

God Cares for and Protects Us in Surprising Ways

1 Samuel 22

Good morning everyone! This morning, we *continue* our study in the OT Bk of **1 Sam, Ch 22**. David is God's *next* chosen king of Israel, but he's *on the run* as an innocent *fugitive* and *outlaw*, and King Saul is trying to *kill* him. Today, we'll study *how* God *protects* David from Saul in *surprising* ways. But that should *not* surprise those of us who *know* how *Creative* God is! God *often* cares for and protects us in *surprising* ways. Let's get started with prayer:

Dear Father, we *praise* You. You're *not a boring, predictable* God. You always *surprise* us by *how Creative* You are, especially *how* You *take care of* and *protect* us. *Thank* you that You *protected* us from 2 *deadly* hurricanes. We ask you to *aid, comfort* and *help* so many who're *suffering* after those 2 storms. And we ask You to save us *once again* from Hurricane Beta.

Father, this morning, we *acknowledge* You are the God of *All Comfort*, so we ask you to *comfort* Sister Anne and her family & friends in the death of her mom. We pray for *others* who're *still* grieving the loss of loved ones. We ask You, our *All-Powerful* Lord, to *miraculously heal* Bro. Todd, according to Your will, and to be with the entire Guidry family. We pray for others who're *sick* or in *financial* or *any need* that You *prove* Yourself the *Faithful* God You are.

Now, as we study Your Holy *Word*, teach us by Your Holy *Spirit*. In Jesus' *Mighty* Name, Amen.

In our study *last* time in **1 Sam 21**, God miraculously *spared* David's life when he *foolishly* escaped to the Philistines. Now let's *find out* what happened *next* when David *returned* to Israel:

1 Sam 22:1 So David left Gath and escaped to the cave of Adullam [Heb = *refuge*]. When David's brothers and his father's whole family heard, they went down and joined him there. **2** In addition, every man who was desperate, in debt, or discontented rallied around him, and he became their leader. About 400 men were with him.

Our 1st *surprise* in this narrative is the *place* God provided for David to escape to as a fugitive. A *dark, dank, dirty* cave! In Heb, "Adullam" means "refuge".

Let's see *where* the cave of Adullam is located in Israel. Adullam is about *half-way between* Gath, in Philistine territory, and Bethlehem, David's *hometown*. Today, you can visit this cave in Israel. It's *not a hospitable* place, but God *provided* it when David was *homeless*.

→Sometimes the *physical* or *emotional* shelter God provides in our time of *need* may *not* be what we would choose, but nevertheless, God *proves* He's *still* taking care of us!

Because David is now *persona non grata* in the eyes of *paranoid* King Saul, David's *whole* family is in *danger*. So for their protection, they *join* David to *hide out* in this cave.

A 2nd way God *surprises* us in this account is how *many* men in Israel *flock* to David to become his *de facto* army and bodyguards. But this is *no* accident. God directs these men to *join* David! We see a NT parallel in how *young* men and women *flocked* to Jesus to be *His* disciples!

In vs 2, the men following David are *Desperate*, in *Debt* or *Discontented*! David shows us his *extraordinary* ability as a leader to *forge* this *motley* crew of *misfits* and *malcontents* into a *lean, mean, fighting machine* of 400. Later it will grow to 600 [**1 Sam 25:13**]. 37 of these *brave* warriors will become David's famous "37 Mighty Men" who accomplish *outstanding* military *exploits*, like a *combo* of our modern Secret Service Agents, Green Berets and Navy Seals!

Here, David begins to *resemble* the famous English folk hero, Robin Hood, with his band of Merry Men pursued by the evil Sheriff of Nottingham.

→It's the *mark* of a *good* leader, and a *good* Christian, to *use* the *hand* God *deals* us in life for His Glory. We must *work hard* to *succeed* using the *limited* abilities, people and resources God

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entrusts to us. David did it. Jesus did it. And we can do it too—with God's help!

1 Sam 22:3 From there David went to Mizpeh of Moab where he said to the king of Moab, "Please let my father [Jesse] and mother stay with you until I know what God will do for me." 4 So he left them in the care of the king of Moab, and they stayed with him the whole time David was in the stronghold [Heb: *masada*].

A 3rd thing that *surprises* us is *how* God takes care of David's *aging* parents. But 1st, David *obeys* the 5th of the 10 Commandments, which is God's command for *us* to *honor* our father and mother. In the NT, Jesus *interprets* the 5th Commandment to mean that we *take care of* our parents *financially* and in *other ways until* they die [**Mk 7:1-13**].

