

ABIATHAR . . . the sole survivor from a massacred city
ABIATHAR . . . the sole survivor from a massacred city
(I SAMUEL 22:19.20)

Such a thing had never been known in Israel. King Saul had murdered a city of priests, and had thereby sealed his doom. He had heard how they had helped David, and, frustrated by his own inability to capture the young prince, he was furious. He snarled, and demanded adequate reasons why the clerics should help the enemy of the throne. "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?" (1 Sam. 22:14). The calm, dignified answer annoyed Saul, and he fiercely replied, "Thou shalt surely die, Ahimelech, thou, and all thy father's house. And the king said unto the footmen that stood about him, Turn and slay the priests of the Lord. But the servants of the king would not. And the king said to Doeg, Turn thou and fall upon the priests. And Doeg the Edomite . . . fell upon the priests, and slew on that day fourscore and five persons that did wear a linen ephod. And Nob, the city of the priests, smote he with the edge of the sword" (vv. 16-19). And the watching madman-for mad Saul must have been- could not see that his actions would become the greatest boomerang in history.

A Great Distress

"And one of the sons of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped, and fled after David" (v. 20). We do not know how the boy managed to evade the cruel sword of the Edomite. Possibly in the confusion he was able to dodge away through the ranks of sullen footmen. The soldiers were angry but impotent as their royal leader pronounced the despicable death sentence, and risked their lives when they refused to obey a command. It is not too much to suppose, therefore, that if opportunity arose they gladly assisted the fleeing boy. Abiathar ran for his life, and when he was able to rest for a few moments he realized that he was alone in the world, and friendless. Storm clouds filled his sky, and Saul seemed likely to hound him to death. Then he remembered the fugitive prince. Yes, he would go to David and ask for help.

A Great Decision

Slowly, carefully, the young man made his way toward the cave of Adullam. He quickly found the hillside trail, and commenced the ascent; but almost immediately a rough voice commanded him to stand still. Startled, he obeyed, and a toughened sentry stepped from a hiding place to ask the cause of this intrusion. "Young man, where are you going, and why?" The boy told his story, and confessed he wished to reach David. The older man's eyes were filled with sympathy as he saw the boy's grief, and if Abiathar asked, "Do you think David will take me in?" the sentry hastened to dispel his fears. "Son, of course he will. He is the friend of all the needy. My boy, didn't you hear that 'every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was bitter of soul, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men'?" (I Sam. 22 :2). Son, I came

ABIATHAR . . . the sole survivor from a massacred city to him, and I found a welcome. What he did for me, he will do for you. Go ahead. All is well."

A Great Deliverance

"And Abiathar shewed David that Saul had slain the Lord's priests. And David said unto Abiathar . . . Abide thou with me, fear not : for he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life: but with me thou shalt be in safeguard" (1 Sam. 22 :21-23). That day the young man discovered three wonderful facts. (i) A place to rest. His own home had been destroyed, and the old surroundings were now prohibited to him. The birds had their nests, but he had no place to call home until he bowed before a charming prince who welcomed him into the fellowship of a new society. "My boy, stay here and rest." (ii) A promise to reassure. Fear not . . . with me thou shalt be in safeguard." Abide with me. I will be your protection; my words shall be your delight; my men shall be your brothers; and my presence shall be your home. (iii) A peace to enjoy. Abiathar looked into the face of his new friend, and a new calm settled upon his tired spirit, and he lay down to rest.

This document was created with Win2PDF available at <http://www.daneprairie.com>.
The unregistered version of Win2PDF is for evaluation or non-commercial use only.