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SILVER STAR BIBLE SCHOOL 2000

DAVID, A MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART

THE FUGITIVE BECOMES KING

Speaker: Bro. David Pride

Study #1: God hath delivered him into my hand.

Reading: 1 Samuel 23

My beloved brethren and sisters.

I'm sure we would all agree, that the power of example is very great. We live in a time when the world is presenting all kinds of role models to us. We see it reflected in our speech, in our conduct, in the clothing that we wear, the clothing that our children wear; these things may be testimonies to the greatness of an individual in this world's scheme of things, that has no greatness whatsoever as far as God is concerned, and sometimes, b&s, the role models are of the very lowest character altogether.

And the scriptures say something different: the scripture puts it this way, it says 'let this mind be in you which also is in Christ Jesus', and so we have from God the very highest, the very highest example that we can possibly emulate, that we can seek to follow, that we can love, b&s, to be like, because that's what role models are, everyone seems to have them. Someone they admire, someone they look up to, someone that they'd like to be with, and the fact of the matter is that for us, there's only One to emulate, and if we do it right, b&s, and by the grace of God, we will be like Him! That's the promise of God's Word.

And now I'm going to say something to you that is controversial; I've read the manual, relax brethren, I know what it says there about introducing controversial topics at the bible school, but this is not controversial from God's perspective, but it may be from ours, b&s, when we think of the man, David, it just may be from our perspective, because among all the godly and Christ-like role models, few stand out more than David. And you may say, why is that controversial? I agree with that totally! But I can't help but wonder what comes to our minds first when we think about David, b&s? Let me just ask you to ponder that for a moment: what comes to your mind first when you think of David? Do you think of the shepherd? some of the things that bro. Ron opened up to us and bro. Mike last night, about David. The giant killer, the poet, the song-writer, the musician, the king, the ancestor of the Lord Jesus Christ, or perhaps, b&s, and is it

more likely do you think, that this could be the case, that when we think of David we think of one who is a liar, one who coveted, one who committed adultery and murder? but I just ask you to ponder what comes to mind first in your thinking.

You know, the first list that we just mentioned, the first things that we just mentioned, are qualities I think, b&s, that we would like to possess, perhaps we do have some of these qualities of David, perhaps we are shepherds, musicians, some of the things on that great list. The second list, maybe things that are true of anyone of us here, I'm thinking in the sense of the Lord Jesus Christ in the discourse on the mount; you know how He puts the terms (and we just spoke about these things, that second list) He says, 'if you think you are', you see, (so we've got the criteria given to us by the Lord Jesus Himself) then we wonder where we begin to fit in our own perspective, in our own personality, in our own character, into these thoughts about David. And this is the thing that bro. Ron is trying to bring out to you, and I'm sure bro. John will do as well; it is that we've got to see ourselves there, we've got to be with David, we've got to be David in these things, b&s, we've got to be part of all the scenarios that have to do with David, from the time when he's anointed all through the fugitive years, into the years of the kingship, to the time of his death, we've got to be David! We've got to feel David within us or it will do us no good, b&s, as bro. Ron said. The things of this bible school, and as great as the lessons are, if these things are not felt in our deepest heart, they will do us no good because they won't go with us.

Our goal this week, and we have a goal this week, and I'm sure it's for all the brethren that are leading these classes, is that we don't lose sight of the divine evaluation of David. He's a man after God's own heart, b&s, let me just show you the two places, and I think we need to do this, we'll turn to (actually it's our readings for the day) it's 1 Samuel chapter 13, just would like to look at the two places because you see, you have one at the beginning and one at the ending; one when David is beginning, in fact, David wasn't even aware of it at this point, that the anointing would take place, that God was finding the man after His own heart, and the other after David is a long time asleep in the dust of the earth, and the testimonies are given. 1 Samuel chapter 13 (and this is as we saw already, b&s, the time when Saul had done foolishly) and so many times, this great man in stature, b&s, someone who everyone looked up to in a literal sense, wasn't it? this great man would say so feebly, when he was disobedient, that I forced myself (it's like saying, I didn't want to do it but I just had to do it as though something within him just compelled him to do the very thing he wished he didn't have to do) and that's the picture of Saul. And this is what he'd done with the offering of the burnt offering in his impatience and in his instability, his unwillingness just to wait upon God. In verse 14, it says, 'Now thy kingdom shall not continue: Yahweh hath sought Him a man after His own heart, and Yahweh hath commanded him to be captain over His people, because thou hast not kept that which Yahweh commanded thee'. That's the first occasion when you see the expression, it's at the very beginning, isn't it? Yahweh knew David, He knew the character of this man before he'd done anything, He knew the character of this man. And then after the life of David is spent, (and bear in mind this, b&s,) all the things of the life of David that had happened, all the things that were on that second list had

