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LINKS CONNECTING WITH THE LESSONS OF 1895.

Our last lesson from the Old Testament, December 15th, 1895, told the story of Jonathan's loving leave-taking of David (1 Sam. 20: 32-42). That was the turning point in David's career. For six years thereafter he was an outlaw. The leading events of these years were: (1) While at Naioth king Saul in frenzy tries to kill his son Jonathan; David at Nob receives sacred bread and Goliath's sword from Ahimelech the priest (1 Sam. 21: 1-9). (2) David escapes to Gath in Philistia, but being received with sullen suspicion, feigns madness and flies back again to Judah (1 Sam. 21: 10-15). (3) He takes refuge in a cave near Adullam, a little border town only two miles from the valley of Elah where Goliath was slain, and thirteen west from Bethlehem. Ancient wells and caves are here, one cave with ample accommodations for four hundred men, and the modern Arabic name is identical with Adullam. Here four hundred adventurers, tired of Saul's rule, joined the young captain (1 Sam. 22: 1, 2). They lived by forays on the Philistines, who at this time overran Judah, and by levies made on neighboring towns and planters as the price of David's protection. In this company were his nephews Joab, Abishai and Asahel, a young prophet named Gad, and a number of Canaanite warriors, such as Uriah, Zelek and Ithma. (4) It is interesting to note that according to the inscriptions of Psalms 6, 7, 11, 57, 59 and 142 they were all written after the outbreak of Saul's jealousy and before David's flight to Gath; Psalms 56 and 34 were written while he was there, and Psalm 63 after his flight to the wilderness of Judah. (5) When David's followers had increased to six hundred men (1 Sam. 23: 13) he marched around the lower end of the Dead Sea and left his aged parents at Mispheh in charge of the kindly king of Moab, who probably remembered that David's ancestress was a Moabitess. About this time David made the friendship of Nahash, king of Ammon, also (2 Sam. 10: 2) and according to tradition wrote Psalm 27. (6) David returned to the forest of Hareth, probably in the Hebron mountains, near Adullam, where he heard of Saul's revengeful slaughter of the priests at Nob, and took Abiathar, the son of Ahimelech, under his protection. (*Herwhit's Notes*).

Hard as these years of exile were for David to bear, yet they were most fruitful years to him as his apprenticeship for the kingdom, as his "schools and schoolmasters." (1) By his exile among other nations he learned their characteristics and how best to deal with them. (2) He could contrast the effect of their religion with that of the religion of Jehovah, and thus become confirmed in true religion and patriotism. This led to the marvellous development of religious institutions and of the service of song under his administration. (3) The exile experiences preserved him from the dangers to which his sudden elevation to power and popularity would expose him. He learned his weakness and need of divine help. (4) He had the best of opportunities for becoming acquainted with the people, their grievances under Saul, their needs, their dispositions and tendencies. He understood their spiritual as well as temporal wants. (5) He had practice in the art of governing. (6) He gained experience in war. (7) He obtained a knowledge of the country. (8) In this school of fighting men were trained those generals and wise strategists who in the golden days of David's rule commanded his armies, and raised Israel from the obscurity of an "Arab" tribe, who with difficulty held their own among the ancient Canaanites, to the position of one of the great nations of the old eastern world. (Ellicott). (9) He had around him a trained band, like the "old guard" which enabled him to take immediate possession of the kingdom when the time came. (10) Many of his sweetest songs were wrought out by his long and hard experience for the comfort and hope not only of his own people, but for God's children in all ages. (11) In spite of his few lapses from faith and perfect truth, he grew in character and manhood, he became strong in faith and virtue, large-hearted, wise, noble, consecrated to God. (*Pritchard's Notes*).