

*Refiner's Fire – How God Shapes Us into People after His Own Heart – Week Six*

# ***Persecution and the Refiner's Fire***

*1 Samuel 22:6-23*

**Introduction:** Sometimes the refiner's fire that God takes us through consists of persecution by people who hate God and reject faith. In this chapter Saul, still paranoid about maintaining his kingly power, suspects the priests of Nob are conspiring against him. Because no Israelite would risk killing the priests, Saul employs Doeg the Edomite who slaughters them all. In this chapter we discover why persecution takes place and how God typically intervenes.

## **1. A DANGEROUS SITUATION – Persecution is very likely when power-hungry narcissistic leaders obsess about preserving power.**

*1 Samuel 22:6-10*

- A. *The opening scene* – Saul is the very picture of narcissistic God-resisting leadership. 22:6b
- B. *The typical profile* – We see four qualities of leaders that tend to foster persecution. 22:6a, 7-10
- C. *The significance for us* – Narcissistic leaders create a dicey environment for people of faith.

## **2. A SHOCKING BRUTALITY – Persecution can become almost inexplicably cruel when God's enemies harbor irrational fears.**

*1 Samuel 22:11-19*

- A. *The scene* – Saul sends messengers to gather the priests of Nob. 22:11
- B. *The slaughter* – Saul with increasing marks of insanity kills the priests. 22:12-19
- C. *The significance* – History instructs us that persecution often morphs into a frenzy of anger.

## **3. A GRACIOUS GOD – Persecuted people forge a fervent fellowship of the wounded. 1 Samuel 22:20-23**

- A. *On the divine side* – God honors the sacrifice of the persecuted. 22:20a (See Rev. 6:9; 11)
- B. *On the human side* – We should work to prevent persecution. 22:20b-22
- C. *Result* – God forges a strong connection among the persecuted. 22:23