taken place, and the character of David had been so blended with the purpose of God; it brought him on his knees before his Father, begging for repentance, begging in repentance for forgiveness, that it could be said long after David is dead and buried, this from Acts chapter 13. These are the words of the apostle Paul at verse 22, talking about the removal of Saul, the removal, b&s, of Saul, 'And after that He raised up unto them, David to be their king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will'. That's the divine perspective, that wasn't mentioned at the beginning, b&s, but this is after all that's been done, and after the book is closed, so to speak. That the Father can look at the life of David and say, 'Yes, a man after God's own heart, who fulfilled all My will'. Remarkable, isn't it? and you can see why it's our goal to not lose sight of the fact he is the man after God's own heart; first and foremost, let that come to your mind, b&s.

We're thinking of that time period where it is from fugitive to king. The chapters that we'll be dealing with is 1 Samuel 23 through to 2 Samuel chapter 3, and lightly on some of these, I think, b&s, and actually having said that, I've already got bro. Ron's agreement to go back into chapter 22 to begin, because I need that to give you the connections that will help you understand what we're dealing with when we come to 1 Samuel chapter 23. But the focus of this period, talk about stress, the focus of this period, b&s, is on a man in great trouble. This is a man on the run, he is a fugitive, and I say, we've got to relate to these things, don't we? somehow we've got to see ourselves as David, during all the difficulties of his life; we've got to be part of it, we've got to feel it. How do we relate? because I believe we need to, b&s. I wonder if you ever think of yourself as a fugitive? perhaps things are so easy in this life that we can't begin to think of ourselves that way, but we need to! We need to think of ourselves as fugitives, b&s, because we are that in a very real sense, from fugitive to king is our life story. I want you to feel that, I want that to just settle into your thinking, from fugitive to king, is our life's story! because aren't we fleeing, b&s, from everything the world represents to us? Everything that it offers, everything that it tries to convince us that we need and can't live without, and we're fleeing from these things because we know that those things are not only detrimental to our spiritual well-being, they will kill us. Spiritually they will kill us, so we're fleeing for our very lives as fugitives, and the world would love to put its stamp upon us, and that's why the apostle Paul says, 'don't let the world squeeze you into its own mould', it wants to do that, and we're fleeing from it. But we're fleeing with Yahweh's David, Yahweh's Beloved, as our leader. The great Shepherd, the chief Shepherd, is the One who's leading us as we are fugitives from all that is pressing in upon us, attempting to keep us from the things of the kingdom of God.

Well, b&s, we'll be heading into 1 Samuel 23, this is the phase of the life of the man after God's own heart, that we want to think about this morning and I'd like to set the scene a little bit with some background on this, and I'll try to do this with this overhead and with these maps that you have, just to see the territory. Bro. Ron put a map up that showed the area of the 12 tribes in their inheritance under Joshua. The area then (I don't know if you can see it very well on this map, but this territory down here perhaps on yours you can) there's a kind of shaded yellow area which is the area in which David

will be dealing with primarily as a fugitive; he'll come out of this area a little bit into the area of the Philistines and up to Aphek, but will be turned back, and so for the most part, it will be in this area right here, where is the time of the fugitive period from Saul. And also the occasion when later on, he goes down and fights against the Amalekites to the south, and he goes out of this area to the south. I'm going to dispense with this, I think we can work better off this particular map, and you can see the points we're considering a little better here, (but you also have a map that you can do anything you please with, if you want to write on it, just go and do it). So that's the area that we're dealing with, it's Judaea or Judah that's the territory, b&s, where David's wanderings are going to take place from Saul.

David is an outlaw! you have to call it like it is, David is an outlaw from the perspective of the authorities, he's a fugitive on the run from the authorities. And it's going to be one of the most difficult and trying periods; you know, we like to think of the faith of David, and the trust in Yahweh as being absolutely level, under trial, b&s, it's not always like that, for us or for David. There are times of great depression and great discouragement, they find their way into this period as well as all the periods of David's life, and he has to be lifted out of these and set right, and so we'll see these things happen as well.

