

it as the sun and moon stand in the sky that life is filled with persecution, ill-will, trial, difficulty, and many unexplained circumstances (cf. John 16:33). This is not a pessimism of despair; it is a recognition of the state of affairs. But what do we do with these things? That's the big issue. If we can recognize in them an opportunity to accept His purification, His manifestation of love, His endeavor to bring us more into the likeness of His Son, then we have gained by our experiences. We need to trust in the darkness (Isa. 50:10). Trench had it right when he wrote these lines:

"But oh, whatever of worst ill betide,
Choose not this manner to evade your woe;
Be true to God; on Him in faith abide,
And sure deliverance you at length shall know.

It may be that some path His hand will show
To your dear earthly homes; or He will shape
For you at length a way of glad escape."

NOTES:

THE BOOK OF FIRST SAMUEL

"The Priesthood with David"

1 Samuel 21, 22

Introduction

1. No man lives unto himself. What one does is inextricably bound up with the affairs of others. Hence, it was with David. His separation from Jonathan led him into an association with the divine priesthood. More problems ensued.

2. But the problems of David and the priesthood were associated. David remarks, ". . . for he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life; but with me thou shalt be in safeguard" (22:23). Those who are out to disrupt God's purpose in one life will do it with those who associate with that life. This is a principle of the Word. The greatest expression of this is by our Lord (John 15:18).

3. Look then into the contents of this chapter and you will see the interrelationships between David and the priests. How one life is intertwined with another. It also teaches that God's designs are never frustrated. Study these three ideas:

1. The priests NEEDED.

a. For retirement. 21:1, 2.

Apparently David didn't know where to go after Jonathan left him. God led his steps to Nob, a secluded place south of Gibeath, where he sought sanctuary with 86 priests.

It is noted that David lied on several occasions here. This is not condoned. Later he confessed it with the Lord (Psa. 119:29).

b. For refreshment. 21:3-6.

The shewbread is figured at this point. There were rules governing its use (Lev. 24:9; Ex. 19:15). Our Lord provided an explanation for the situation, noting that He is Lord of the Sabbath and holy things. Furthermore, people in apostasy or sin can lay no claim to holy matters (Matt. 12:3-5). It should be noted that Ahimelech apparently

had direct communication with God to give David the bread (22:10).

c. For rearmament 21:8, 9.

The sword of Goliath had been stored with this priestly compound as a memorial of the goodness of the Lord. To David it was a pledge of God's favour, hence he took it as a stimulus to faith.

NOTE It is admitted that these items are all just historical incidents. But they are more. Each contributes to the design of the Lord in the working out of His goals for David.

2. The priests BETRAYED.

The only comment one would desire to make in this section of the text is "But God." Through no apparent cause of their own, the priests are drawn into the conflict of Saul with David. They suffer terribly. **BUT GOD!**

a. The historical record. This includes:-

1) A setting. 22:6-10.

In Ramah Saul appeals to his own tribe for help against David (albeit he is king over all Israel). He denounces Jonathan. Only a stranger in Israel is willing to support his diabolical efforts.

2) A testimony. 22:11-15.

As a group, the priests deny the charges laid against them. They plead that they be not reckoned (imputed) to their account (v. 15). Their pertinent questions raised merely add fuel to a fire already burning in Saul's heart against them.

3) A murder. 22:16-19.

The bodyguard of Saul refuses to respond to his request for murder. The barbarous atrocities were carried out by a foreigner who apparently did not respect the Lord's own (Note: what a lesson for believers who may be drawn into that fearful activity of attacking God's blood-bought children, particularly

those in His service! Cf. 1 Cor, 4).

As David later laments (22:22), he was involved in this dreadful killing. It raises the question: could David have spared the priests had he been truthful about his mission? Harvests are inextricably joined to sown seeds. Sin is bitter to the sinner, but its consequences fall upon others!

b. The spiritual response. Psalm 52.

The Spirit of God has provided in the Word His inspired version of what was really going on. Here it is in outline form as found in the Psalm whose superscription assigns it to this incident.

1) Condemnation of Doeg. vv. 1-5.

a. Denunciation of his evil vv. 1-3.

b. Description of his fate. vv. 4, 5.

God will move against Doeg. His end is sealed. He's never heard of again in the Bible. What a tragic mention in history!

2) Contemplation of the righteous. vv. 6, 7.

a. Reverence for God (v. 6).

b. Folly of wicked (v. 7).

Here is satisfaction at the vindication of divine justice.

3) Confession of David vv. 8, 9.

a. Declaration of faith (v. 8).

b. Dedication of fervour (v. 9).

God will yet be the Winner! The contrast with the wicked is patent.

3. The priests PROTECTED. 22:20-23.

Protection for the lone survivor of the Ramah-Nob massacre is of the hand of the Lord. Through a miraculous flight, He finds safety with David, the Lord's anointed (v. 23). The word "safeguard" means "custody." God would see to this.

Conclusion What does this text mean to us today? Life surely is not a bed of roses. We can count upon