

We've been travelling along with David for the past several months. Our journey started back in 1Samuel 16, wherein Samuel anointed David as king-elect. And yet, as we've seen, the LORD needed to prepare David before he would enthrone David.

Last week, as we considered chapter 21, we learned that David was forced to flee from Saul and became a fugitive. He fled first to Nob, where he received bread and a sword, and then to Gath, where he pretended madness.

After he departed from Gath, we read in 1Samuel 22:1, that he escaped to the cave of Adullam, which brings us to our theme: David in the Cave of Adullam. We shall consider our theme under two headings: (1) David in the Cave: Literally Examined (here I want to simply explain verses 1-5), and (2) David in the Cave: Practically Applied (and here I want to suggest five broad and important lessons).

- I. David in the Cave: Literally Examined
- II. David in the Cave: Practically Applied

I. David in the Cave: Literally Examined

1. V1—"David therefore departed from there and escaped to the cave of Adullam. So when his brother and all his father's house heard it, they went down there to him."
2. Having fled from Achish, the king of Gath in the previous chapter, David now takes refuge in the cave of Adullam."
3. There are three questions that need answering: Where did David go? Why did David go? Who went with him?
4. (1) Where did David go?—"He escaped to the cave of Adullam"—Adullam was a city in Judah not far from Bethlehem.
5. According to historians, this territory was known for large caves carved into the softer limestone mountainsides.
6. Thus, when we read that David escaped to the cave of Adullam., it likely means he took refuge in multiple caves (for as we shall see hundreds of people came to him).
7. Dale Ralph Davis—"We needn't assume all the men and/or their families were in the same cave. But neither should we imagine a cave as a cramped hole in the side of a hill. There are caves in the area today that easily rival or exceed large hotel lobbies for space."
8. (2) Why did David go?—this question is answered in vv4-5, in the twice repeated word "stronghold" which is often translated "fortress."
9. This word refers to a place of safety and refuge—a place of fortification from the elements or any sensed danger.
10. Thus, David "escaped" to the cave of Adullam"—he fled from Saul and his servants—he took refuge in Adullam.
11. The caves there would hide him from his enemies—they would serve as a fortress to protect him from his foes.
12. (3) Who went with him?—from verses 1-2 we learn two groups of people accompanied David—his family (v1) and a group of misfits (v2).
13. (a) His family, v1—"So when his brothers and all his father's house heard it (that David had fled to Adullam), they went down there to him."
14. It's likely that David's parents were elderly at this point, and so we find that David sought for them more suitable arrangements.
15. V3—"Then David went from there to Moab; and he said to the king of Moab, 'Please let my father and mother come here with you, till I know what God will do for me.'"
16. It makes sense that David would appeal to the Moabites for assistance, as you remember, Ruth the Moabitess was David's great-grandmother.