He's not alone in his fugitive years! Quite a group of individuals have gathered around David, he's drawn them to him really, b&s, at first we see some 400 men mentioned, then the number seems to swell up to 600 and then we find there are women and children, the wives of these men are there with the children. David's own wives are there, and the number swells much greater than that (we'll probably have an estimate of those numbers at some point as we go along). Not the best of individuals: these are described in scripture as wicked men, malcontents, they themselves in all probability are criminals many of them from the authority of the day, called 'sons of Belial' in one place, b&s, kind of an aimless lot that go up together and David has a great task here, for these folk, they'd hardly be the ones that you'd bring to you, if you were seeking comfort in a time of distress, help in a time of distress. But nonetheless, they are the ones that gather to David, he didn't look for them, they came to him; they came to him because he was a hero in many eyes. He was the giant killer after all, there was that popular song of the day that 'Saul had slain his thousands and David his tens of thousands', he had a great reputation, and I suppose that some would refer to him, as being charismatic, a kind of a magnetic personality that just draws people to him. And so it was, they were drawn to him, out of difficult backgrounds and difficult walks of life, and David had a great job with these men, b&s, this is like the ecclesia in the wilderness; if David was the spiritual head, he was the arranging brother of the ecclesia. And his job was to mould these and shape these goats into sheep, that would follow a good shepherd, and it was quite a task that he had before him to do this, the ecclesia was going to be energized by a man that had no place to lay his head! He would take on that task and that responsibility, b&s, willingly, and would shape these men into an army.

Before going into 1 Samuel chapter 23, if you will just go to that area, b&s, we're going

to need to link what we're going to read in 1 Samuel chapter 23 with what has just happened, in order to get the sense of it and the feeling for it, we've got to kind of tread a little bit lightly here, although I've asked bro. Ron if this was alright and he said it was and I'm glad for that, because I really need it, and he will be speaking about the same area at the end of the week, so this will have blurred quite a bit by that point in time, I would imagine. But we're going to take a look at chapter 22, and what we need to see and what we need to feel, b&s, is their great power, that had taken place in Israel. This is one of the darkest moments that we could possibly consider ever to take place in Israel's history, and it was a horror that's directed by a man whose mind is out of control. The king of Israel, whose mind is out of control, Saul is so disturbed, so caught up in himself, b&s, whose gaze is downward and inward and seldom is upward. Who's convinced that everyone is against him, what a spirit of the man; just convinced that everyone's against him, that there's a conspiracy, it's like treason everywhere! Just look at 1 Samuel 22 and verse 8 and try and hear the sound of Saul here, b&s; he says, 'All of you have conspired against me, and there is none that sheweth me (and you'll notice in your margin that 'uncovereth mine ear', that's Saul's way of thinking, I mean, he could be perfectly content, b&s, if someone would kind of sneak up to him and just whisper in his ear, just uncover his ear after this awful conspiracy that's taking place, and he says there's no one around to do that! How come nobody will help me? how come nobody will tell me what's going on?, even my own son is involved in this). He says, 'there's none that sheweth me or uncovereth my ear that my son hath made a league with the son of Jesse' (and bear in mind that the 'son of Jesse' that's a type of derogatory approach to one who is his son-in-law, b&s). 'And there is none of you that is sorry for me,'(sounds like a little child speaking, doesn't it? sounds like a little child who says nobody loves me, that's the expression of speech that we're getting from Saul) 'there is none that sheweth unto me that my son hath stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait, as at this day?' which, of course, David was not doing, b&s, he wasn't lying in wait for Saul, and as far as being his servant, the word there has to do with a slave or a bond slave, and this is his son-in-law, much higher than a servant but one who had been brought into the house! But you see the perspective of Saul, and how troubled he is and how downward and inward looking Saul is, b&s.

Well, there's always someone to tell us what we want to hear; there was a man there that was willing to tell Saul, that was willing to uncover the ear, and sneak over to Saul and just whisper in his ear, and his name was Doeg, Doeg the Edomite, one of Saul's men, ready to uncover Saul's ear. He tells him all about what had happened, verses 9 and 10, 'Doeg the Edomite which was set over the servants of Saul, and said, I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub. And he inquired of Yahweh for him, and gave him victuals; and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine'. So he tells the tale, he uncovers the ear of Saul and Saul hears what he expects from this evil man, so there's conspiracy even in the priesthood, b&s. 'And Saul sends for Ahimelech the priest, and all the priests to come down from Nob; (it's only a few miles, b&s, there's a close proximity of all these events taking place there in Judaea). Saul's in Gibeah, the priests are in Nob (this is the city of the priests) and the message goes out that all the priests are to come down to Gibeah to Saul. This is Saul's

hometown, it's called 'Gibeah of Saul' in Isaiah actually, so they're at a close proximity, they can make this journey fairly easily, and they come down to stand before Saul, and to kind of 'face the music' as they say.

