

## God's Provision in Times of Emergency

### 1Samuel 21:1-9

By Phillip G. Kayser at DCC on 6-5-2011

#### Introduction

You've all probably heard this parable, but stories bear repeating. The story goes that a man lived in a two-story house on a flood plain. And there had been so much snow melting in the mountains and precipitation downstream that the river was threatening to overflow its banks. And of course the usual warnings were given via radio and TV to evacuate. At one point a Jeep with a louder speaker arrived and gave further warnings, and offered to evacuate him. But the man's response was that he was going to wait for God to rescue him.

But the river went up over the banks and began to flood the area. In fact, it very quickly rose to the level of the second floor. A boat was going through the area and offered to evacuate him, but he gave much the same response. "I'm trusting God. He will provide."

One hour later the water was so high that the man had climbed onto the top of his roof. A helicopter pilot spotted him from a long way off, and came by. Using a megaphone, the rescuers tried to convince the man to grab the rope ladder, which was dangling above his head.

"No worries." says the man. "I will be fine. God will provide for me."

The flood rises. The man predictably drowns.

At the pearly gates, the man says to God: "I had faith. Why did you let me die?" To which God replies: "I sent you a jeep, a boat and a helicopter."

No Christian would be stupid enough to do like that man did when they are faced with a literal flood. When water is lapping at our feet reality kicks in and we act responsibly – which is why that story is not very funny. And yet when it comes to many other areas of life some Christians become just like that man. They become passive (perhaps waiting for God to do something more convenient – like taking away the flood), and become blind to the ways in which God has already provided. Their view of getting a better job is, "We are praying about it. And we are going to trust God for this." Their view of kicking a bad habit may be a little bit better. They perhaps pray, "Lord, please get me out this." But they totally ignore the spiritual jeep, boat, and helicopter that God has provided to help them gain

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victory over that lust. Perhaps it is inconvenient – they want God to do something easier. Their view of getting out of debt, or fixing their marriage, or protecting their home from burglars is utterly unrealistic. In effect they want to avoid chapters 21-31 of this book. These aren't pleasant chapters. Hardly anybody would deliberately choose to be in those chapters. Well, I know some Navy Seals who might think they would like it. But they are tough chapters. Yet they show God's rich provision. That's the amazing thing. They show God's provision over and over.

If we *could* have skipped over the last eleven chapters of 1 Samuel and moved straight from chapter 20 into David becoming king, it could have made a wonderful fairy tale. It would have been a rags to riches story with just a little bit of danger and just a little bit of inconvenience. It still would have been a wonderful story about an unknown shepherd with a meteoric rise to fame; a persecuted Christian quickly replacing the persecutor. And it would have still fit within the theology of the name-it-and-claim-it people.

A couple years ago, Rodney talked about the Cinderella Syndrome that many people have with jobs. Instead of aggressively pursuing their dreams and taking advantage of every opportunity, they act like they are waiting for a fairy godmother to zap them with her wand and turn their dreams into reality. I've talked to guys who don't know where their next meal will come from, and as I have gotten them a meal and started strategizing with them on how I would help them and what *they* would need to do to get out of the hole that they are in, you can tell that they are balking. They want a palace, but not the work required to achieve it. They are hoping that I will somehow wave my wand and turn their pumpkin into a carriage, their mice into horses, and their poverty into riches. Well, it doesn't work that way in any area of life.

If you are hoping for a fairy godmother to fix your economics, your children, your lust, your marriage, your – you name it, then idolatry is the first sin that you need to repent of because your God is a pagan fairy godmother, not the God of the Bible. The God of the Bible fills the Bible with historical stories of danger, emergencies, hardship, and suffering that molds men's character, in order to snap us out of such reveries, and return us to reality and to the hard work that is involved in pursuing our upward call. *It is an upward call* – that's the good news. *God will provide for you* – that's the good news. *Providence is on your side* – that's the good news. But today we are going to be getting a tiny glimpse as to how God provides during times of emergency. And it sure isn't with the wave of a wand.

## I. God doesn't necessarily take the emergency away (v. 1a)

The first thing I want you to notice is that God doesn't necessarily take the emergencies away. This really should be a no-brainer, but a lot of people act like they don't believe it. They are waiting for God to take the emergencies away. They are not acting. Verse 1 begins: "**Now David came to Nob, to Ahimilech the priest.**" So David is still on the run. He's on the run despite the prayers of Jonathan, David, Samuel, and the school of the prophets. The verse continues, "**And Ahimelech was afraid when he met David...**" When news of what Saul had done in chapter 20 reached Ahimelech, he was one nervous guy. And it makes sense: If Saul is willing to go against David, God's anointed, and he is willing to go against Samuel and the school of prophets, Ahimelech rightly fears that Saul might come after him. And actually, in the next chapter we find that his fears were not ill founded. He gets killed. And David certainly has legitimate fears. In the previous chapter David had told Jonathan, "**But truly, as the LORD lives and as your soul lives, there is but a step between me and death.**" Jonathan didn't believe it, but the danger was there nonetheless.

