

Rescue

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[0:00] It is very, very nice to see all your faces. That's really great. Thank you, Mark, for leading. And Anya and Ruth for leading us in singing.

! At the back.

Yeah. Okay. Right. Good. Let me just say I really enjoyed preparing this passage. It's one of my happy places. The cup of coffee, a quass on the Hebrew text.

What a nerd I am. But it's one of my happy places I've discovered. And I hope that the Lord will use that to further his purposes and bless his people this morning.

So let's pray. We thank you for Holy Scripture. We thank you that in Scripture we see our great Savior.

[1:12] And we ask that this morning you, Lord Jesus Christ, would stand among us and speak to us through your word. You have said that your word is powerful and strong.

And you use it to advance your purposes by your Spirit. So please will you do that amongst us this morning so that the glory goes to you.

We ask help for the speaker and help for the hearers. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. The Bible is a book about rescue.

And rescue is an important word, meaning like saving, delivering, perhaps a very strong version of helping, redeeming.

So you need rescue if you're a drowning swimmer. You need rescue if you're a trapped prisoner. You need rescue if you are a lost wanderer.

[2:13] You need rescue if you're a frightened child who's got stuck up a tree or hidden in the cupboard under the stairs and you can't find your way out. You need rescue if you're a trapped prisoner. And this chapter of the Bible is about rescue.

And you might have noticed the word pops up several times. And so the talk this morning is for people who need rescuing. If you are sitting here this morning thinking, well, I don't need rescuing, then there's not much here for you, I'm afraid.

If you're thinking, you know, I'm just so good, so great, I don't need any help with anything, life, everything's going my way, in the words of the song. There's not much here for you, I'm afraid, apart from to say how little you know about yourself and the human condition.

But anyway, this is for people who need rescue. And let's put it into context. So you might have forgotten we were going through Samuel, which is what we do as a church.

We go through books of the Bible and we are in the middle of a storyline. And Mark helpfully said that the storyline begins way back in the Garden in Eden, where we had Adam and Eve.

[3:28] And Satan, the snake, the serpent, tempts Adam to go against God and eat the forbidden fruit. You remember all that. So the thing was the snake comes into the story right early in the beginning.

Adam and Eve get kicked out of the garden. In a way, the human story is how you can get back into the garden, except it turns out to be a city rather than the garden. And Adam and Eve begin a close acquaintance with death.

And that's the acquaintance that we, their children, have ever since. We are doomed to die. And in one way or another, through death and disease and illness, we're always in the middle of death somehow or another.

The thing about the beginning of the story is that at the beginning, God promises the serpent crusher. So there we are, the serpent crusher who will smash the serpent's head while he, the serpent, bites the heel of the serpent crusher.

But right at the beginning of the story, we're thinking, where is this serpent crusher going to come from? And interestingly, this turns out to be important later, the Hebrew word for serpent is nahash.

[4:43] Okay? So we're in the middle of this story about how we can be rescued, how the serpent can be defeated, how we can escape sin and death, how we can get back into the garden via the serpent crusher.

And it's a long story and it has many twists and turns in it. Through the story, we learn about faith. So when we get to Abraham, we learn about faith. When we get to Moses, we learn about law and sin and the blood of the Lamb.

And the bit that we're in, in Samuel, is telling us a new thing, that the serpent crusher will be a saviour king. And judges and Samuel and kings sort of give that breadth to the ongoing story.

So, boys and girls, you're on now. So, up on the screen there. In the story of Samuel, the people wanted a K something something something G.

Have to be quick because we've got loads of these. King, thank you. Right, I won't do applause until we get to the end. A king. So they wanted a king. And the prophet who guided this in the book of Samuel was called...

[5:56] Samuel? Samuel, Samuel. Yeah, that's right. Okay. And you might not remember this part of the story, but they wanted the right thing for the wrong reasons.

They wanted to be like the other. Now, this is a bit more difficult. You need... Look at this one. N something T something something something S. They wanted to be like the...

Well done. Good. Yeah, like the nations. But you see, Israel was supposed to be different to the nations. She was supposed to be the one nation that everybody said, Wow, I wish I could be like them.

Look at what a good nation they have. Look at their laws. They're so wise. Look at their God. He is so good. And he answers their prayers. And the nations were supposed to envy Israel.

That's what it was supposed to be like. Envy Israel for her wisdom and the way God answered prayer. And that bit's fallen off the bottom of the screen. Little round of applause for the answers so far.