Ahimelech is questioned and he gives a lovely testimony really, of the character of David, b&s, just look at verse 14, 'Ahimelech answered the king, and said, Who is so faithful among all thy servants as David, which is the king's son-in-law' (Saul would never mention anything about that, b&s, so that's been just pushed aside, he's rejected that) but Ahimelech brings it up to his attention once again, doesn't he? 'he goeth out at thy bidding and is honourable in thine house?' Now he couldn't have had a better recommendation for David than what Ahimelech did on that occasion, b&s; and do you know what? it was the last thing, the very last thing that Saul wanted to hear; he didn't want to hear anything good about David, b&s, and his answer to Ahimelech was in essence this; 'Ahimelech, you're a dead man' that was the word! you're a dead man and so are all the priests with you'. That's the way Saul's thinking went, b&s, it just seemed the evil of it all, the darkness of it all, just seemed to grow; that's the way it goes, isn't it? It starts with one thing and gets to be more and more and more.

And so it was with Saul: all the priests and it will go beyond that as well. So he gives the orders to the guards, (incredible words here, b&s) incredible words on the lips of Saul, how oftentimes you'll find in the things that Saul is saying that he is speaking of God, or he is using the name 'Yahweh', Saul is doing this. And I don't know about you, but for me, when I hear the name 'Yahweh' being used on the lips of Saul, on anyone who doesn't care about the magnitude or the greatness of that Name, it gives me chills to the bone. But that's Saul, and these are the incredible words that he uses as he looks upon that group of priests and Ahimelech standing in the front of them, he says, 'Turn and slay the priests of Yahweh', and that, b&s, is an indictment against himself, because if they are Yahweh's then they're not Saul's to do anything with. 'Turn and slay the priests of Yahweh' he says and all those guards stand still in their tracks. They're better men than Saul, b&s, not one of them makes a move upon the priests; but there is that man there, Doeg the Edomite, there is that man who's willing to do anything for Saul and he commits the crime. You know, b&s, when we read things like this and have to contemplate scenes like this in the scripture, sometimes they are scenes that we almost wish we could turn away from. I don't know how your mind works when you read about this; you could just read that Doeg killed the 80 priests and just move on or your mind could begin to visualize the scene. And I see in my mind, those priests standing there, not resisting (this is one man against 80) b&s, it's not likely that one man could have killed 80 priests unless they were just standing, waiting for whatever would happen. And I see that man just walking behind them, one by one, and cutting their throats until there was literally, a pile of 80 priests of Yahweh lying in the dirt, before the king of Israel.

There's a verse in the Psalms which you might just look at on your own, it's in the 52nd Psalm; let's take a look, b&s, it's just worth it to just wonder if it's referring to this. It's Psalm 52 (and you know the little headings of the Psalms, the superscriptions of the Psalms are actually part of the Psalm itself, you'll see in Psalm 52 that it says for the

superscription, 'A psalm of David, when Doeg the Edomite came and told Saul, and said unto him, David is come to the house of Ahimelech', so all those things that happened there that we just spoke about, but just look at the first three verses. 'Why boastest thou thyself in mischief, O might man? The goodness of God endureth continually. Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs; like a sharp razor, working deceitfully. And if it's about Doeg, b&s, we see these things as far more than coincidence; no coincidences in the Word of God. This man's tongue devised evil, sharper than a sharp razor, and did he kill the priests this way, we wonder? 'Thou lovest evil more than good; and lying rather than to speak righteousness'.

But the horror doesn't end there, it spills over into the city of the priests, spills over into Nob itself. This is at the hand of Saul, b&s, and we speak of Doeg, but Doeg was powerless without the authority of Saul, and we need to see this for what it is. Doeg is a pawn in Saul's hand, he's doing what Saul wants, but it's Saul, b&s, that we're looking at here. This is Saul's evil work! And in the city of the priests, in the city of Nob, under Saul's guidance and direction, every man, woman, and child is murdered; king of Israel! And one man escapes, just one of the priests, son of Ahimelech, Abiathar is his name and the scriptures say that he escaped and fled after David. You might wonder how it's possible that anyone could escape on that occasion, but in the confusion of the command to slay the priests, when all the guards stood still, I could just picture Ahimelech at that point in time, saying to his son, 'take the ephod, get over to David and tell him what has happened'. He escapes and flees after David; David's on the move, b&s, he's moving from the cave of Adullam and is going down to the forest of Hareth and much of this is under the direction of Gad the seer who seems to be with him at this point in time (and we might just mention something about Gad in a moment) but David is on the move, and Abiathar will have to find him. Now it's an interesting thing that Abiathar can find David, Jonathan can find David, and Saul can never really find him. You've got to see the hand of God in this, you've got to see the ways of providence in this, b&s. This is God's dealings here with His people and He's very much involved; and Abiathar will come to David and how do you think he would feel?

