Abiathar. But it was just the kind of mixture that David would have to lead when he became king. What better time to start learning how to be a good leader? Later, David was a brilliant king, soldier and politician. Where did he get his training? In the cave of Adullam!

□1 22:2

• *He sends his family to Moab*

So he took care of people, beginning with practical provision for his family<sup>□1</sup>. He sends them to Moab. Perhaps he had a good relationship with the Moabites, since his great-grandfather had married a Moabitess<sup>□2</sup>.

□1 22:3-4

□2 Ruth 4:21-22

### 3. Cannot rest for ever

• *He must take the initiative - finding out what is happening and doing what needs to be done*

3. **A future king cannot rest for ever.** Soon David has recovered and Gad advised him he must not stay too long at Adullam but must 'go into the land of Judah'<sup>□1</sup>. A future king cannot be simply waiting around in a cave of Adullam, in the borderlands between Judah and Philistine territory. He must take the initiative. He must be well-informed and well-known among the people of God. Leadership is not passively enjoying a title. It is a matter of aggressively finding out what is happening and doing what needs to be done. 'Go into the land of Judah!' is the word David needs at this time. He must not remain outside the centre of action. If (as I believe) 'stronghold' refers to the cave itself, it must have been easy to protect. Perhaps (like the caves of Qumran) it was high up on the side of a cliff.

□1 22:5

• *Gad's word is an appeal for a step of faith*

Gad's word is an appeal for a step of faith. To go back into the central land of Judah is to trust in God to keep him in the place where Saul is seeking David.

### 4. Must continue to cope with unreasonable hostility

4. **He must continue to cope with unreasonable hostility.** It is not simply that David has to put up with an incident or two. The hostility he is receiving is self-righteous; Saul thinks God is on his side<sup>□1</sup>. It is pompous; we can just imagine Saul holding court under a tamarisk tree, with all his officials around him<sup>□2</sup>. It is vicious; Saul feels quite happy to appeal to greed ('Will the son of Jesse give. . .

□1 see 23:7

□2 22:6

• *Saul – pompous, vicious and scornful*

fields and vineyards? <sup>□3</sup>) and to ambition ('Will he make all of you commanders...?' <sup>□3</sup>). It is scornful; he will not even use David's name ('the son of Jesse,' he calls him).

<sup>□3</sup> 22:7

• *Saul puts the blame on others*

He puts all the blame on others, blaming his servants ('no-one tells me'), his son and David himself<sup>□1</sup>. He seems to have forgotten the spear-throwing!

<sup>□1</sup> 22:8

• *David learns to stay cool under an unreasonable enemy*

No injustice is harder to face than injustice which is illogical and unreasonable. It is infuriating to have an enemy one cannot reason with! But David has to live with it. If he cannot stay cool under an unreasonable enemy, how will he be able to be king? There will be many who are like Saul that he will have to relate to.

## 5. Persist in faith amidst complex responsibility

### 5. He had to persist in faith amidst complex responsibility.

• *Coping with guilt-feelings over the tragedy at Nob*

First he has to cope with guilt-feelings over a tragedy. Doeg had witnessed the help Ahimelech had given David and now sought to ingratiate himself with Saul by telling all he knew<sup>□1</sup>. Saul, as vicious as ever, summons the family of Ahimelech, lashes out at them with violent slander<sup>□2</sup>, refuses any explanation<sup>□3</sup> and orders the death penalty<sup>□4</sup>. When his servants hinder such obvious cruelty and injustice<sup>□5</sup>, Doeg is willing to do the work<sup>□6</sup>, killing the entire company of eighty-priests and annihilating the population of the town of Nob<sup>□7</sup>. Only Abiathar escapes<sup>□8</sup>, reports to David<sup>□9</sup> who blames himself<sup>□10</sup> and takes Abiathar into safety among his own men<sup>□10</sup>.

<sup>□1</sup> 22:9-10

<sup>□2</sup> 22:11-13

<sup>□3</sup> 22:14-15

<sup>□4</sup> 22:16

<sup>□5</sup> 22:17

<sup>□6</sup> 22:18

<sup>□7</sup> 22:18-19

<sup>□8</sup> 22:20

<sup>□9</sup> 22:21

<sup>□10</sup> 22:22

• *David refuses to let anything move him*

What a stressful life. How bad David must have felt about Nob. If had not been going through such a bad phase of panic and unbelief, the people of Nob would still be alive. It was all a rich and varied experience. In the midst of it all David refuses to let anything move him. He settles into the task of leadership. Soon the four hundred will be six hundred<sup>□1</sup>. His men love him (as is shown by the story of 2 Samuel 23:13-17, coming from the same period of his life). He was trusting in God, as his psalms from this period reveal. Whatever failures he had been through, however much he felt bad<sup>□2</sup>, he persisted in faith. In all these events Saul is deteriorating but David is maturing. In the kingdom of God nothing ever stands still. Saul is moving steadily towards reaping the results of his wickedness. David is growing steadily in spiritual experience of all kinds. Saul is maturing himself for judgement. David is being matured for kingship.

<sup>□1</sup> 23:13

<sup>□2</sup> 22:22

• *David grows steadily in maturity for kingship while Saul moves steadily towards judgement*



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