And in any period of history it is sometimes hard to know if Jonathan is right or if David is right. The Jonathans are the ones who initially say, "The economy is resilient, don't worry. The banks will be bailed out, don't worry. There will always be groceries on the shelves, don't worry. The government would never round up your ammo, don't worry. They could never take away everyone's house, don't worry." Jonathan didn't believe there was any danger. And if David had followed his advice, he would be a dead man.

Now sometimes the Jonathans of this world who don't believe every conspiracy are actually correct. And David was willing to check out Jonathan's theory – just in case. But David was not naïve. His view of God was not that of the name-it-and-claim-it crowd who believe that God will never allow us to go through tribulation. Chapters 21-31 were David's years of tribulation. Don't tell David that it's not God's will for him to face tribulation. Don't tell the Christians in Sudan that they will get raptured out of the tribulation or they will want to rapture you. They have been going through 50 years of tribulation. Sometimes it is God's will for us to face multiple emergencies. In the next few years we may be facing some of the greatest emergencies our nation has ever faced. Now it is true that God provided for David in marvelous ways all through these chapters, but it wasn't in the way that Jonathan had hoped. David lost everything initially.

In fact in these verses David didn't have any protection or any provision. He got away with nothing but the clothes on his back.

And I bring this up because there are too many dogmatic Jonathans out there. They are good people. They are friends of mine. They are even sometimes right. They didn't prepare for y2k and because of God's mercy they weren't any the worse for it. So they assume that they can ignore the telltale signs of Hitlerian Fascism in our nation. They assume that they can ignore the warnings of double-digit inflation, bank failures, and worldwide economic collapse. Will they be right a second time? Maybe. But I plan to be a cautious David. While I don't tremble like Ahimilech trembled (which is the literal Hebrew), I'm still not willing to take too many chances. While I am not driven by fear, I still want to plan. And I am certainly not planning for God to wave a magic wand and make the emergencies disappear. God could have mercy on us, but given the rebellion of our nation against His law, it is almost certain that we are headed into troublesome times.

## **II. God doesn't necessarily make people sympathetic with your situation (v. 1b) – they are thinking about themselves**

The second thing that I want you to notice is that God doesn't necessarily make everyone sympathetic with your situation. Ahimelech would just as soon that David stayed away. He's thinking about his own danger. Now he does share with David here, even though, as we will see, the sword already belonged to David in the first place. But Ahimelech, who should have had broader kingdom perspective, was more wrapped up in his own dangers than he was in David's. And if you hope to get through an emergency by depending upon others completely, you might be in for a disappointment. The very people that you might have thought would have stood strong for you and gone to bat for you might be only willing to give token help. "OK David. Here's five loaves of bread. But please don't stick around here, and don't come back. I don't want to get in trouble." The people that David found loyal ended up being common men, tax protestors, and others on the run from Saul. It was just like in Nazi Germany. Very few pastors were willing to buck the system. Some felt guilty enough to give token help. But very few were willing to risk their lives. Very few were willing to preach against Hitler.

So don't necessarily think that everyone's going to be sympathetic with your emergency when it comes up. People tend to default to the status quo and to safety. We will see in the next chapter that those status quo

people ended up getting killed anyway, so it doesn't always pay off. But it seems to be the default that people go to. That's one of the reasons why I like this church. You have more in common with the valiant men of David than you do with Ahimelech. Praise God! They were men who were willing to hang together, knowing full well that otherwise they would hang separately. And I think most of you are like that. But I'm just saying that not everyone is that way. History shows that most people are like Ahimelech. They are nice guys. They want to help in some ways. But they don't want to take any risks that might get them into trouble. At most they will give you token help and hope you stay away.

### **III. God doesn't necessarily let civil magistrates support you (v. 1c)**

Nor should you be surprised if Sheriffs, Mayors, councilmen, and courts don't stand by you. When Ahimelech says, "**Why are you alone, and no one is with you?**" Ahimelech is not denying the presence of David's small band of servants and friends. The text indicates that there were people with David. And Jesus interprets it that there were people with David. He wasn't totally alone. All the commentators agree on that. But commentators point out that the meaning is that there is no civil magistrate who could vouch for David because he was officially alone. His army was not with him. The people who were "important" were not with him. So it's not just the pastors who bail on him. The magistrates do too.