Sickened, b&s, grief-stricken over what he'd seen, what he witnessed, relates the horror of the priests of Nob to David, Saul's evil work not Doeg's. Just look at verse 21, this is still the 22nd chapter, where it says, 'Abiathar showed David that Saul had slain Yahweh's priests' (he knew where the blame laid, my dear b&s) it was with Saul, he was the king. David's perspective, because he had been at Nob, he benefitted by being with Ahimelech and the priests at Nob. And David's perspective was because Doeg had seen him, that it was his fault and that's the amazing thing of this leader. Nothing like Saul, nothing like looking at someone else and saying, 'it's their fault, but David is willing to let the responsibility rest upon him, and he says, 'it's my fault'. Look at verse 22, 'David said unto Abiathar, I knew it that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there' (he knew the character of that man, b&s, did David); you could see how he could work with this group of 400 and then 600 in the wilderness and on the run, because he knew the character of men and he knew what made them tick, and he was a young man, in his early 20's now, just a young man, being the one who would shape that ecclesia in the

wilderness, and it's an incredible thing and you see, the character, the great character of David as a man after God's own heart. From his youth, b&s, this is the character of this great man. But David says in verse 22, 'I knew it that day when Doeg the Edomite was there; that he would surely tell Saul: I have occasioned the death of all the persons of thy father's house'. And that laid heavily on David's shoulders as well, my dear brethren and sisters, because these are the priests of Yahweh. And David would have great respect for that! and he felt the guilt of their deaths now just rested upon his shoulders.

Of course, God is involved in all these things, isn't He? Yahweh's Word against the house of Eli, was being fulfilled in the events of Nob, so God's hand was very much involved in this, because he told Eli that his house would perish because of the wickedness of his sons and his own inability to deal with this. The whole house of Eli would be taken from the priesthood; all but one are gone, b&s. And even Abiathar, you might say he escaped this decree; he didn't escape this decree; strange thing, b&s. Some of us have laboured long in our life in the truth and yet it is possible, b&s, that we walk off the path, after long labour; and so it was with Abiathar, he is the brother who was loyal to the truth all his life, and then at the end, walked away. It's a sad thing, b&s, Abiathar was loyal to David through all the fugitive years, through the years of his kingship, until you come down to the very end, and David is an old man, Adonijah is desiring to be king and Abiathar swings his allegiance over to Adonijah. Of course, this is fruitless, but as a consequence of that, when Solomon became king, one of the first things he does is, he brings Abiathar before him and he removes him totally from the priesthood, he's gone! And the decree of Yahweh is fulfilled with every member of the house of Eli. And Abiathar doesn't escape it, but he's loyal through this period that we're talking about and he will be with David and David will deal with him on a constant basis.

Let's go to chapter 23, b&s. There's a saying that 'man cannot change the direction of the wind, but he can adjust his sails' and I think you understand that; you can't change the direction of the wind but we can adjust our sails, and you know, it's never more true than in the case of David, and never more true than what we see at Keilah, which is what we're introduced to when we come into chapter 23. Keilah, is here, b&s, because David is in the forest of Hareth and he's going to get some word as to what's taking place in Keilah. You know, among the last words of David are these, he said, 'As Yahweh liveth that hath delivered my soul out of all distress', that's at the end looking back, what David is saying is, the divine hand was with me all along; God delivered! As black as the moment was, God delivered me from it, in all my distress; Yahweh worked with David but this, b&s, I think all of us, at some point in time, can say that we've seen the hand of God in our lives, can we not? We've seen the hand of Yahweh working in our lives, we don't do much in the way of testimony (I don't like these things when people get up and give personal testimonies about things and I'm not going to do that) but we can see the hand, and we can relate these things, I'm sure, but we've got to give God something to work with, and David did that, wonderfully he did that, he gave God something to work with. Bro. Roberts in Ways of Providence (I'll just ask you, are you familiar with Ways of Providence by Bro. Roberts? I see some nods here, but not

everybody; I would like to think that everybody is) but let me just say this to you, b&s, this is part of the writings of our pioneer brethren, and it's important that we are familiar with these things. And I'll say to you, if you're not familiar with Ways of Providence, make yourself familiar with it, because these are the important foundations of our heritage as Christadelphians, and we need this, and we need this now more than ever. So get familiar with the writings of the pioneer brethren and use them. This quote from bro. Roberts in Ways of Providence, and how it fits into the circumstances with David; he said, 'A man persevering in the way of duty, will reach results unattainable to the slothful; first because of the natural effect of keeping at it, and secondly, because God draws nigh to those who draw nigh to Him, and supplements their labour with His special assistance and direction'. Have you got that? I'm going to read it again to you, 'A man persevering in the way of duty, will reach results unattainable to the slothful; first because of the natural effect of keeping at it, and secondly, because God draws nigh to those who draw nigh to Him, and supplements their labour with His special assistance and direction', I love that quote, b&s, because that too finds its place in the fugitive years of the life of David. Might even add something to it, be presumptuous enough to add something

to this, I should say. Sometimes, the Father even changes the direction of the wind for His people, and we see this happening with David and the events that take place in chapter 23, the things of Keilah.