17. Thus, it's very possible, and I would even add likely, that David appealed to the Moabites because of this relationship.
18. David sought a safe place for his parents to live, temporarily, until he had further insight in what he should do.
19. V4—"So he brought them before the king of Moab, and they dwelt with him all the time that David was in the stronghold."
20. (b) A group of misfits, v2—"And everyone who was in distress, everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was discontented gathered to him. So he became captain over them. And there were about four hundred men with him."
21. As Saul's wickedness spread, it's likely that an increased amount of people suffered under his cruel leadership.
22. It's probable that many of the poor suffered under his foolish management of the kingdom and suffered for it.
23. These people grew discontent with Saul's rule and eventually attached themselves to David as their ruler or captain.
24. William Taylor—"They were a motley multitude, each individual having his own special reason for the course he took. Some came because their circumstances were so bad, that any change, even though it were into a cave, was an improvement; others came because they were so deeply drowned in debt that they could escape slavery only by becoming military adventurers; while others were impelled to join the company because they were embittered either by their own personal sorrows, or by oppression at the hands of Saul. But all alike were attracted to David because he was a brave, dashing leader, destined, in the end, to be king over Israel."
25. Now, before I come to our second main heading, and suggest some practical lessons, let me point out two people found in chapter 22.
26. (i) The prophet Gad, v5—"Now the prophet Gad said to David, 'Do not stay in the stronghold; depart, and go to the land of Judah.' So David departed and went into the forest of Hereth."
27. Where Gad came from, we are not sure—it's possible he met him in Naioth when he visited with Samuel in chapter 19.
28. But either way, one thing is for certain—Gad was a prophet sent by God to give his beloved fugitive instruction.
29. And this also indicates he was more in-tune with God, or that he was in a better spiritual condition than the previous chapter.
30. This is also hinted at in v3—"Please let my father and mother come here with you, till I know what God will do for me."
31. In other words, David was waiting for a word from God—he was waiting for God to give him assistance and direction.
32. In short, he was waiting to hear from God—what a beautiful description of David, and one very different from the previous chapter.
33. (ii) The priest Abiathar, vv20-23—"Now one of the sons of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped and fled after David. And Abiathar told David that Saul had killed the LORD'S priests. 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. Stay with me; do not fear. For he who seeks my life seeks your life, but with me you shall be safe.'"
34. If you remember back in chapter 21, Ahimelech the high priest assisted David by giving him bread and a sword.
35. Doeg the Edomite, who was present in Nob, told Saul about this incident, and Saul had Ahimelech, his family, and the entire city killed.
36. Thus, it's possible in Abiathar we have the last surviving priest, and guess where God sends this last priest—to David!
37. The prophet would represent God to the people and the priest would represent the people to God—both were necessary.
38. Thus, we have all three offices represented in David's growing kingdom—a prophet, priest, and the king-elect.

39. This underscores what we learned last week—God graciously and patiently provided for and protected His beloved David.
40. And thus, we behold David, his brothers, 400 men, and a prophet in the cave of Adullam, and then we find all of these plus a priest in the forest of Hereth.

II. David in the Cave: Practically Applied

1. Here I want to consider David's stay in the cave, from a more practical and spiritual perspective suggesting a few lessons.
2. Remember, David is to be viewed from two perspectives—first, as an example of a man after God's own heart, in a world that hates God and His people, and secondly, as a type or shadow of Christ.
3. And thus, with these two perspectives in mind, I want to suggest five broad and important lessons from David's stay in the cave.
4. (1) Christians flee to Christ as their refuge and stronghold—David's escape to the cave illustrates our escape to God in Christ.
5. David was fleeing from his enemies and he took refuge in a cave, wherein he found shelter, safety, and security.
6. Thus, I think it's important to notice, throughout the book of Psalms, David refers to God as his refuge and strong tower.
7. In fact, David actually wrote two Psalms during his stay in the cave, Psalm 57 and 142, and both refer to God as His refuge.
8. Psalm 57:1—"Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me! For my soul trusts in You; and in the shadow of Your wings I will make my refuge, until these calamities have passed by."
9. But I want to briefly turn you to the second Psalm (142), and quickly examine several key texts in light of this first lesson.
10. V3—"When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then You knew my path. In the way in which I walk they have secretly set a snare for me."
11. Verses 4-5—"Look on my right hand and see, for there is no one who acknowledges me; refuge has failed me; no one cares for my soul. I cried out to You, O LORD: I said, 'You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living.'"
12. (a) All human refuge failed him, v4—"Look on my right hand and see, for there is no one who acknowledges me; refuge has failed me; no one cares for my soul."
13. This is an interesting statement—remember, David was far from being alone while in the cave—hundreds of people were with him.
14. And many of these people cared for David—remember, his parents and siblings were with him while in the cave.
15. But notice what he says—"no one cares for my soul"—that is, there's no one who can fully care "for my soul."
16. V4—"Look on my right hand and see, for there is no one who acknowledges me"—advocates stood on the right hand.
17. What he means is this—there's no one who is qualified to care for him in the way that his soul needed—"refuge (human refuge) has failed me."
18. O my dear friends—how slow are we to learn this basic lesson—no man is able to meet the needs of our soul.
19. Man will always fail us! Regardless of what man we look to! Even good people who really and truly love us!
20. Do you know what? This is the problem with some of us—we are looking to manmade refuges to shelter us!
21. And so, there are two things you need to know—on one hand, there are people who love you and care for you, and yet, on the other hand, no man can fully care for your soul.
22. Now, don't get me wrong—the LORD often cares for us in and through others, who serve as His hands and mouth.

