

THEME: Is God always fair? Even to priests?!?

TEXT: 1 Samuel 22

INTRO: It is time to put on your thinking caps, and lets look at a puzzling account of a high priest in the Bible.

It is no secret that King Saul was an unstable man. His preoccupation of hunting down David bordered on derangement! In a fit of madness, he had the priests executed who offered aid to David by giving him to eat of the showbread.

But it may surprise you to find out *who's fault* it was that these priests were executed.

If you remember the story, David pauses by the temple to gain a sword and something to eat in **1 Samuel 22**.

LESSON:

HIS BACK STORY: He had accompanied David whilst he fled from the wrath of Saul.

1 Samuel 22

1 David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave Adullam (**The Justice of the People*): and when his brethren and all his father's house heard it, they went down thither to him.

2 And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men.

3 And David went thence to Mizpeh of Moab: and he said unto the king of Moab, Let my father and my mother, I pray thee, come forth, and be with you, till I know what God will do for me.

4 And he brought them before the king of Moab: and they dwelt with him all the while that David was in the hold.

5 And the prophet Gad said unto David, Abide not in the hold; depart, and get thee into the land of Judah. Then David departed, and came into the forest of Hareth.

6 When Saul heard that David was discovered, and the men that were with him, (*now Saul abode in Gibeah under a tree in Ramah, having his spear in his hand, and all his servants were standing about him;*)

7 Then Saul said unto his servants that stood about him, Hear now, ye Benjamites; will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards, and make you all captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds;

8 That all of **you have conspired against me**, and there is **none that sheweth me that my son hath made a league with the son of Jesse**, and there is **none of you that is sorry for me, or sheweth unto me** that my son hath stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait, as at this day?

9 Then answered 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.**

10 And he enquired of the LORD for him, and gave him victuals, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine.

11 Then the king sent to call Ahimelech the priest, the son of Ahitub, and all his father's house, the priests that were in Nob: and they came all of them to the king.

12 And Saul said, Hear now, thou son of Ahitub. And he answered, Here I am, my lord.

13 And Saul said unto him, Why have ye conspired against me, thou and the son of Jesse, in that thou hast given him bread, and a sword, and hast enquired of God for him, that he should rise against me, to lie in wait, as at this day?

14 Then Ahimelech answered the king, and said, And who is so faithful among all thy servants as David, which is the king's son in law, and goeth at thy bidding, and is honourable in thine house?

15 Did I then begin to enquire of God for him? be it far from me: let not the king impute any thing unto his servant, nor to all the house of my father: for thy servant knew nothing of all this, less or more.

16 And the king said, **Thou shalt surely die, Ahimelech, thou, and all thy father's house.**

17 And the king said unto the footmen that stood about him, Turn, and slay the priests of the LORD: because their hand also is with David, and because they knew when he fled, and did not shew it to me. But the servants of the king would not put forth their hand to fall upon the priests of the LORD.

18 And the king said to Doeg, Turn thou, and fall upon the priests. And Doeg the Edomite turned, and he fell upon the priests, and slew on that day fourscore and five persons that did wear a linen ephod.

19 And Nob, the city of the priests, smote he with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and sucklings, and oxen, and asses, and sheep, with the edge of the sword.

THE ESCAPED PRIEST:

Out of the 65 priests who bought the farm that day, there was one single solitary priest who managed to escape.

20 And one of the sons of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped, and fled after David.

21 And Abiathar shewed David that Saul had slain the LORD's priests.

22 And David said unto Abiathar, 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.

23 Abide thou with me, fear not: for he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life: but with me thou shalt be in safeguard.

Safeguard, indeed!

Whilst he stuck by David's side through out his escape, and remained faithful to David in the field, something must have happened when David returned to power.

You remember there was a rivalry between Solomon and Adonijah for the throne of David.

Adonijah had on his side:

- Abiathar (*The priest of David*)
- Joab (*The captain of David's Guard*)

Solomon had:

- Zadok (*The priest*)
- Benniah (*The Bible-Hitman*)
- Nathan (*The prophet*)
- Bathsheba (*One of the queens*)
- The dying promise of David, his father
- God's Sovereign Will

It was not meant to be for Adonijah, and his inability to accept this led to his own death by requesting the hand of the handmaid of the King.

Why Abiathar had aligned himself with Adonijah is anybody's guess. It may well have been the acceptable and politically correct thing to do, as Joab, David's captain, ALSO aligned himself with Adonijah.