Well, let's go there, b&s, we'll see that it's threshing time in Judah. The Philistines are doing their Philistine thing, which is pillaging and robbing; the word comes to David in verse 1, 'They told David saying, Behold, the Philistine fight against Keilah, and they rob the threshing floors'. And David can't look the other way, b&s, he could never look away from the needs of his people, of his brethren; and he's compelled by his character, to help them. He's just compelled by this, this is the man, this is the man after God's own heart. And there's a key to David's life during this period and in all the periods that would follow, b&s, there's a key thing in the life of this man who loved his brethren, and that is that he would inquire of Yahweh, and you see this expression, many many times during the fugitive period particularly, that he inquired of Yahweh all through the life of David, powerfully evident but now very much so during this fugitive period. And how did he do it, how did he inquire of Yahweh? I mean he knew how to speak to God in prayer, it's very evident that he knew how to do this, we could just read the psalms and we can see this, can't we? But this is different, he's inquiring of Yahweh because he needs an answer from Yahweh; he needs to have a direction from Yahweh and it's available to him. In those days, the answers were available through a certain procedure and this is what David is going to follow.

And there was a prophet with David, this prophet was in the role of what I like to think of as a spiritual advisor and his name is Gad, he's called a seer. In 1 Samuel 9 and verse 9 (you don't have to turn to this, it simply says there, 'beforetime in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, thus he spake, Come and let us go to the seer; for he that is now called a prophet was beforetime called a seer', and that's what Gad was, Gad was the seer. And Gad instructed David to move from the cave of Adullam to Hareth, we saw

that in 1 Samuel 22, but for all of that, b&s, the association that he would have, and I believe it was a long term association that would go beyond the fugitive years, that Gad would be with him. But I'm convinced here, that he's inquiring through the priests, and he'll continue to do so even though there are prophets involved with David (Samuel, Gad, Nathan) very much and intimately involved with him. The inquiring of Yahweh for this sort of direction is through the priest, and in this case, the priest is Abiathar. In 1 Samuel 23, just a kind of technical point I guess you could call it, I think we should move verse 6 to follow verse 1, it's just kind of a technical thing, I think that many of you folk that have studied this area of scripture, would feel that that would be the case. So we read, 'that after they were robbing the threshing floor, that it came to pass (this is verse 6, call it verse 2 now) and it came to pass, when Abiathar the son of Ahimelech fled to David to Keilah, that he came down with an ephod in his hand' (the background of this, of course, is the end of chapter 22 and it just sort of continues into chapter 23; and then what we have as verse 2) 'Then therefore David inquired of Yahweh (and you could see how this would take place in its proper order then, that's almost like in retrospect when we read it as verse 6 but put it in its place behind verse 1). At any rate, Abiathar comes to David and he's going to allow David to inquire of Yahweh through him, and David will do so.

I don't want to get into a study of the high priest here, b&s, or the garments of the high priest either, but just this whole aspect of how David inquired of Yahweh and how we go about this, and what the procedure would be. Abiathar came to David with the ephod, you remember, this is the one of the most significant parts of the high priest's garment. The upper outer garment of the high priest that would be like the veil of the tabernacle as far as the colours were concerned, the gold, the blue, the purple, the scarlet, the fine twined linen, and fashioned along with that, with the same care, as the ephod, could be the breastplate, with the 12 stones that represented the 12 tribes of Israel; so that the priest when he went into minister before Yahweh would carry with him as it were, the 12 tribes, the people of Israel would be represented in these stones, as he went into the holy place and ministered for them. It's called the breastplate of judgment, b&s, and obviously we're leaving out some of the details (of necessity we're doing that because this really isn't our study here) But through the high priest, the judgments of Yahweh, His decisions would be made known, would be received and made known.

Just go back to Exodus, and we'll just pick up a couple of thoughts there from Exodus. Chapter 28 and we're looking in at verse 30, 'And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart when he goeth in before Yahweh: and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before Yahweh continually'. So in the breastplate of judgment were these items that were known as Urim and Thummim; the word 'Urim' means 'lights' (224), the word 'Thummim' means 'perfections' (8550) and somehow they were within this breastplate of judgment. You know, if we pursued this, b&s, I think we would see some evidence for the fact, that this was a kind of pouch, Exodus chapter 28 and verses 15 and 16, would give you that idea of the breastplate being four square; it would be made and then folded so that it would be four square as though it was a pouch that would

