

STUDY 8

1 Samuel 21 - 24 **Seek and destroy**

Just for starters

Have you ever been stuck in a situation where you thought there was no way out? What happened?

Wild goose chase

Read 1 Samuel 21.1 - 22.23 and 23.15-28

Investigate

1. Chapters 21-23 depict David fleeing from Saul. Fill in the following table about these incidents.

Place of refuge	Who assists David?	Dilemma	Outcome
Nob (21.1)	21.4-9	21.3-6	22.9-10
		21.7	22.16-23
Gath (21.10)	21.13	21.11-12	21.15 - 22.1
The Cave of Adullam (22.1)	22.1	—	22.2
Mizpeh of Moab (22.3)	22.4	22.3	22.4
	22.5		22.5
Wilderness of Ziph (23.14)	23.14	23.14	23.14
Horesh (23.15)	23.16-17	23.15	23.16, 18
The Wilderness of Maon (23.24-25)	23.25	23.26	23.27-29

2. How does Saul's treatment of Nob compare with his treatment of the Amalekites? (15.15-16; 22.18-19)

Against the Lord's Anointed

In the midst of his rage against David, Saul commits a heinous crime: he has 85 anointed priests and their families killed (1 Sam 22.16-19). The scandal of this massacre is not just the loss of life, but that Saul lays his hand against men anointed to mediate the relationship between the Lord and his people. Rather than leading the nation under God, Saul has assaulted God himself by murdering his anointed ones. He has just jeopardised God's covenant with Israel.

What's more, Saul is now hunting another anointed one: David.

To the Rescue

Read 1 Samuel 23.1-14

Investigate

3. What crisis does Keilah face? (23.1)
4. What is David's purpose in coming to Keilah (23.2-4)? What is Saul's purpose in coming to Keilah? (23.8)

Think it through

5. How do David and Saul each relate to God in this episode? What does this tell us about relating to God?
6. In what ways are you like David when you relate to God? In what ways are you like Saul?

A close call

Read 1 Samuel 24.1-22

Investigate

8. How determined is Saul to capture David? (Compare 23.13 with 24.1-2.)

9. How do David's men react when they see Saul in David's cave? (24.4)

10. How does David treat Saul and why (24.6-13, cf. 22.17-19)?

11. What does Saul finally realise? (24.16-22; cf. 15.28)

Think it through

12. What is the significance of David cutting Saul's robe? (See 15.27-28)

13. When Jesus was crucified, the soldiers gambled for his clothing (John 19.23-24). In doing this, they unwittingly fulfilled Psalm 22.18. When it came to Jesus' tunic, the soldiers did not tear it. Although this fulfilment is widely recognised by readers of the Bible, many forget to ask what exactly is the meaning of the garments. Thinking about the role garments play in 1 Samuel, what might be the significance of the fact that Jesus' tunic remained untoned?

14. Throughout this study we have seen various people reading God's hand into their specific circumstances (e.g. Saul at Keilah, David's men in the cave). Is it right for us to read God into our circumstances? How do David's actions in this study help us to answer this? (see also 1Thess 5.15-22, Rom 8.28-29).

15. Certain Psalms are set during this part of David's life. They are Psalms 18, 34, 52, 54, 56, 57, 59, 63 and 142. These Psalms give us a glimpse into David's thoughts and emotions, much like a diary. Read Psalm 57. What is the context of the Psalm (in the title)? What is David's attitude to God and his own enemies?