And this is one of the reasons why God allowed the country of Israel to suffer horribly during the next few years. Civil magistrates were derelict in their duty to resist Saul's tyranny, and citizens were derelict in holding their local magistrates accountable to fulfill their vow of office. So God allowed the whole nation to suffer until such time as they began to see the absolute necessity of resistance to tyranny. We speak of this as interposition. A lower magistrate is supposed to come in between – to interpose himself between tyranny and you. And we will be looking at that subject in more detail in the future.

Now you all know my eschatology. I am firmly convinced that Christians will eventually win. But that does not mean things can't get worse in America right now. And the lack of interposition by lower magistrates almost guarantees that things will get worse before they get better. Many times these emergencies are God's redemptive judgments. In other words, He will bring good out of the judgment. He is disciplining the nation with the tyrants to bring the nation to repentance.

#### **IV. God doesn't necessarily remove the need for caution in speech when enemies or weak-kneed people are around (v. 2 with v. 7 and 22:22)**

The fourth thing that we clearly see in this passage is that God doesn't necessarily remove the need for extreme caution in speech during emergencies. Some people would call it lying, and David might have said that he was hiding the truth from people who didn't need to know it. Verse 2 says, **“So David said to Ahimelech the priest, ‘The king has ordered me on some business, and said to me, ‘Do not let anyone know anything about the business on which I send you, or what I have commanded you.’” And I have directed my young men to such and such a place.’”**

Wow! Nice story David. King Saul has sent you on a secret mission?

Generally speaking you will find three interpretations of this verse in the commentaries. Some people say that David is not lying because God is the rightful king of the nation and God has sent him on this errand. So even though he is hiding the truth, he is not lying. They will appeal to Psalms that David wrote around this time where David calls God the king of Israel. And we looked at one of those Psalms last time. But even on this interpretation, David is still deliberately deceiving someone even though he is not telling an outright lie.

The second interpretation is that David *is indeed* lying, and that this was a bad thing. David was saying that King Saul had sent him on this mission, and David should not have lied. He should have told Ahimelech the whole truth even if it got him in trouble. I don't agree with that interpretation, but there are good men who hold to it. David Payne's commentary holds that view.

The third interpretation is that David deliberately told a falsehood, and he was perfectly justified in lying because he was lying to Doeg, the enemy, and was doing this to protect Ahimelech, someone who had already shown friendship by hiding his sword. During warfare circumstances the Bible authorizes deceiving the enemy. They appeal to 1 Samuel 22:22 where David says, **“I knew that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul.”** So knowing it, he gave misinformation. On this interpretation David was speaking something that he hoped Doeg would believe. It was either, “the king sent me on this errand,” wink, wink, or David was duping both Doeg and Ahimelech for Ahimelech's good.

But whichever of those three interpretations you opt for, you can appreciate David's heart. David knows that Ahimelech needs to be protected. Perhaps if he words it this way Doeg won't make a bad report. But he feels bad that Doeg is even there, so he has to say something that will keep both Ahimelech and Doeg in the dark.

But I'll tell you one thing – this issue that Corrie ten Boom and her sister Betsy faced in Nazi Germany is an issue that you will need to settle before the emergency arises. I won't take people with me on missions trips to closed countries if they waffle on this question of caution in speech before the enemy. If you will tell the truth in a way that harms your neighbor and sends them to their death you have pitted the law against the law, something that God never did. In fact, you are violating the spirit of the spirit of the ninth commandment, which forbids bearing false witness against your neighbor – which involves getting your neighbor in trouble with your speech. If the soldiers come to your door and ask you, "Where are the Jews?" are you going to answer like Betsy did, "They are under that table"? Though it is not false witness against your neighbor, Betsy was certainly witnessing against her neighbor. Or are you going to answer like Corrie did and tell a falsehood? Some people say that they would hide the Jews behind the false wall, but wouldn't say anything. But their very silence would be revealing something, and the false wall doesn't resolve the question. The false wall is itself a deception. It is pretending something that is not true. Hiding Jews is hiding the truth. Telling the truth about the Jews in your home is implicating yourself in their murder. It's such a tough choice that many people make the unbiblical choice like Betsy did.

If this is an issue you have never studied, I would encourage you to start by reading the Bible's praise of the midwives who told a falsehood rather than killing babies, or the Bible's praise of Rahab who told a falsehood rather than turning the Jewish spies over to the soldiers, or Joshua who deceived the enemy with his warfare tactics, pretending one thing and then doing another. Without caution of speech in warfare situations you will find yourself potentially endangering the lives of many people. You don't owe the truth to a king Saul. It is possible for some people to be stricter than God is or to pretend to be holier than God is. No, God is the definition of holiness. Sometimes God's provision is His authorization of extreme caution in speech. This exception to the general rule is God's provision.