HIS CAREER ENDING: (*Forced retirement for his connection with Adonijah's rivalry against Solomon for the throne.*)

1 Kings 2

25 And king Solomon sent by the hand of Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; and he fell upon him (*Adonijah*) that he died.

26 And unto **Abiathar** the priest said the king, Get thee to Anathoth, unto thine own fields; for thou art worthy of death: but I will not at this time put thee to death, because thou barest the ark of the LORD God before David my father, and because thou hast been afflicted in all wherein my father was afflicted.

27 **So Solomon thrust out Abiathar** from being priest unto the LORD; that he might fulfil the word of the LORD, which he spake concerning the house of Eli in Shiloh.

So, is God fair to His priests?

You might ask, rather, does God keep His Word? For this, in all actuality is a beautiful combination of God keeping His prophecy, as well as extending extreme mercy towards an undeserving priest.

Check this out!

GOD'S PROPHECY FULFILLED:

1 Samuel 2

31 Behold, the days come, that I **will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father's house, that there shall not be an old man in thine house.**

32 And thou shalt see an enemy in my habitation, in all the wealth which God shall give Israel: and **there shall not be an old man in thine house for ever.**

33 And **the man of thine, whom I shall not cut off from mine altar, shall be to consume thine eyes, and to grieve thine heart:** and all the increase of thine house shall die in the flower of their age.

34 And this shall be a **sign** unto thee, that shall come upon thy two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas; in one day they shall die both of them.

35 And I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in mine heart and in my mind: and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever.

“The Man of Thine who isn’t cut off...” I believe this is **Abathar**.

What more would or could consume the eye and grieve the heart of Eli? While he would not see it first hand on earth, but observe it afar from above, he would watch as the last of his line would be ‘fired’ from being priest... no more to lead the people in worship, no more to sacrifice in mediation, no more to even enter before the Lord’s presence.

Oh... did I forget to mention?! Do you know what ABATHAR means?
“Aba” (Father) “THAR” (Remnant) – The ‘father of all that was left’

:-) That that’s Bible prophecy fulfilled.

BIO:

Exhaustive Library of Bible People, 2013 - 20-Abiathar

#20 - Abiathar

A bi'a thar - Father of abundance, or “father of a remnant” - People's Bible Names
Excellent father; father of the remnant - Hitchcock's Bible Names

Date of First Mention (Ussher) - 1062 BC

Biographical Data

Abi'athar (father of abundance, that is, liberal). High priest and fourth in descent from Eli. (B.C. 1060-1012). Abiathar was the only one of the all the sons of Ahimelech, the high priest, who escaped the slaughter inflicted upon his father's house by Saul, in revenge for his father's house by Saul, in revenge of his having inquired of the Lord for David and given him the shew-bread to eat. 1 Samuel 22:1. Abiathar having become high priest fled to David, and was thus enabled to inquire of the Lord for him. 1 Samuel 23:9; 30:7; 2 Samuel 2:1; 5:19, etc. He adhered to David in his wanderings while pursued by Saul; he was with him while he reigned in Hebron, and afterwards, in Jerusalem. 2:1-3. He continued faithful to him in Absalom's rebellion. 15:24; 29; 35-36; 17:15-17; 19:11.

When, however, Adonijah set himself up for David's successor on the throne, in opposition to Solomon, Abiathar sided with him, while Zadok was on Solomon's side. For this Abiathar was deprived of the high priesthood. Zadok had joined David at Hebron, 1 Chronicles 12:28, so that there was henceforth who high priests in the reign of David, and till the deposition of Abiathar by Solomon, when Zadok became the sole high priest.

Smith's Bible Dictionary

Hasting's Bible Dictionary

Near Relation

Child of Ahimelech

Father of Ahimelech & Jonathan

Paternal Ancestry (4 Generations) – Eli > Phinehas > Ahitub > Ahiah/Ahimelech > **Abiathar** > Ahimelech

Occurrences In Authorized Version

29 Verse(s)

1 Samuel 22:20-21, 22, 23:6, 9, 30:7,

2 Samuel 8:17, 15:24, 27, 29, 35, 36, 17:15, 19:11, 20:25,

1 Kings 1:7, 19, 25, 42, 2:22, 26, 27, 35, 4:4,

1 Chronicles 15:11, 18:16, 24:6, 27:34,

Mark 2:26