→I want to *commend* Anne and Dan and their children for their *loving care* for Anne's mom Virginia until her death this week. I *also* commend Kelly and his family for their care for Kelly's mom and dad, and *all* of you like, Debbie, Debi, Judy and Everette who've taken care of your elderly moms and others of you who've taken care of your aging parents. You've all *obeyed* God's 5th Commandment to *honor* your parents. I pray you children will grow up to do the *same*.

The nation of Moab was Israel's *enemy*. Why would David *trust* the king of Moab, Israel's enemy, to take care of his parents? Because David's *great grandmother* Ruth was *from* Moab!

Mt 1:5 Boaz fathered Obed by Ruth, Obed fathered Jesse, 6 and Jesse fathered King David.

David's father Jesse was ¼ Moabite, and David was 1/8 Moabite. So it was *logical* for David to take his parents to *distant relatives* in Moab for *protection* from King Saul! God *surprises* us by using *even* Israel's *enemy* Moab to help David's *family* in their hour of need!

A 4th way God *surprises* us is God sends His prophet to *guide* David *just* when he needs it *most*!

1 Sam 22:5 Then the prophet Gad said to David, "Don't stay in the stronghold [Heb: *masada*]. Leave and return to the land of Judah." So David left and went to the forest of Hereth.

Let's look at our map again: Apparently, David returns from *Moab* and *hides out* on Israel's high *plateau* and *escarpment* Masada, famous 1,000 years *later* as Israel's *last stand* in the Roman conquest in 70 AD. In ancient times, this was a virtually *impregnable* fortress, yet God tells David *not* to stay there, but *return* to *Judah* where David will be *vulnerable* to Saul's attacks.

Why does God tell David to *leave* a place of *safety* and *go* to a place of *danger*? Does that *surprise* you? Could God be *building* David's *faith* and *trust* in God to take care of Him! Yes!

→Why does God sometimes allow *you* and *me* to experience danger? One reason is because *we* often put *ourselves* in danger! But another reason is so we'll *learn* to trust God more!

God *proves* His faithfulness to David *another* way by *not* leaving David *alone*. Instead, God guides David *through* God's prophet Gad. Today, we have the Bible to guide us, *not* a prophet.

Now *contrast* God's *care* and *protection* of David and his family with King Saul, who has *no* word from God the *rest* of his life! What a *horrible* place to be *without* God's Word or guidance!

1 Sam 22:6 Saul heard that David and his men had been discovered. At that time Saul was in Gibeah, sitting under the tamarisk tree at the high place. His spear was in his hand, and all his servants were standing around him.

Now the scene *changes*, and we're at Saul's *pow wow* with his royal *henchmen*. Instead of *sitting on* his throne, Saul is sitting under a *shade* tree. And Saul is *suspicious* of everyone, so he's always *clutching* his spear! And *sure 'nuff*, Saul's spies report David's *whereabouts*!

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1 Sam 22:7 Saul said to his servants, “Listen, men of Benjamin: Is Jesse’s son [= David] going to give all of you fields and vineyards? Do you think he’ll make all of you commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds? **8** That’s why all of you have conspired against me! Nobody tells me when my own son makes a covenant with Jesse’s son. None of you cares about me or tells me that my son [= Jonathan] has stirred up my own servant [= David] to wait in ambush for me, as is the case today.”

Saul throws a 1st Class Pity Party! I throw some pretty good pity parties of my own, so be glad I don’t invite you! ☺

Saul *stokes the fear and greed* of his kinsmen from the tribe of *Benjamin* by telling them that *if* David, from the Tribe of *Judah*, becomes king, David won’t give them *cushy* government jobs and *perks* anymore. Saul *accuses* his loyal bodyguards of *conspiring* against him by *not* jumping on his *anti-David bandwagon* and by *withholding* intelligence reports. Notice Saul can’t *bring* himself to call David *or* his son Jonathan *by name*. And Saul has become so *paranoid* he *projects* on to David that David is waiting in *ambush* to *assassinate* Saul, which is the *very* thing Saul *himself* is trying to do to David! **1 Sam** is a textbook for *Psychology 101*!