23. But what I mean is this—no mere man, regardless how holy and loving, can meet the deepest needs of our souls.
24. Let me apply this lesson to a few groups of people present—wives, as much as your husband loves and cares for you, he is not your ultimate refuge.
25. Children, as much as your parents love and care for you, they are not your ultimate refuge—people, as much as your pastors love and care for you, they are not your ultimate refuge.
26. What a wonderful blessing it is, to have people who actually love and care for you—it is a blessing beyond words.
27. But when it comes right down to it, there's not a single person on this planet, who can care for our souls in the way they need care.
28. (b) Only divine refuge saved him, v5—"I cried out to You, O LORD: I said, 'You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living.'"
29. Having concluded that all human refuge failed him, David was forced to look beyond man to God as his refuge.
30. V5—"I cried out to You, O LORD: I said, 'You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living'—God and God alone is our refuge.
31. This is what David learned while in the cave—he learned that while people loved him, only God can truly care for him.
32. This fact has been brought home to my heart in recent days, as we have been mourning with the Miller family.
33. For example, yesterday after we placed Mrs. Miller's body in the grave, Mr. Miller gave me a very heartfelt hug.
34. He said to me through tears, that he was thankful to God for our involvement and encouragement during this time.
35. But brethren, surely you know that we, in and of ourselves, are a very poor and insufficient refuge for the Miller family.
36. All we can ultimately do, is point them to the LORD, our sure refuge and our portion in the land of the living.
37. (2) Christians flee to Christ as spiritual and social misfits—the description of those who came to David is highly encouraging.
38. In most translations they are described with three "Ds"—"And everyone who was in distress, everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was discontented gathered to him."
39. And brethren, this is exactly what happened to David's greater Son, for think about it—Who gathered themselves to Christ but misfits.
40. Lepers, the lame and blind, prostitutes, tax-collectors, sinners—these are the people who gathered (flocked) to Christ.
41. Mk.1:32—"At evening, when the sun had set, they brought to Him all who were sick and those who were demon-possessed. And the whole city was gathered together at the door."
42. In other words, just as the outcasts and outsiders gathered to David, so the outcasts and outsiders gathered to Christ.
43. Thus, these three "Ds" describe every person who comes to God in Christ—they each come in distress, debt, and discontented.
44. (a) Distress—this Hebrew word literally means "straits" or "stress"—it refers to someone pressed in a tight place.
45. Now, the people who gathered to David, were distressed with various circumstances of difficulty and trouble.
46. But those who gather themselves to Christ, are distressed with a sense (awareness) of the guilt and filth of their sins.
47. Matt.11:28—"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"—they are burdened with a sense of sin.
48. In other words, our Savior invites those distressed with the weight of their sin and God's displeasure for that sin.

