



Studies in the Life of David

Text

First Samuel 22:6-23

Topic

When King Saul's men refuse to kill the priests, Doeg steps in and murders eighty-five of them, along with their wives, their children and infants, their neighbors, and even their livestock

Title

"All Doeg's Go to Hades"

Introduction

Every now and then I'll hear a Bible teacher say, "You are invincible until God is finished with you."

Reading the Bible, studying its characters, I'd have to agree. Take, for example, the three friends of Daniel - Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego - who refused to bow to the idol that King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon constructed of himself. The king threatened to kill them by throwing them alive into a burning fiery furnace that was heated seven-times hotter than usual.

They said to him,

Daniel 3:16 ..."O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter.

Daniel 3:17 If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to **deliver** us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king.

Daniel 3:18 **But if not**, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up."

They expected imminent deliverance from the fiery furnace. But if they were not delivered from it, they were ready for imminent danger and death.

What an attitude! Guess what: *It's the attitude every believer in Jesus Christ ought to have all the time.* Most believers through the centuries have been in imminent danger. Today most believers in other parts of the world remain in imminent danger.

Are we? Maybe not in the same way, but it is still incumbent upon us to maintain the same attitude - otherwise we risk getting soft and apathetic.

Our passage in First Samuel gives us a look at the priests of God. They were in imminent danger of being slaughtered by King Saul. Eighty-five of them were murdered. One of them experienced imminent deliverance.

It grips us as an illustration when we remember that the New Testament describes Christians - every one of us - as God's priests.

I'll organize my thoughts around two points: #1 As The Lord's Priest Your Life Is Always In Imminent Danger, and #2 As The Lord's Priest Your Life Is Always In Imminent Deliverance.

#1 As The Lord's Priest
Your Life Is Always In Imminent Danger
(v6-19)

Every believer in Jesus is considered a priest. The apostle Peter wrote,

1 Peter 2:5 you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ....

1 Peter 2:9 ... you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

We thus identify with the priests in our text. There are at least three other key characters:

- There is a rightful king who is away and awaiting the time for his kingdom to be established.
- There is a rejected king whose heart is bent on murder.
- There is an outsider who carries-out the terrible will of the rejected king.

All that sounds typical:

- Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, is the rightful King of kings. He's away, having ascended into Heaven, but is poised to return in His Second Coming to rule over the earth.
- Mean time Satan is called "the god of this world" and "the prince of the power of the air." He is the rejected king and his designs are to murder believers, God's priests.
- Nonbelievers are Doeg-like in that they are described in Scripture as being taken captive by Satan to do his will.

Thus are we *always* in imminent danger while we live. Let's see, then, what we can learn about facing imminent danger.

1 Samuel 22:6 When Saul heard that David and the men who were with him had been discovered - now Saul was staying in Gibeah under a tamarisk tree in Ramah, with his spear in his hand, and all his servants standing about him -

Saul is depicted as being at a strategic location, spear in hand, army at the ready, to attack David whenever and wherever he finds him.

Satan's strategies against us are described as "fiery darts" (Ephesians 6:16). He, too, is on the hunt, weapon-ready, seeking to murder us.

Does that sound extreme? Paranoid? No, it's normal. If it sounds extreme or paranoid then we have forgotten that we are involved in a life-or-death struggle. Just because we do not face imminent physical persecution (yet) on a daily basis it doesn't mean we are not in imminent danger.

1 Samuel 22:7 then Saul said to his servants who stood about him, "Hear now, you 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?"

Saul lets his men know that if David becomes king they will lose both their earthly possessions and their earthly positions. In other words, he appealed to their lusts and to the pride of life in order to keep them under his authority.

Sound like anyone you are familiar with? The devil also uses material possessions and positions in order to hold folks captive to do his will.

1 Samuel 22:8 All of you have conspired against me, and there is no one who reveals to me that my son has made a covenant with the son of Jesse; and there is not one of you who is sorry for me or reveals to me that my son has stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait, as it is this day."

We'll see in a moment that most of Saul's men, though solidly in his kingdom, nevertheless retained some sense of right and wrong. Likewise out in the world, not everyone is out to get you.

But we should be out to get them - *to get them saved!*

Among those surrounding Saul was his chief herdsman, Doeg. He steps forward.

1 Samuel 22:9 Then answered Doeg the Edomite, who was set over the servants of Saul, and said, "I saw the son of Jesse going to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub. 1 Samuel 22:10 And he inquired of the Lord for him, gave him provisions, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine."

Doeg was Mr. Opportunity. This was his big break. He had been in the right place at the right time in order to aid Saul.

Doeg's are everywhere. In our case, we don't always know who they are until they step forward to aid our enemies. But we can be sure they are watching us - at home, in church, at work, out in the world.

1 Samuel 22:11 So the king sent to call Ahimelech the priest, the son of Ahitub, and all his father's house, the priests who were in Nob. And they all came to the king.

Saul summoned Ahimilech and all the priests. *Not good!*

Ahimilech knew he had helped David. He knew Doeg had witnessed it. He could put one-and-one together and conclude Saul was out for blood.

This was a Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego moment for the priests. They were facing imminent danger. Still, they came when summoned, recognizing the authority God had given Saul as king.

As the Lord's priests we must nevertheless recognize the earthly authorities that are over us. They are there by God's permission - even those we would rather not submit to.

I think sometimes we don't have more Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego moments because we too quickly get out from under authority we don't like. We avoid those unpleasant moments. Our brothers and sisters in other countries do not have the kind of options, the kind of mobility, we have. I'm not sure if we are really better off for it if it means wiggling out of situations God has designed for us.