It’s fascinating Saul has *lost* his *charisma* and *influence* as king, so that he *resorts* to *bribery* and *fear* to *salvage* the *allegiance* of his men, whereas David *naturally attracts* men’s *loyalty*!

→Satan is *no* different: Satan gets the *allegiance* of evil people through *bribing* them with sinful toys and *fanning the flames of fear* about what they’ll *lose* if they *follow* God. Don’t *fall* for Satan’s *lies*! Yes, serving God *costs* us. But serving God *also* brings *great, eternal rewards*!

1 Sam 22:9 Then Doeg the Edomite, who was in charge of Saul’s servants, answered: “I saw Jesse’s son come to Ahimelech son of Ahitub at Nob. **10** Ahimelech inquired of the LORD for him and gave him provisions. He also gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine.”

At last, Saul finds a *kindred spirit*! Doeg was from Edom, one of Israel’s enemy countries Saul had conquered. Doeg is a *greedy mercenary* trying to get on Saul’s *good side*. Doeg *tattles* to Saul that Israel’s high priest helped David, which we read in **1 Sam, Ch 21:1-9**.

1 Sam 22:11 The king sent messengers to summon Ahimelech the priest, son of Ahitub, and his father’s whole family, who were priests in Nob. All of them came to the king. **12** Then Saul said, “Listen, son of Ahitub!” “I’m at your service, my lord,” he said.

Let’s go back to our map again: Saul is in *Gibeah*, and the priests are *not far away* in *Nob*. The *unsuspecting* family of priests appear before the king, *not* realizing it will be their *last journey*!

Notice Saul calls Ahimelech “son of Ahitub”. Saul can’t call *anybody* by their *1st name*! This shows how Saul’s mental illness keeps getting *worse* as he *isolates* himself from others. This would be like *us* calling everyone by their *last name*: All right: Carmical, Lambright, Reeder, Manning, Guidry, Doherty—*get your act together!* Which we *always* need to do! ☺

Saul *also* distances himself from everyone, because Saul is increasingly *alienated* from *God*. And Saul’s *isolation* from God means he’s *estranged* from *everyone else*!

→Folks, if we aren’t *rightly related* to *God*, we *won’t* be *rightly related* to *anyone else*!

1 Sam 22:13 Saul asked him, “Why did you and Jesse’s son conspire against me? You gave him bread and a sword and inquired of God for him, so he could rise up against me and wait in ambush, as is the case today.”

Without informing these priests of the charge against them, Saul makes this *outlandishly false* accusation against them of *treason* in this *kangaroo court*!

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1 Sam 22:14 Ahimelech replied to the king: “Who among all your servants is as faithful as David? He is the king’s son-in-law, captain of your bodyguard, and honored in your house. **15** Was today the first time I inquired of God for him? Of course not! Please don’t let the king make an accusation against your servant or any of my father’s household, for your servant didn’t have any idea about all this.”

Ahimelech is *shocked* by Saul’s *false accusation*. Ahimelech’s *conscience* is *clear*, so he naturally *defends* himself with the *truth*, not knowing he’s digging his own grave! Ahimelech argues *convincingly* David is Saul’s *most faithful* servant. David is the king’s *son-in-law*, *captain* of the guard, and *honored* at the palace. Ahimelech *helped* David in *good faith* with *no idea* his actions would be *misconstrued* by the king.

But Saul *ain’t buyin’* the *truth* or *listenin’* to God *anymore!* In Saul’s *deranged* mind, David is the *Enemy* with a *Capital E!* Telling Saul the truth is like *waving red* in front of a *charging bull!*

1 Sam 22:16 But the king said, “You will die, Ahimelech—you and your father’s whole family!” **17** Then the king ordered the guards standing by him, “Turn and kill the priests of the LORD because they sided with David. For they knew he was fleeing, but they didn’t tell me.” But the king’s servants would not lift a hand to execute the priests of the LORD.

Saul flies into a *rage* and orders the *immediate execution* of the *entire* family of priests! This is *bad*:

- a. This *mock trial* was *illegal*, because in Israel, the *death penalty* could *not* be invoked, *if* there were *only one* witness [**Numb 35:30**].
- b. This was a *travesty of justice*, because Doeg *fails* to report how Ahimelech was *cautious* about helping David [**1 Sam 21:1**]. Saul *ignores* the high priest’s *heartfelt* testimony that he *thought* he was *helping* Saul. And Saul allows the priest to *incriminate* himself *without* a defense attorney.
- c. Earlier David *obeyed* the 5th Commandment to honor his father and mother, but here Saul and Doeg *disobey* the 9th Commandment by *committing perjury* in court!