## V. God doesn't necessarily remove your need to seek for provisions (v. 3)

The fifth thing we see in this passage is that God doesn't necessarily remove your need to seek for provisions or to scrounge for the people you are responsible for. Verse 3 says, "**Now therefore, what have you on hand? Give me five loaves of bread in my hand, or whatever can be found.**" He boldly asks. He tries to find food. He doesn't just sit there in his dining room hoping God will put food on the table. Does God sometimes do miracles like that? Yes He does – like he did with the milk and bread at George Muller's orphanage. I have seen God do miracles. But God's normal pattern is for us to seek provisions, not just expect them. He usually does not reward the lazy, the wasteful, or the ones who refuse to be good stewards. During times of emergency we are going to need scroungers who know how to ask and know how to bargain. Christians will have to band together and share resources. In Luke 14 Jesus blasts passive Christians and says that you must count the cost. Otherwise, He says that you are like a person who builds a tower without getting together all the materials needed to finish the tower. God's provision does not exclude our human responsibility. He works *through* our human responsibility.

## VI. God doesn't necessarily make everything work if you are a Pharisaical "standard-bearer" instead of a gracious "image-bearer" (vv. 4-6 with Matt 12:3-4; Mark 2:25-26; Luke 6:3-4)

### A. *What it means to be a standard-bearer instead of an image-bearer*

The sixth point is that God doesn't necessarily make everything work if you are a Pharisaical standard-bearer instead of a gracious image-bearer. Let me read the passage, and then I will explain.

**1Samuel 21:4** And the priest answered David and said, "*There is no common bread on hand; but there is holy bread, if the young men have at least kept themselves from women.*"

**1Samuel 21:5** Then David answered the priest, and said to him, "Truly, women *have been* kept from us about three days since I came out. And the vessels of the young men are holy, and *the bread is* in effect common, even though it was consecrated in the vessel this day."

**1Samuel 21:6** So the priest gave him holy *bread*; for there was no bread there but the showbread which had been taken from before the LORD, in order to put hot bread *in its place* on the day when it was taken away.

28: Now let me read Christ's *interpretation* of this passage in Mark 2:23-

**Mark 2:23** Now it happened that He went through the grainfields on the Sabbath; and as they went His disciples began to pluck the heads of grain.  
**Mark 2:24** And the Pharisees said to Him, "Look, why do they do what is not lawful on the Sabbath?"  
**Mark 2:25** But He said to them, "Have you never read what David did when he was in need and hungry, he and those with him:  
**Mark 2:26** how he went into the house of God *in the days* of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the showbread, which is not lawful to eat except for the priests, and also gave some to those who were with him?"  
**Mark 2:27** And He said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.  
**Mark 2:28** Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath."

The reason appealing to 1 Samuel 21 was so brilliant is that it wiped out two of the Pharisees legalistic additions to God's Sabbath law. There were variations among the Pharisees as to whether the maximum you could travel was half a mile (2000 cubits), one mile (4000 cubits) or one mile to the destination and then one mile back (8000 cubits). But the Bible said nothing of that. And David violated all three of their Pharisaic additions since he travelled two miles from Naioth and then another 23 miles southwest to Gath. Christ's point was that necessity could allow you to break the Sabbath since the Sabbath was made for your health, not for your destruction. And the Old Testament already allowed for such flexibility.

Secondly, David ate holy bread on the Sabbath that was only intended for the priests. But eating on the Sabbath was so important to Sabbath keeping that God allowed for some exceptions to His law. For example, Exodus allows cooking and other work for Sabbath food preparation. And since these men were hungry and had another 23 miles to run, they would need some food. God didn't want people fasting on the Sabbath. Christ's interpretation was that this fit the heart of what the Sabbath was about. Jesus said, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath."

Now let's think about that for a minute. What Jesus was saying is that God's law was designed for man's well being and took into account not only the rules, but also the person, and the situation. Anyone who thinks only of rules is a standard-bearer. He waves a banner that says, "Here are some rules that everyone has to follow." Now, if you were to wave the *whole* Bible and say, "Here is the *Bible* that everyone has to follow," that would not be a problem. But standard-bearers ignore the context of those rules. If standard-bearers were to be logically consistent, let me show you how ridiculous their

position would be. 2 Thessalonians 3:10 says, “**if anyone will not work, neither should he eat.**” If we were logically consistent standard-bearers we would have to say that babies shouldn’t eat because they are not working, and bed-ridden aged people shouldn’t eat either because they are not working. After all, it says, “If *anyone* will not work, neither should he eat.” There are no exceptions. Anyone means anyone. But of course, interpreting the Scripture that way is taking it out of the context of that situation and those people that Paul was talking to, and no standard-bearer would be that ridiculous on this passage. They know that Paul was talking to troublemakers who were gossips and lazy. It was anyone of *them* that he was talking about. Now that Scripture is so easy to understand that no one would be a standard-bearer with it. Instead they would be image-bearers, caring for those children made in the image of God. And yet they do exactly the same thing with other rules.

