

1 Samuel 23:1-13

Guard us and Guide us

Pray that God's Spirit would give you spiritual insight into his Word.

1. Do you remember a time you needed guidance from the Lord and could not decide what you should do in a particular situation? What did you do?
2. What are some of the contrasts between Saul in the previous chapter and David in this chapter? Look particularly at 22:16-19 and 23:5; 22:7-8 and 23:6-13.
3. What was David doing in rescuing the people of Keilah? See Judges 2:18 and 1 Samuel 11:1-11.
4. Who would usually be privy to the advice of the priests? Abiathar gives David advice. What does this tell us about David's role?
5. In seeking guidance, David asked Abiathar to use the ephod as well as the Urim and Thummim (notice the yes/no answers of the Lord in vv. 2, 4, 11, 12, cf. Exodus 28:1-30). We don't have prophets like Gad, nor priests like Abiathar, nor the Urim and Thummim to give us guidance. How should Christians discover the "will of the Lord" for their lives? Discuss. Also, consider these passages: Proverbs 3:4-5; 1 Thessalonians 4:3; James 1:5; Romans 12:1-2; 2 Peter 1:19. The last passage is particularly important in light of the claim that some make that guidance must be either a voice, an angel or an impression in your heart for it to be from God.
6. In v.4 we witness David asking God the same question a second time. In Judges 6:36-40 we see Gideon likewise asks God a second time for guidance after he had made known his will. What are the similarities/differences between David and Gideon in their request?
7. In thinking about how this applies to us ask yourself this question: After God has revealed something in his word, do we need additional confirmation from science, research, or our culture? After you have given an answer consider the implications of Jesus' words to Thomas in John 20:29.
8. What are the similarities and differences you see between David in this passage and Jesus as he is presented in Isaiah 61:1-4?

9. Throughout this passage, the author uses the word "save" to describe what David did for the people of Keilah (v.2, v.5). This often means "deliverance of God's people the LORD brings about" (as in 1 Samuel 7:8, 14:23, 4:3). In what way is the military picture of God physically saving Israel a foreshadowing of the work Jesus Christ would do? For this, you might want to look at passages that reflect different aspects of Jesus' work that employs military language, for example Colossians 2:15, 1 Corinthians 15:24-26 and Revelation 17:14-15.
- 10.1 Samuel 23:10-12 shows us that God knows what would happen if David stays in Keilah and what would happen if he leaves. The former never happened and yet God knew it. The same is true of Matthew 11:21 where Jesus shows that he knows what happened to Tyre and Sidon knowing they did not receive miracles, and he knows what would have happened if miracles had been performed there. This is an indication that God knows everything that has happened, is happening, will happen, and what might have been but will never be. What do you think are the practical implications of the fact that God could have made things differently from the way they are? What does this say about God's knowledge and power? What does this say about the present state of the world? How does this affect our prayer, evangelism and good works?
11. Why do you think 1 Samuel 23:1-13 is here? What does it teach us about the larger picture of the book of 1 Samuel and what does it tell us about God's redemptive activity?

Pray that God would by his Spirit enable you to put these things into practice.