These *trumped up* charges and verdict are *so obviously false* that Saul’s *own loyal* servants *refuse* to obey his *illegal, immoral* and *irrational* order to *kill* the priests! This is the 2nd time this has happened, because Saul *also invoked* the *death penalty* against his *own son* Jonathan, and his soldiers *also refused* to obey Saul’s order, and they did *not* kill Jonathan [**1 Sam 14:44-45**]!

God *surprises* us a 5th time, even in this *horrible* incident: Saul *destroys* his own reputation by *convincing* his men *once again* he’s no longer *qualified* to be king. This *further prepares* the way for David to *later* become God’s *anointed* and *qualified* king of Israel!

1 Sam 22:18 So the king said to Doeg, “Go and execute the priests!” So Doeg the Edomite went and executed the priests himself. On that day, he killed 85 men who wore linen ephods. **19** He also struck down Nob, the city of the priests, with the sword—both men and women, children and infants, oxen, donkeys, and sheep.

There’s *horrible irony* here: Saul *gladly* and *unjustly orders* the massacre of innocent men, women, children and even animals. *Remember* how Saul *refused* to obey God’s direct *order* to kill Israel’s enemy Agag, the Amalekite king and the Amalekite animals? [**1 Sam 15:9**]

Now, let me ask you: *Who’s to blame* for this *atrocity*? You may be *surprised* by the *answers*:

1. *David* is to blame for *lying* to Ahimelech and *claiming* to be on a *secret mission* for Saul [**1 Sam 21:2,8**]. If David had told the *truth*, Saul would have *probably* killed the priests *anyway*, but their *innocent* blood would *not* be on David’s conscience for *setting them up* and leaving them

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defenseless. However, we'll see in a moment, David *does* confess his wrong.

2. Doeg, a *rank* unbeliever, is *guilty* of *mass murder* as Saul's *hit man* and *hired gun*.
3. Saul bears the *primary, human* blame by *disobeying* God's 6th Commandment and committing *murder*. This *proves beyond any doubt* Saul is now *playing* for Satan's team!
4. But God Himself *allows* this tragedy, because 50 years *earlier* God gave the boy Samuel a prophecy about how the *consequences* of the *horrible* sins of Eli, the high priest and his 2 wicked sons would *result* in the deaths of their descendants. Ahimelech and his family were *direct* descendants of Eli and his 2 evil sons [1 Sam 2:30-36].

God's *Eternal Purposes* are *mysterious*: Doeg and Saul are *fully responsible* for this *holocaust* against Jewish priests, but ultimately, they were *carrying out* God's Will. God didn't *force* them do it; they *chose* to sin. But God *allowed* their free choice that accomplished *His Purposes*.

If this seems *unfathomable* to you, try this one for size: **Who's to blame for Jesus' Death?**

1. *Judas* betrayed Jesus, and *all His disciples* deserted Him in His hour of need.
2. *Caiaphas* and the *Jewish Sanhedrin* *condemned* Jesus to death in another *unfair, illegal* trial.
3. *Pilate* the Roman governor *sentenced* Jesus to death *unjustly* as an *Innocent Man*.
4. The *Jewish mob* cried "Crucify Him!" *demanding* the death of their *Perfect Messiah*.
5. The *Roman soldiers* were Jesus' *brutal* executioners. The soldiers were "*just following orders*", which was the Nuremberg defense at the Nazi war trials.
6. *You and I* are *guilty*, because the punishment for *all our sins* killed Jesus. But Jesus *willingly* bore the death we deserved to *save us*, because He *loves us*.
7. God Himself *gave* His *Only Perfect Son* Jesus as the Substitutionary Atonement to take away our sins and forgive us forever.

Is 53:6 We all went astray like sheep; we all have turned to our own way; and the LORD has punished Him for the iniquity of us all.

→Your eternal destiny depends on *how* you answer *this* question: Do you believe God did this *amazing* thing for you? Do you believe Jesus died for your sins and rose again? Will you trust in Jesus alone as your *only* Savior, Lord and God? If so, you'll forever be God's *forgiven* child. If you've never made this *most important* decision in life, I encourage you to trust in Christ today.