You can be a standard-bearer who fails to care for your wife and children with the command, “Be fruitful and multiply.” The rule made is that we’ve got to have as many babies as we possibly can.” And I bring this up as one who had hoped that we could have a dozen children. I’m not against having big families. But instead of taking the trouble to investigate how that command should be fulfilled, it’s easy to just wave the rule. You can be a standard-bearer when it comes to the commands to fast and fail to notice Scriptures that exempt young children and the sickly. You can be a standard-bearer when it comes to Proverbs 31 and fail to remember that there are Scriptures which also call for vacations and rests. You can be a standard-bearer when it comes to devotions and never miss a morning or evening time of devotions, but completely miss the relational side and joyful side of devotions, and even the fact that there are times that you have to skip the routine and have devotions a different time.

You see, standard-bearers only know how to deal with rules. In contrast, image-bearers deal with the rules of Scripture as they are applied to the whole image of God in man. He will be sensitive to the person’s age, situation, maturity level, understanding. Standard-bearers could care less about the consequences – it’s all about the rules. And I have seen devastation brought to families because the parents are standard-bearers. They don’t know how to be flexible. They don’t know how to be loving with the rules. Image-bearers see the rules as an expression of love. When standard-bearers look at rules, all they see is rules. It is not as if the image-bearer throws out or ignores the rules. Those rules reflect part of the image

of God. But they are only part. An image-bearer values both the rule and the person, and he is always looking at what the goal for that rule is.

And here's the important point – the Scriptures incarnate image bearing, not standard bearing. The way the Pharisees managed to get everybody to be standard-bearers was that they extracted all the rules from Scripture that they could find, and they put them into a list that could be kept. But in doing that, they took them out of context and made them sterile and harsh. Just to illustrate - it's sort of like what people do with systematic theology. They take every statement the Bible makes about God and make a beautiful doctrine. I love the doctrine. But they completely leave out all the practical applications of that doctrine. Every time God gave a doctrine He was answering a practical issue. And if you want proof, take just about any doctrine and trace it through the Gospel of John. It will blow you away at how practical and rich that doctrine is. You will see bits and pieces of that doctrine answering pressing needs. When the disciples were abusing authority and wondering who would be the greatest, Jesus would appeal to the doctrine of the Trinity and from the Trinitarian relationships show what godly authority, submission, love, leadership, and delegation looked like. When they were being selfish, He would appeal to God's attribute of aseity. When they doubted God, He would appeal to the inerrancy of Scripture. For Christ, doctrine was very practical. It wasn't heartless like so many systematic theologies are. And if your home resembles a systematic theology more than it does the Gospel of John, you may be a standard-bearer.

Hopefully that gives you a word picture of the way God gives rules. The Bible makes rules, and then shows how to apply them to various circumstances and gives exceptions to the rules. If you took the Scripture I read from 2Thessalonians 3:10 out of context, you've got an incredibly bad law. It's a law that would kill all babies. But how frequently do we do exactly the same thing with other laws? I have met standard-bearers who wave the standard "Thou shalt not kill?" and insist that this means negatively 1) you can't defend yourself with a gun when attacked by a rapist, 2) you can't prevent a murder by killing the attacker, 3) the government may never engage in capital punishment, and 4) no one should join the military. So that is the negative side of their standard bearing. The positive side of their standard bearing is that they insist that you must preserve life at all costs in the hospital even if it saps the hospital and taxpayers of hundreds of millions of dollars. So they are willing to steal money in order to uphold their interpretation of the rule, "Thou shalt not

kill.” But Scripture would say that is idolatry. While the Bible is totally against all euthanasia, it doesn’t idolize life either.

What does the Bible do? In Deuteronomy 5 God gave the Ten Commandments, and then in chapters 6-26 He gave detailed examples of what each commandment does and does not mean. It’s Deuteronomy 6-26 that keeps people from being legalistic standard-bearers. If you throw out the case laws (which most of the church has done in the name of grace) you will almost always end up with graceless rules and end up being a harsh standard-bearer on some things. That’s the irony. So on the sixth commandment that we were talking about, those chapters authorized personal self-defense, the death penalty, just war, and other positive things. The negatives it forbade included punishment for false witnesses, personal revenge, torture and other things.

