

# 21: Saul kills the priests, David saves Keilah

Notes for 13 Jul

*Jim Cunningham*

Read: [1 Samuel 22:6-23:14](#), [Psalm 52](#)

When we commenced studying the beginning of the kingship of Saul, my view of Saul's character was reasonably positive. The narrative within these verses has revealed the true character of the man. When we are under certain strains and pressures, our true characters are frequently revealed.

Contrast Christ's response, from the Garden of Gethsemane till His death on the cross. Stripped of authority, deserted, whipped and nailed to a cross. The use of force, whatever was to happen to Him, totally forbidden.

## Disappearing Loyalty

vv 22:6-8

Here we have a paranoid Saul. Do you think his sense of paranoia contributed to his eventual downfall? What does this passage relay about Saul's relationship with his followers?

## Perceived Betrayal

vv 22:11-16

David deceived Ahimelech, which we studied last week. Yet he put his life on the line by defending him in front of an obsessed Saul? Why do you think he did so?

## Retribution

vv 22:17-19

Saul's guards were reluctant to carry out his orders. Did they have mixed loyalties and/or were they acting out of principle? Doeg, the Edomite, carried out the collective punishment. It is difficult to make sense of how this was carried out if Doeg was acting alone. I suspect there were others involved. Is collective punishment ever justified or was it just a mediaeval, barbarous act? If you have time, look at ['Collective Punishment' in Wikipedia](#). My inclination is to believe that modern humanity can behave no differently from the tribes in the Old Testament. We often deceive ourselves by our packaging!

## Antidote to Fear

vv 23:1-7

Remember, the Philistines were advanced in their military technology. They were experienced and motivated warriors. David's men were understandably beside themselves with fear. However, there is no supporting evidence that David shared their fear. Why not?

## The Destructive Force of Revenge

vv 23:8-14

David and his men had saved part of Saul's kingdom from the Philistines. Yet Saul was obsessed with finding and destroying David and his followers. Do you think that Saul's actions may have been the final nail in the coffin for the retention of his kingship? Feelings for revenge can be so self destructive. How should we deal with them?