49. (b) Debt—sinners come to God in Christ because of a spiritual debt—Scripture describes sin as a moral debt.
50. Those who gathered to David were impoverished under the rule and reign of Saul—they sold themselves into debt.
51. And so, it is, sin is a moral debt to God—man owes God obedience, because God as our Creator has created us.
52. And thus, every time we act contrary to God's law and fail to comply with it, we increase our debt before God.
53. And thus, friends where can we go! Who can pay our sin debt? The only person qualified is God's incarnate Son.
54. Hymn (690)—"I hear the Savior say, "Thy strength indeed is small, child of weakness, watch and pray, find in Me thine all in all. Jesus paid it all, all to him I owe; sin had left a crimson stain, He washed it white as snow."
55. (c) Discontented—this Hebrew word literally means "bitter" and refers to a displeased or dissatisfied disposition.
56. A discontented person is someone who is unhappy or displeased with something—they are no longer content with their situation.
57. A person who comes to Christ is discontented with this world, serving Satan, and living in sin and rebellion to God.
58. They have come to see the emptiness of mere possessions, the folly of serving Satan, and the passing pleasure of sin.
59. A.W. Pink—"The one who has been brought to realize he is a spiritual pauper, and who is now full of grief for his sins, is discontented with the very things which till recently pleased him. O the emptiness of the world to a soul which God has smitten with a sense of sin!"
60. (3) Christians flee to Christ to receive a word from God—this is exactly what David did while in the cave of Adullam.
41. But I want to notice how David worded this, v3—"Please let my father and mother come here with you, till I know what God will do for me."
42. David anticipated to hear from God on what God would do for him—O brethren, this is an amazing statement!
43. When I first read this statement earlier on Saturday morning, I thought it said—"till I know what God would have me to do."
44. But this not what it says—it says—"till I know what God will do for me"—now, the two are necessarily related.
45. David wanted to hear from God to know what God would have him do, as He fulfilled His promises to David.
46. Thus, David was desirous to hear from God, yes to know what he should do, but also to know what God would do.
47. Christians today need the same assistance and direction, and God still gives it through His prophets and apostles.
48. That is, He gives it through the writings of the prophets and apostles, through whom God speaks to His people.
49. I really fear many Christian are unclear about this—God still speaks to His people—He still give them His word.
50. And He does this through the writings of the holy prophets and apostles—He speaks to us in and through His word.
51. Remember those words of our Savior we recently saw in the book of Revelation—"He who has ears let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches."
52. There is a real sense, brethren, that we've all gathered this morning in the cave of Adullam to know "what God will do for us."
53. Ps.57:2-3—"I will cry out to God Most High, to God who performs all things for me. He shall send from heaven and save me; God shall send forth His mercy and His truth."

61. The phrase "who performs all things for me" means, God will perform everything He promised David He would do.
62. He promised David that he would reign as king, and thus, this includes everything necessary to get him to the throne.
63. O brethren, God too has promised us a kingdom, and thus, He has also promised everything necessary to ensure we enter this kingdom.
64. (4) Christians flee to Christ as a minority or remnant—there were only 400 men out of the entire nation of Israel.
65. And so too, Christ describes His people as "a 'little flock'" and said "there are but few who enter the narrow gate."
66. It's a testimony to God's grace that he used these 400 men to form one of the greatest military forces known to man.
67. If you remember, Christ turned the world upside down with 12 apostles, this has always been the way God works.
68. This of course, is so that He and He alone, gets all the honor and glory—He uses a few misfits to get all the praise.
69. (5) Christians flee to Christ as their Leader and Captain—Christians not only take Christ as refuge but Sovereign.
70. That is, as we come to Him in distress, debt, and discontentment, we come to Him as our Ruler, Leader, and Captain.
71. Some of you may know this, but this initial group of misfits that gathered with David, became the core of his army.
72. Why did these men fight for David? Why did they willingly take Him as their Ruler? Because he relieved them from their distress! Because he was a gracious Ruler (unlike Saul)!
73. O my friends, why do poor sinners come to Christ as Captain and Ruler, but because He is a gracious Sovereign!
74. These 400 men that came to David, were in for a difficult life—they would follow David through his (10yr) journey.
75. Because they openly joined themselves to David, his enemies became their enemies, his trials became their trials.
76. There's a true sense in which they left the world they knew, to submit to David, and to follow him through great tribulation.
77. 1Sam.22:23—"Stay with me; do not fear. For he who seeks my life seeks your life, but with me you shall be safe."