We’ve already looked at the exception of truth telling. In certain very restricted circumstances the Bible says that you don’t owe people the truth. For example, you don’t have to leave a sign on the door for the burglar that you are gone. You don’t have to think, “I want to be completely transparent and truthful with the burglars.” The Bible would say that this is foolishness. In fact, it is perfectly appropriate to actively deceive the burglar by having automatic switches turning lights on in different parts of the house, deceiving the burglar into thinking that you are home. By extension, a burglar fits into the Bible’s warfare ethics. So the bible shows you the rules, shows you the exceptions to the rules, shows you how to apply the rules to unique circumstances, and shows you how to apply the rules in a way that will benefit others and glorify God. That’s image bearing. And it takes more maturity than standard-bearing. David illustrates that this issue comes to a head during times of emergency. You better deal with it long before the emergencies arise.

***B. Side note on God’s flexibility within the law (see God’s exception to Lev 6:16 in 10:12-20; see Numb. 28:9; see soldiers and Numb. 19:14-16; See John 7:2; Luke 14:5; See Matt 12:9-13; Mark 7:19)***

I won’t get into it, but I have included two sub-points for those who want to take this too far and do whatever you want you to do. That’s humanism. I have given you some examples under point B that show that the Bible, and the Bible alone, can define this flexibility within the law.

### *C. Side note on purity in battle (v. 5)*

And then secondly, verse 5 shows that flexibility has its limits – it’s biblical limits. In the case of eating this bread, the absolute limit was that no one who had had sexual relations in the previous day could partake of the priests’ bread. And David had assured them that whenever he was in battle, he completely devoted it to the Lord. And just like there were limits on the showbread, there are limits on every other area of God’s law. Just because God allows exceptions to the law, “thou shalt not kill,” does not mean we can whack people at will. Just because God gives exceptions concerning falsehood in time of war (for example spies telling fibs to the enemy) does not mean we can tell lies to our customers and business competitors and excuse the lying with a lame idea that businesses are at economic war. God does not allow for that distinction. The Bible alone must define the circumstances under which exceptions can be made.

Now the reason I have brought this whole discussion up is that if you are not diligently studying worldview, ethics, apologetics, and other things that I encourage the young people in, you won’t have Biblical wisdom to make the right decisions when emergencies come. You can’t pull a book off the shelf during an emergency. It is a snap decision. And the more immersed you are ahead of time in Biblical law, the better your snap decisions will become. Christ endorsed what David did here.

### **VII. God doesn’t promise that things won’t go worse (v. 7)**

The seventh thing that I see in this passage is that God doesn’t promise that things won’t get worse. Verse 7 says, “**Now a certain man of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before the LORD. And his name was Doeg, an Edomite, the chief of the herdsmen who belonged to Saul.**” The very mention of this Edomite is ominous. They were enemies of Israel. To show an Edomite working for Saul shows that Saul has become the enemy of Israel. And sure enough, in chapter 22 this Edomite is used by Saul to kill all the pastors in Nob except for one. David thought it was bad in chapter 21, but chapter 22 sees things getting much worse.

When emergencies come along we should pray that God would remove them. But there are no guarantees that He will do so. God brings emergencies into your life for your good, not necessarily for your comfort. It would have been much nicer if this Doeg guy was not present. But God would use Doeg to bring about punishment on Ahimelech’s house for their sins (and he had already prophesied that he would do that) and to cause

David himself to grow. And I am convinced that God is using some modern day Doegs to bring discipline to the church of Jesus Christ today. Until the church repents, things are likely to get worse, not better. So the fact that God promises to provide for you does not guarantee absence of troubles.

### **VIII. Yet God still provides in the midst of emergencies (vv. 6,8-9)**

#### ***A. The bread***

And yet, God provided for David in all of this. In this passage God provided bread – a symbol of life and all that was needed to sustain life, and God provided a sword, a symbol of all that is needed to protect and maintain life. We've already looked at the bread. Let's end by looking at the sword:

#### ***B. The sword***

Verses 8-9 say,

**1Samuel 21:8 And David said to Ahimelech, "Is there not here on hand a spear or a sword? For I have brought neither my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's business required haste."**

Yeah, it did. The king's business to kill me required haste. Verse 9 gives Ahimelech's response.