contain something. I wish every thread could be tied up in this, this is one of those things that you wish could be totally wrapped up and delivered as the perfect answer, but I'll just tell you my thoughts. And my thoughts are that there were stones in the breastplate (there are other thoughts on this whether the stones of the breastplate shone forth with lights), and I just feel myself, b&s, that there were stones in the breastplate, that the inquiry could be made of the priest as to a question, the priest could reach into the breastplate and light and perfection would be given on the matter from Yahweh which would signify, 'yes, this should be done' or 'no, it should not', and yet having said that, having said that I don't want you to feel that I'm saying that it's just a 'yes' or 'no' answer, because sometimes the priest, (I believe this is by the power that Yahweh had invested in him as His priest) was able to elaborate and just open up the things beyond a simple 'yes' or 'no' answer. But that's the way I see this working and to pursue it much beyond that, I think would be a difficult thing for this point in time. But David was inquiring through the priest, and the priest was able to give him a definitive answer as to 'yes' whether he should do this, or 'no' he should not do it.

So Keilah, back in 1 Samuel chapter 23, Keilah has been invaded by the Philistines; David inquires of Yahweh, actually twice about the same thing, and we'll just look at this in verse 2, where it says, 'David inquired of Yahweh saying, shall I go and smite these Philistines? And Yahweh said unto David (and we could say here 'yes') Go and smite the Philistines, and save Keilah'. And David's men are afraid and they express this to him, b&s, they express their fear, and it was good enough for David, I'm sure; the answer of Yahweh was good enough, but the pressure of his men would cause him to speak again, to inquire again, and in verse 4 David inquired of Yahweh yet again. And Yahweh answered him and said, 'Arise, go down to Keilah, for I will deliver the Philistines into thine hand', so David and his men went, based on that they went; they went in the power of the Word of God, convinced that this would be fulfilled and it was, b&s. It surely was!

Of course, Saul had his spies everywhere, didn't he? as David did, I'm sure. I mean, they were military men, they would have their intelligence forces out, looking over the lay of the land, seeing how the opponent was setting up his forces, and where he was camped and things of this nature. So Saul would know that David had gone into Keilah, and now he was in the city; he had saved the city but he was in the city, and Saul would look on that as a great, strategic blunder on the part of David, because he had gone into a city with bars and gates. And once you're in a city with bars and gates, that city can be surrounded and in due course of time, you will overcome. And that's where David was! and he began to see the hand of God in this, b&s, you've got to see the hand of God in these things. But David also knew Saul's secret operations as well, didn't he? look at verse 9, 'David knew that Saul secretly practiced mischief against him'; alright then, the idea of 'mischief' here is 'to spoil by breaking in pieces' (7451+7489). That was Saul's desire to break David in pieces, and this is his own son-in-law, to make 'good for nothing' is the meaning of the word, b&s.

Saul talked about God, he used the name in his conversation, David talked with God,

my dear b&s, and there's a great difference, a great difference. We can't change the direction of the wind, but Yahweh can, and sometimes He does, and so it was at Keilah; just read on a bit, b&s. Just as Saul continues on, verse 9, 'David knew that Saul practiced mischief against him; he said to Abiathar the priest, bring hither the ephod' (there's the key again, you see, he's still inquiring of Yahweh as to the direction), and so he knows that Saul is coming down and Saul is going to attempt to take him. He's seeking David constantly, he is relentless in this, b&s, and Yahweh will free David from the pressure of Saul, because he trusts in Him. Verse 11, 'Will the men of Keilah deliver me up into his hand? Will Saul come down as thy servant hath heard; O Yahweh God of Israel I beseech thee, tell thy servant' (inquiring through the priest again). 'And Yahweh said, he will come down!' yes, he will come down. 'Then said David, Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul? And Yahweh said, They will deliver thee'. Do you see how the direction of the wind has to be changed here, b&s? David is doomed, God said so; Saul's going to come down, these people of Keilah are going to turn you over into Saul's hands, and you're going to be captured and killed (no doubt, killed) but Yahweh will change the direction of the wind because of David, you see. David doesn't stay there, David makes his move, he and his men move out of that city and as a consequence, the very thing that God had said now, would not come to pass because of what David had done, because David gave God something to work with, you see. So what it hangs on is, yes; if you stay in Keilah, they will deliver you up. And David didn't stay! and he was delivered by the hand of God.