[6:58] Well done, boys and girls. So, the king that God gave them was actually this person. S something something L.

Yeah? Saul? Saul. Yeah, it was Saul. In Hebrew, Shaul, which is a little bit like asking.

Saul. And the king, he looked good. He was very T something LL. That's not too difficult, that one. He was very...

Gracie? Tall! Yes, well done. He was very tall. Yeah. But he was a king who hid amongst the... I spelled that right, haven't I?

Yeah. He was a... This is a funny thing about Saul. He's a bit of all sorts of things. He's not quite right as a king. Because one time he hid among the... He did. Well done. He hid among the baggage.

[8:01] I haven't got a picture of baggage. So, in this chapter, leading up to this chapter, we're now going to see whether Saul actually measures up to what a king ought to be.

Will a king rule well? Will he save and rescue his people? Will he defeat his enemies? And that's what we're going to see in this chapter. And it's actually one of the chapters where more or less everything goes right.

It's one of these chapters where you think that's how it ought to be. Sadly, it isn't always like that. So, let's look at the story. So, boys and girls, you need to look across at a Bible with mom and dad or whoever you're sitting next to.

Because we're just going to go through the story, pick things out as we go. It says, Nahash the Ammonite went up and besieged, or actually it said he stood in front of, Jabesh Gilead.

And the men of Jabesh said to him, make a treaty with us and we will be subject to you. So, who comes from where? Oh, I've answered the question myself.

[9:04] But in case you weren't watching. Who comes? Who's the first person who comes somewhere very quickly? Grown up? Come on, we will take forever.

Yes? Nahash. And Nahash means? Nahash means snake.

Yeah. So, this is interesting. This is set up for us as a story about the king versus the snake. And he comes up against Jabesh Gilead.

There he is against Jabesh Gilead. And the story is worked out through, and so and so said, and then it says, and so and so said, and then so and so said.

So, let's look. The first thing that was said, and the men of Jabesh said, what did they say? Have I got some? Yeah, I've got something. Oh, no, I haven't.

[9:59] You can do that. But yes. Make a treaty with us and you make a treaty and we will we will be subject to you.

It's actually, it says, cut a covenant. And I think it's important, that word covenant. It's a really big Bible word. In Hebrew, you don't make, you don't sign a covenant, you cut it.

And I won't go into the reasons for that. But you cut a covenant and we will be your servants. That's what they say. And in a way, that's quite a sensible thing to do.

Because once you've got a covenant, you know where you are with somebody. You have got your relationship written down in words. And a covenant is something you have to keep to.

So, then another word for covenant is testament. So, in our Bible, we have the New Testament, which actually means the new covenant. And Christians are in a covenant through Jesus Christ with God.

[11:06] At the last stop, he says, this is my blood of the new covenant. So, covenant wasn't a bad idea. If you've got a big enemy coming up to you, you might well say, whoa, let's, no, no, before we get to fighting and blood and stuff like that, let's make a covenant and put something down in words which will keep us safe.

So, just a reminder that Christians, we're in a covenant which keeps us safe. The new covenant, a new relationship sealed with blood.

Jesus wasn't cut, but he was pierced. Anyway, a covenant. And, who says what next? What does Nahash the Ammonite say? Because I think you will agree, he's not a particularly nice character.

So, let's get this bit over with. What does he say? What sort of covenant does he want to do? Yep. I will guide you out your right eye.

Yes. I don't, I mean, would you go for that as an agreement? You know, can't pay my electricity bill.

Oh, we'll make an agreement. I'll come and gouge out your right eye.

[12:23] I mean, it's not, not a particularly good covenant, is it? So, he actually says, I'll cut it this way. I will bore out, is that, bore out the right eye of all of you.

So, that's not very nice, is it? And, what he's doing is, I mean, for one thing, he's making them useless as soldiers because they can't see what they're doing, can't see where they're going. and, he uses a word, so that, can anybody spot that?

If I gouge out your right eye, so that, or the result will be, and there's an important word here. Any of the younger members going to go for this?

What will he bring? There it is. I'm just seeing how many hands are going to be. Gracie, do you want to have a go? Disgrace!

Yeah, let's have a little round of applause because you're doing really well. Let's, let's keep this up. I will bring disgrace on Israel. Now, you know, I said at the beginning the whole point of Israel that people would envy Israel and say, wow, it's such a great place to be.

[13:29] I would love some of that. But, he is doing the opposite. He's saying, that was, it's the sort of place you would hate to be. It's a shameful place. Oh no, don't mention Israel to me.