**1Samuel 21:9 So the priest said, "The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you killed in the Valley of Elah, there it is, wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod. If you will take that, take it. For *there is no other except that one here.*" And David said, "*There is none like it; give it to me.*"**

We saw in chapter 17 that this sword already belonged to David, so what is it doing here? We don't know for sure, but the supposition is that David hid it there rather than allowing it to be confiscated. In chapter 19 he owned the sword and hid it in his tent. Somewhere between that time and this chapter Saul confiscated the weapons, and David decided to hide it. This speech may have been as much for Doeg's hearing as for Ahimelech's. It was probably this giving of the sword, though, that got Ahimelech the death penalty. He had previously hidden David's sword. And Doeg now knew it.

And you might wonder, "Why would that be a problem?" Well, it was a problem because by this time there was strict weapon control within the nation of Israel. It is an utterly astounding fact that not one of the 86 priests who lived and served at Nob had a sword with them. In the Law of Moses, everyone was required to have weapons. In fact, God praised the priest Phinehas for killing a Moabite and Israelite with his spear during that time of emergency. And you would think that during a time when Philistine raids

were common and you needed to defend yourself, this absence of swords or spears is astounding. And yet that's what Ahimelech said. The only sword at Nob was the one hidden in a place where most people wouldn't dare to look. Apparently Saul thought that his own safety from insurrection was more important than the safety of the people. So he disarmed the people and even the soldiers had to turn in their weapons when they went off duty. That's why David could not bring a sword from his house.

And *this*, brothers and sisters, has been the sad practice of tyrants all down through the years. When Saul first came to power, only he and his son Jonathan owned a sword. Why? Because the tyrants in chapter 13 were the Philistines. They didn't trust the Israelites with swords. And in chapter 13 it was illegal for Jonathan and Saul to have those swords. But God's law trumps man's law, and Scripture indicates that if you don't provide for and defend your family you are worse than an unbeliever. Saul initially encouraged everyone to get armed. He was a good king at first. But as he became more and more paranoid of the people towards the end of his 40-year reign, he became a tyrant, and he started to imitate the pagans by disarming the population. He even disarmed the priests and Levites. And without exception through history, governments that disarm people are tyrants who are not to be trusted, while those who believe in liberty want their people to be armed. It is always the way it has been.

This is controversial in Christian circles, but it should not be. Embedded right in the law was the right to defend yourself against common criminals, riots, and bandits. Exodus 22:3 says, "**Let every man put his sword on his side...**" Weapon ownership was a part of the law. And Jesus continued that tradition in Luke 22:36. He said that He had sent them out once before without money, extra clothing, or swords to show that he could miraculously provide for them. But now that He was leaving He gives the abiding principle. He said, "**But now, he who has a money bag, let him take it** [in other words, don't presume upon God financially], **and likewise a knapsack; and he who has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one.**" That passage is saying that owning a weapon is more important than owning a second garment. It is one of the most fundamental of the God-given rights in Scripture.

At this time of night the disciples didn't have time to sell a garment and buy a sword. But verse 38 goes on to say, "**Then they said, 'Lord, look, here are two swords.'** **And He said to them, 'It is enough.'**" While Jesus did not allow Peter to raise the sword against the civil magistrate later on in the chapter (and we will have much more to say about that in future

sermons), He did allow them to carry illegal weapons. And I say illegal because history tells us that Rome had strict weapon control. So many Romans had been killed by the sicarii that they banned the ownership of swords, and soldiers and police had to turn in their weapons when they were off duty. Jesus was commanding something that was in violation of Roman weapon control laws. We need to understand that allowing such weapons is a major part of God's provision for you to protect yourself during emergencies. The police won't always be there to protect you no matter how good a job they do. In a later chapter David would command his men, **“Every man strap on his sword.’ So every man strapped on his sword.”** That was a violation of a weapon control act. And if you have conscience issues with that, then you are saying that an unconstitutional law can trump God's law. It cannot. You cannot get more fundamental issues than survival provisions of bread and survival possession of a weapon.

Now some people get nervous with the Scripture at this point because they say, “What if every criminal got a weapon? What if every gang member got a weapon? It will be all out war.” They need to wake up and smell the roses because the criminals already have weapons; gang members already have the weapons. Gun control laws have never kept weapons out of criminals' hands. As Thomas Jefferson said, “Laws that forbid the carrying of arms... disarm only those who are neither inclined nor determined to commit crimes... Such laws make things worse for the assaulted and better for the assailants; they serve rather to encourage than to prevent homicides, for an unarmed man may be attacked with greater confidence than an armed man.”<sup>1</sup> That was president Thomas Jefferson.

Gun control is ungodly, wicked, and unconstitutional – but more importantly it is unbiblical and it has always been the prelude to tyranny. The gun control act that they tried to foist on America in the 60's was for the most part copied word for word (I think it is something like 60% of it) out of the gun control act of Hitler, which enabled him to massacre citizens with impunity. The gun control act of Turkey led to the slaughter of millions of Armenians by Muslims. Weapon control in Rwanda led the Hutus to massacre the Tutsis in riots with impunity. The founding fathers of this nation saw the handwriting on the wall if private citizens were ever disarmed because it would lead to totalitarian tyranny like European governments had.