1 Samuel 22:12 And Saul said, "Hear now, son of Ahitub!" He answered, "Here I am, my lord."

1 Samuel 22:13 Then Saul said to him, "Why have you conspired against me, you and the son of Jesse, in that you have given him bread and a sword, and have inquired of God for him, that he should rise against me, to lie in wait, as it is this day?"

Satan is described as "the accuser of the brethren" (The Revelation 12:10). You will be accused. Just be sure you are accused for being a Christian and not for anything you've done that is truly blameworthy.

Ahimilech aided David in his exile. We have the privilege, as priests, of aiding Jesus. We do it by serving His servants.

- We give God's servants the holy "bread." Now the bread in the Tabernacle spoke of fellowship with God. It was called shewbread, meaning *the bread of the face*, indicating the priests were face-to-face with God. So we would say that our gathering together with the servants of the Lord fulfills this.
- We give God's servants the "sword," which we are told in the New Testament is the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God.

- We “inquire of God” for God’s servants by praying for them.

I want to be accused of those things! I want to be guilty of those things!

1 Samuel 22:14 So Ahimelech answered the king and said, "And who among all your servants is as faithful as David, who is the king's son-in-law, who goes at your bidding, and is honorable in your house?"

1 Samuel 22:15 Did I then begin to inquire of God for him? Far be it from me! Let not the king impute anything to his servant, or to any in the house of my father. For your servant knew nothing of all this, little or much."

Facing imminent death, Ahimilech gave a positive testimony of David. Remember that David had lied to him. He could have whimped-out and exposed David as a liar, as a fraud. Instead he spoke highly of David because he knew that David was God’s anointed.

As priests we represent God to men. We do it in our words and by our ways. Thus it behooves us to give the most positive testimony possible. Each of us is responsible for reviewing our own lives to see if our words and our ways speak highly of the Lord and His grace, or if we have whimped-out and become too much like the world.

1 Samuel 22:16 And the king said, "You shall surely die, Ahimelech, you and all your father's house!"

1 Samuel 22:17 Then the king said to the guards who stood about him, "Turn and kill the priests of the Lord, because their hand also is with David, and because they knew when he fled and did not tell it to me." But the servants of the king would not lift their hands to strike the priests of the Lord.

Good for these guys! Except that, in a moment, they will stand-by and do nothing while Doeg carries out Saul’s command.

You can’t remain neutral in this cosmic spiritual warfare. If you are a decent, law-abiding, moral nonbeliever, you’re still solidly in the devil’s camp. You need to come to Jesus Christ and take your stand with His priests - even if it means your life.

1 Samuel 22:18 And the king said to Doeg, "You turn and kill the priests!" So Doeg the Edomite turned and struck the priests, and killed on that day eighty-five men who wore a linen ephod.

1 Samuel 22:19 Also Nob, the city of the priests, he struck with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and nursing infants, oxen and donkeys and sheep - with the edge of the sword.

Today, right now, there are Doeg's persecuting and murdering Christians in other parts of the world. They're here, too, in the United States, in Kings County. They go about murdering you in a different way - trying to kill your testimony by accusation. You therefore cannot afford to relax your spiritual disciplines.

Truth is, most of us don't leave the house each day thinking that we could die for the sake of Jesus Christ. But we should leave the house wanting to die daily to ourself, to take up our Cross. We must remember that we are always in imminent danger as the Lord's followers. We should cultivate the heart that says, "we have no need to answer you in this matter... our God whom we serve is able to **deliver** us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. **But if not**, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up."

#2 As The Lord's Priest
Your Life Is Always In Imminent Deliverance
(v20-23)

Eighty-five priests were 'delivered' from imminent danger through death. One priest experienced a different kind of deliverance, escaping death to continue serving the Lord.

1 Samuel 22:20 Now one of the sons of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped and fled after David.

Meditate on those last three words, "fled after David." In our case we should be described as fleeing after the greater son of David, our Lord Jesus. If there is a way of escape, it will always be towards Jesus.

What are you facing today? It could be something physical... or financial... or relational. Flee to the Lord and not to the world.

1 Samuel 22:21 And Abiathar told David that Saul had killed the Lord's priests.

1 Samuel 22:22 So David said to Abiathar, "I knew that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul. I have caused the death of all the persons of your father's house.

David knew Doeg would tell Saul but he had gone forward with his deception anyway. Ahimilech defended David and it cost him his life along with the lives of so many others.

One lesson to derive is for us to speak highly not just of our Lord but of His other servants. In the end we will be judged on what we do and say, not on what others do and say that might seem to give us excuses for lowering God's standards.

1 Samuel 22:23 Stay with me; do not fear. For he who seeks my life seeks your life, but with me you shall be safe."

Jesus once promised us, His priests, "... 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, **they will also persecute you...**' " (John 15:20).

Satan sought Jesus' life. He seeks yours. He wants to murder you. He'd settle for ruining you, for destroying your testimony.

With the Lord, you are "safe." **However, you need to understand "safe" in eternal terms.**

The apostle Paul did and that's why he could say what he did at the end of the eighth chapter of Romans..

Romans 8:35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

Romans 8:36 As it is written: "FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE KILLED ALL DAY LONG; WE ARE ACCOUNTED AS SHEEP FOR THE SLAUGHTER."

Romans 8:37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

Romans 8:38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come,

Romans 8:39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Would you rather be Ahimilech? Or Abiathar? It's a tough question, spiritually speaking. There is, of course, a desire to depart and be with Jesus. But there is also an understanding I am invincible until He is through with me. To live is Christ, but to die is gain.

In the end I need to be ready daily to be either of those guys as I face imminent death and imminent deliverance walking with the Lord.