1 Sam 22:20 However, one of the sons of Ahimelech son of Ahitub escaped. His name was Abiathar, and he fled to David. **21** Abiathar told David that Saul had killed the priests of the LORD. **22** Then David said to Abiathar, "I knew that Doeg the Edomite was there that day and that he was sure to report to Saul. I myself am responsible for the lives of everyone in your father's family. **23** Stay with me. Don't be afraid, for the one who wants to take my life wants to take your life. You will be safe with me."

In spite of all the *bad* news in this *dark* ch in God's Word, we're *surprised* by God's Grace *shining* through! Abiathar, one of Ahimelech's sons, *escapes* and takes *refuge* with David. God always *preserves* a *remnant* of His People to *fight* and *win* another day.

→David shows *another* characteristic of a *good* leader here: David is *quick* to *admit* his guilt and *take responsibility* for his sins and mistakes! *We* should do the same!

In 1938, Roman Turski was a *Polish flier* returning home to Poland from France. His plane developed *engine trouble*, and he was forced to *land* for *repairs* in Vienna, which was occupied by the Germans. Turski got a *hotel* for the night, hoping to keep a *low profile*.

In the morning, as Turski stepped outside his hotel to buy souvenirs, he ran *smack* into a *frantic* man saying, "Gestapo! Gestapo!" Turski *rushed* the *fearful* man *upstairs* and *hid* him in his

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room. When the Gestapo arrived, they *questioned* Turski and *examined* his passport, but *failed* to search his room.

After they left, the *tearful* man asked Turski for help, using *gestures*, because *neither* man spoke the *same* language. Turski *showed* the man his *flight map* and *explained* that if he landed in *any* airport, the Nazis would *arrest* them *both*. So Turski *flew* his passenger and *landed* in a *field* just over the Polish border, and the *grateful* man went on his way. When Turski *landed* in Cracow for *refueling*, the police *searched* his plane, *accusing* him of helping a man *escape* from Vienna. Finding nothing, they let Turski go. He asked *why* the man was *wanted*? The man was *Jew*!

Turski served as a *fighter pilot* in the *Polish Air Force*. After Poland's *defeat*, he escaped to Rumania, was *captured* and sent to a concentration camp. Turski managed to *escape* and joined the *French Air Force*. When France fell, he went to *England* and fought in the Battle of Britain. On one of his missions, Turski *rammed* a German plane and *crash landed* his Spitfire in England. His skull was *fractured* in the crash, and the chief surgeon at the hospital said it was *hopeless* to operate.

Later, Turski *awoke* in the *recovery* ward and saw a narrow face looking down at him. The fellow in the *white smock* spoke: "Remember me? 3 years ago, you *saved* my life in Vienna." Then Turski learned the *rest* of the story.

The *Jewish fugitive* whom Turski had flown to safety eventually found his way to freedom in Scotland. He *learned* English and *read* in the newspaper that in the Battle of Britain, a *heroic Polish* pilot had shot down 5 enemy planes and *crash landed*. The newspaper said the pilot's name was Turski, and his condition was *hopeless*. Turski's former passenger *remembered* Turski's *name* because it had been *written* on the *flight map*. So the man asked the RAF in Edinburgh to fly him *immediately* to the hospital where Turski was *dying*.

Turski, his head wrapped in bandages, asked the man, "Why, would you come *here*? And why would the RAF fly you?" "Because", the man answered, "I thought that *at last* I could do something to show my *gratitude*. You see, I am a brain surgeon. I operated on you this morning!"

Little could Turski have *dreamed* that when he helped shield a *fugitive Jew* from the Nazis, he was *saving his human savior*!

And little could Ruth, the girl from Moab, have *realized* how God would use her *faith* in God a *century* later in the life of her great grandson David by helping *save* David's parents in Moab from certain death by Saul.

→Christian, God protects us in *surprising ways*. Let's *not just* be on the *receiving* end of those blessings! Let's be on the *giving* end! Little can we *imagine* how God can use *our* faith and obedience *today* to *bless* and even *save* someone in our family or a stranger 100 years from now!

Extras:

And in *temporary Exile*, David, the anointed, future *king* of Israel has God's *prophet* Gad on one side and God's *priest* Abiathar on the other side. This reminds us of the *Triple Office* of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is *Prophet, Priest* and *King*. He is *not* now *ruling* this world, but one day soon, Jesus will *return* to assume His *Rightful, Public Duties* as Prophet, Priest and King!