One of America's most important founding fathers, Patrick Henry, explained the purpose of the second amendment, which he vigorously fought to have included. He said, “The great object is, that every man be armed.” In

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<sup>1</sup> Jefferson's "Commonplace Book," 1774-1776.

1788 Richard H. Lee said, “A militia when properly formed are in fact the people themselves ... and include all men capable of bearing arms ... To preserve liberty it is essential that the whole body of people always possess arms... The mind that aims at a select militia, must be influenced by a truly anti-republican principle.” In another place he said, “... whereas, to preserve liberty, it is essential that the whole body of the people always possess arms, and be taught alike, especially when young, how to use them...”<sup>2</sup> We have seen in a previous sermon that David had learned very young how to use various weapons against lions, bears, and Philistines.

In George Washington’s address to the first Congress he said, “Firearms stand next in importance to the Constitution itself. They are the people's liberty teeth keystone... the rifle and the pistol are equally indispensable... more than 99% of them by their silence indicate that they are in safe and sane hands. The very atmosphere of firearms everywhere restrains evil interference. When firearms go, all goes, we need them every hour.” So our first president, George Washington, said, “Firearms stand next in importance to the Constitution itself.” Well, it’s no wonder that the second amendment would be trampled on when most of the constitution has been neglected.

The bottom line is that citizens need food and weapons during times of emergencies. These are not luxuries. These are absolute necessities. In fact, they are such necessities that Jesus said you should sell your garment and get a weapon if you don’t already own one. And if they confiscate guns, there are other weapons with which to protect yourself. Of course, these weapons are for rabid dogs, varmints, and criminals, and should be used with Biblical wisdom and discretion.

But too many Christians have a fairy godmother approach to such provisions. They hope that the state will wave a magic wand and protect them from all criminals. Let me tell you a secret. In every court case that I have read where a citizen has sued the police department for not arriving on time to protect them from criminals, the courts have said that it is an unreasonable expectation for police to be everywhere. They are admitting that the state is not a fairy godmother. Other Christians trust that God will miraculously protect them when the riots come swinging through. But if you saw the videos of the riots in Los Angeles you probably noticed that the rioters were equal opportunity thugs who attacked both atheists and Christians - if they were unarmed. The only stores that were left unburned and unmolested were the stores of Koreans (some of whom were Christian,

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<sup>2</sup> Richard H. Lee, Additional Letters from the Federal Farmer 53, 1788

by the way). And the reason those stores were left alone was because the Koreans had shotguns to protect themselves. So they still had bread and guns. This was God's means of providing for them during emergency riots.

### **Conclusion**

This story of David is a fitting introduction to the next chapters because it shows in symbolic form that God is interested in providing for our needs. But He works through human responsibility. Don't wait for a fairy godmother to zap you out of the emergency. Don't be like the foolish man who sat on top of his house telling the helicopter that they can move on since God will protect us. Instead, may we be more like Oliver Cromwell, who told his soldiers, "Trust God, and keep your powder dry." Amen.



# God's Provision in Times of Emergency

## 1Samuel 21:1-9

By Phillip G. Kayser at DCC on 6-5-2011

### Introduction

- I. God doesn't necessarily take the emergency away (v. 1a)
- II. God doesn't necessarily make people sympathetic with your situation (v. 1b) – they are thinking about themselves
- III. God doesn't necessarily let civil magistrates support you (v. 1c)
- IV. God doesn't necessarily remove the need for caution in speech when enemies or weak-kneed people are around (v. 2 with v. 7 and 22:22)
- V. God doesn't necessarily remove your need to seek for provisions (v. 3)
- VI. God doesn't necessarily make everything work if you are a Pharisaical “standard-bearer” instead of a gracious “image-bearer” (vv. 4-6 with Matt 12:3-4; Mark 2:25-26; Luke 6:3-4)
  - A. What it means to be a standard-bearer instead of an image-bearer
  - B. Side note on God's flexibility within the law (see God's exception to Lev 6:16 in 10:12-20; see Numb. 28:9; see soldiers and Numb. 19:14-16; See John 7:2; Luke 14:5; See Matt 12:9-13; Mark 7:19)
  - C. Side note on purity in battle (v. 5)
- VII. God doesn't promise that things won't go worse (v. 7)
- VIII. Yet God still provides in the midst of emergencies (vv. 6,8-9)
  - A. The bread
  - B. The sword

### Conclusion

