

The Kingdom of David
1 Samuel 21:1-9
3/28/10

Overview

1. David and Ahimelech the priest (v1-9)
2. References to this account by Christ

David and Ahimelech the priest

(v1) Then David came to Nob to Ahimelech the priest. And Ahimelech came to meet David trembling and said to him, "Why are you alone, and no one with you?" (v2) And David said to Ahimelech the priest, "The king has charged me with a matter and said to me, 'Let no one know anything of the matter about which I send you, and with which I have charged you.' I have made an appointment with the young men for such and such a place. (v3) Now then, what do you have on hand? Give me five loaves of bread, or whatever is here." (v4) And the priest answered David, "I have no common bread on hand, but there is holy bread— if the young men have kept themselves from women." (v5) And David answered the priest, "Truly women have been kept from us as always when I go on an expedition. The vessels of the young men are holy even when it is an ordinary journey. How much more today will their vessels be holy?" (v6) So the priest gave him the holy bread, for there was no bread there but the bread of the Presence, which is removed from before the LORD, to be replaced by hot bread on the day it is taken away. (v7) Now a certain man of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before the LORD. His name was Doeg the Edomite, the chief of Saul's herdsmen. (v8) Then David said to Ahimelech, "Then have you not here a spear or a sword at hand? For I have brought neither my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's business required haste." (v9) And the priest said, "The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you struck down in the valley of Elah, behold, it is here wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod. If you will take that, take it, for there is none but that here." And David said, "There is none like that; give it to me."

1. *Then David came to Nob to Ahimelech the priest. And Ahimelech came to meet David trembling and said to him, "Why are you alone, and no one with you?"*
 - A. Nob - Apparently Nob became the center of worship after Shiloh was destroyed.
 - i. Shiloh still a worship center early in Saul's reign ([1 Sam 14:3](#))
 - B. Ahimelech - The priest serving at Nob. His father was Ahitub ([1 Sam 22:9](#))
 - i. In [1 Sam 14:3](#), Ahijah is a son of Ahitub. Ahimelech was either Ahijah's brother, or perhaps, this was another name for Ahimelech.
 - ii. In [Mark 2:26](#), Christ refers as *Abiathar* as high priest. (See below)

- C. Why Ahimelech was trembling (afraid of David) is not stated. (compare to [1 Sam 16:4](#))
 - i. Ahimelech finds it strange that David is alone.
- 2. *And David said to Ahimelech the priest, "The king has charged me with a matter and said to me, 'Let no one know anything of the matter about which I send you, and with which I have charged you.' I have made an appointment with the young men for such and such a place. Now then, what do you have on hand? Give me five loaves of bread, or whatever is here."*
 - A. Certainly another lie, and one that will prove to have grave consequences, for Ahimelech along with 85 other priests and all of the inhabitants of Nob ([1 Sam 22:16-19, 22](#))
 - B. David request food
- 3. *And the priest answered David, "I have no common bread on hand, but there is holy bread— if the young men have kept themselves from women." And David answered the priest, "Truly women have been kept from us as always when I go on an expedition. The vessels of the young men are holy even when it is an ordinary journey. How much more today will their vessels be holy?" So the priest gave him the holy bread, for there was no bread there but the bread of the Presence, which is removed from before the LORD, to be replaced by hot bread on the day it is taken away.*
 - A. The only bread that the priest has is the holy bread.
 - i. Set out before the Lord on the table ([Ex 25:30](#); [Lev 24:5-9](#))
 - a. When it was removed, it was only to be eaten by the priests ([Lev 24:9](#); [Mt 12:4](#))
 - B. The priest inquired if the young men with David were ceremonially clean as regards sexual relations (from [Ex 19:15](#)), although there is no specific law in that regard.
 - C. David confirms their purity in this regard, and asserts that it would be especially so since this was no ordinary journey.
 - D. The priest gives him the holy bread, perhaps after inquiring of the Lord (see [1 Sam 22:10](#))
- 4. *Now a certain man of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before the LORD. His name was Doeg the Edomite, the chief of Saul's herdsmen.*
 - A. *detained before the Lord* - perhaps fulfilling a vow ([Acts 21:26](#))
 - B. Parenthetical insertion that sets the stage for chapter 22.
 - C. *Doeg the Edomite*
 - i. Edom was inhabited by the descendents of Esau - [Gen 36:9](#)
 - ii. The Lord gave special command to Israel concerning Edom - [Deut 23:7, 8](#)
 - a. Descendents after the 3rd generation were permitted to enter the 'assembly of the Lord.'
 - D. *chief of Saul's herdsmen*
 - i. Implies that Saul had many herdsmen, and, therefore, many herds - See [1 Sam 8:16](#), 17

5. *Then David said to Ahimelech, "Then have you not here a spear or a sword at hand? For I have brought neither my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's business required haste." And the priest said, "The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you struck down in the valley of Elah, behold, it is here wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod. If you will take that, take it, for there is none but that here." And David said, "There is none like that; give it to me."*
 - A. David inquires if there are any weapons, and the priest gives him the sword of Goliath.
 - i. David had taken Goliath's weapons after his victory ([1 Sam 17:54](#)), and perhaps later placed them in the tabernacle as a gift to God (compare to [1 Sam 31:8-10](#))

References to this account by Christ

1. This event is cited by Christ in the synoptic Gospels
 - A. **Luke 6:1-5** *On a Sabbath, while he was going through the grainfields, his disciples plucked and ate some heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands. But some of the Pharisees said, "Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath?" And Jesus answered them, "Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: how he entered the house of God and took and ate the bread of the Presence, which is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and also gave it to those with him?" And he said to them, "The Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath."*
 - B. **Mark 2:23-28** *One Sabbath he was going through the grainfields, and as they made their way, his disciples began to pluck heads of grain. And the Pharisees were saying to him, "Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?" And he said to them, "Have you never read what David did, when he was in need and was hungry, he and those who were with him: how he entered the house of God, in the time of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and also gave it to those who were with him?" And he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath."*
 - i. in the time of Abiathar the high priest
 - a. In the account that we studied in [1 Sam 21](#), the priest is Ahimelech, the father of Abiathar ([1 Sam 22:20](#))

- b. How should such 'problems' be handled?
 - i. Christ certainly does not err, nor does the Holy Spirit that prompts the penning of this account by the Gospel writer, so we must seek another explanation.
 - ii. The sons of Eli served as priests along with their father ([1 Sam 1:3](#)) Perhaps this is a similar situation.
 - iii. Still have the problem of '*the high priest*'
 - ii. Additional information - *The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath*
- C. **Mt 12:1-8** *At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry, and they began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. But when the Pharisees saw it, they said to him, "Look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath." He said to them, "Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, and those who were with him: how he entered the house of God and ate the bread of the Presence, which it was not lawful for him to eat nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests? Or have you not read in the Law how on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath and are guiltless? I tell you, something greater than the temple is here. And if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath."*
- i. Additional information
 - a. *on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath and are guiltless*
 - i. The priest 'works' on the Sabbath by performing a required sacrifice - [Num 28:9-10](#)
 - b. *I tell you, something greater than the temple is here. And if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless.*
 - i. Perhaps the best explanation for the events in [1 Sam 21:1-9](#)