And Saul broke off from seeking after him at this point. From here, b&s, David and his men are going to go into the wilderness of Ziph, and as I said, these things are in close proximity, you can see them on your map and you can pick them up very easily with your eyes. I just want to move along in time, he's down in this area now, coming closer to the area of the Dead Sea, and these people again, wherever David goes, it's the loyalty to Saul. He wants to turn him over to Saul, and this actually becomes a more difficult situation than even Keilah. There's a lot of discouragement in this time period, b&s, for David, a lot of discouragement; David needs encouragement. Encouragement comes to him in the person of Jonathan, who was able to find him when Saul cannot; what a difficult thing for Jonathan to break away from the forces of Saul and to find his way alone to David. It's encouragement from Yahweh in the person of this great man, this covenant friend, this is Jonathan, b&s. I'm sure we'll be thinking about that relationship in great length with bro. Ron. But this is the covenant friend, the one who's willing to decrease that David might increase, the one who loved him as his own soul. The two of them whose hearts were knit together in the bonds of the truth; David's dearest and truest friend, and this is the man who would say to David, 'whatever thy soul desireth I will give it thee', and now under almost impossible circumstances, he manages to get to David and to find him.

What do you do when you've got a problem, b&s? what do you do when you have a problem or one of your brethren or sisters in the meeting have a problem, how do you deal with it? There's only one approach, Jonathan had it, b&s, look at chapter 23 and verses 16 through 18, 'And Jonathan Saul's son arose, and went to David into the

wood, and strengthened his hand in God. And he said unto him, Fear not, for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee; and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto you; and that also Saul my father knoweth. And they two made a covenant before Yahweh; and David abode in the wood, and Jonathan went to his house'. And let me just say to you, b&s, if you have a problem, you try to solve that problem apart from this, you will fail! If your brother or your sister has a problem and you go to them without this book, you will fail; and they will fail too, because your help will be worthless, strengthen the hand in God, that's what Jonathan did for David! and that's the only answer, if you've got a problem, STRENGTHEN THE HAND IN GOD; go to the Word, find the things that are appropriate bring it along, show your brother, show your sister, go there when you're in trouble, b&s. This is the only way, and Jonathan knew it, and he did it for David! you see, it's not just knowing each other as brethren, as though that constitutes us as friends; I believe friends in this sense are friends who are willing, who are desirous to strengthen one another's hand in God. To meet together on the basis of Yahweh's Word, and that was Jonathan and David. Jonathan blended his heart and his mind with the purpose of God, with David as Yahweh's anointed! and will say to the man after God's own heart, 'thou shalt be king, and I will be next to you'. And it was not to be, b&s, this in all probability, was the last time they ever met together. And yet it will take place, it will take place at a time when Jonathan and David can stand side by side, as equals with Christ; and yes, David will be king, and Jonathan will be king alongside.

Well, Saul came down into the area of Ziph, and his cowardly people attempted to hand over, or point the finger as to where David was, and if we just follow along with this quickly as we conclude, b&s, verse 21, David is abiding in the wood at verse 18, the Ziphites have given Saul what he wanted; Saul's on this side of the mountain and David and his men on that side of the mountain. Just picture the scene now, there's the great hill of Hachilah and they're going around this, the two forces on both sides, and they end up not seeing each other, but Saul's men are compassing David. They're circling him now and they're closing the net and David is trapped with all his men, and Saul has won; and just at that precise moment, in the hand of Yahweh, b&s, the messenger comes to Saul and says the Philistines have invaded the land. Remarkable isn't it? coincidence? not in the hand of the Father, this is the ways of providence! the Philistines have invaded the land and Saul does a kingly thing for a change. He turns and goes and fulfills the role of king and defends his land from the Philistines; and David as a consequence of that, David and his men call that place 'Selah-Hammahlekoth' (5555) which means the 'rock of division or the rock of escape' because this is the place where Yahweh had entered in and had given them the division that they needed between the forces of Saul and his own, and he was able to escape. And I'll just ask you this, b&s, for a final thought; who is your Rock? Who is your Rock? are you able to answer that? Who is the Rock that separates you and divides you from all the pressures that has you sometimes trapped in the net? Who's the Rock for we fugitives, b&s, who are fleeing from all that surrounds us? The Rock of escape, let me just show you this from the Psalms; Psalm 31 and verses 1 through 4, because David knew Who his Rock is, b&s! He says, 'In Thee, O Yahweh, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed: deliver me in thy righteousness. Bow down thine ear to me; deliver me speedily: be

Thou my strong Rock, for a house of defence to save me. For Thou art my Rock and my fortress; therefore, for thy name's sake lead me, and guide me. Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me: for Thou art my strength'. And this Yahweh did with David at the hill of Hachilah, because He is his Rock and he trusted in Him.

And as we go on he says, 'Into thy hand, I commit my spirit' and that takes us a thousand years beyond David, b&s, to another hill, the hill with the awful name of 'Golgotha', the place of a skull (1115). The hill of Calvary, and there we see, there is our Selah-Hammahlekoth, the Rock of escape for us. The One who would be able to say, (and can we join Him in this, my dear brethren and sisters?) as David does, 'Thou hast redeemed me, O Yahweh, God of truth'.