Oh, we don't want to be like them. Do you see what the snake is trying to do? He's trying to make God's people the opposite of what they should be. I would bring disgrace. The opposite of respect and envy.

And it gives us a little reminder of what the snake likes to do. The snake wants to grind God's people down. The snake wants them to feel and seem out of grace.

That's what disgrace means, isn't it? Out of grace. You're no longer in favor. You're no longer in a place of blessing. That's what the snake wants to do. He likes to rob people of blessing. And even though he can't rob them of salvation, he can take away their sense of it and make it seem different. That's what the snake's trying to do here. And it's just worth saying that as sinners, guilt and shame does attach to us and disgrace does attach to us.

[14:37] But in his great mercy, Jesus, when he died on the cross, bore our guilt and shame. That's great, isn't it? He bore our guilt and our shame.

And we don't have to go around as Christian people thinking, you know, with our heads cast down, thinking, I'm just so ashamed of myself because Jesus takes that away.

And there's places in the psalm where it says, God lifts up our heads. And no matter what we've done, no matter what we've been, and we might have been all sorts of things, and we might have done all sorts of things, so powerful is the work of Jesus that he takes away our shame.

And we can lift up our heads and fix our eyes on him and look up to our Heavenly Father and know that we are not, he's not ashamed of us. We're welcomed with him.

Jesus bore our shame. And we say thank you to the Lord for that because it's a great thing, isn't it? Do you agree? And he did it by the cross. Now, let's go see what happens next in verse 3.

[15:43] Now it's the elders of Jabesh saying something. And what do they say? So they've had this offer of this covenant, which is not much of a deal.

What do they say next? Have to be quick. Okay, a grown-up quickly, they say. Thank you very much.

Yeah, notice the word rescue there. It's a sort of glowing word in the text. So they say, give us seven days. We will send out messengers.

It's very close to the word for angels, but messengers is another sort of important word in the Bible. We'll send messengers to all Israel. And if no one comes to rescue us, we will come out to you.

So I noticed that they were sensible enough to ask for help. It's just worth pointing that, you know, when you're in trouble, when you need rescuing, not a bad idea to ask for help.

[16:54] I mean, surprised. Never thought of that. But yeah, it's the right thing to do, isn't it? If you're in trouble in your life, call out to the Lord for help. Not such a bad idea.

Well, they asked for help. And just interesting in all the little resonances here. They asked for seven days worth. Interesting that help often comes on the third day.

Does anybody think, boys and girls, of any rescue that came on the third day? No, can't think of a single thing that happened on the third day. Yes? He rose from the dead on the third day.

Yeah. Thank you very much. So it isn't always a seven day, but here it's seven days. Seven usually means a complete time. And so here they are calling out for help.

And they're asking for seven days. Now I'm interested that Nahash seems to go along with this because he thinks they're in such deep trouble. If you give them seven days, it won't make the slightest bit of difference.

[17:58] And how much trouble were they in? I mean, I would say they were in deep trouble. They're helpless and hopeless. They're absolutely stuck.

Would you agree with me? I mean, if you were in that position, this army outside threatening to gouge out your right eye, you're all on your own as it seems. And they're completely stuck, I would say.

At least they call out for help. And they're looking for rescue. And I just stop on this word rescue. It's a sort of word like yasha.

And you get other words from this. Yeshua, Joshua, Yeshua. And I wondered if that reminded anybody of anybody's name.

Yeshua. There's various combinations of letters, but around this idea of yasha, Yeshua, Joshua. Does that remind you of anybody's name? No? Yes?

[18:59] No? What do you think? I think Jesus. Actually, this is where Jesus gets his name from. Except Jesus' name is in, we get it in Greek. Well, we actually get it in English, don't we?

It's Yesu in Greek. But it comes from this. And you'll call his name Jesus because, this is one of Ray's favorite texts. You'll call his name Jesus because, he will save people from their sins. Yes, because he's a savior. So, there's an interesting connection here. It's about rescue. And our savior Jesus has got that, sort of built into his first name.

his name. Rescue from the snake. And in a way, that's what we all need, isn't it? One way or another, the snake has got it in for all of us. All sorts of snaky things he does, not necessarily gouging out our right eye, but just all sorts of works of the devil.

you know, this chapter is fundamental. We need rescuing. And we need a serpent crusher, as they did too. And I just put up on the screen there, if you were to cast your mind across scripture, just what this theme is, of rescue from Satan and his works.

[20:18] In Genesis, then, we have the serpent crusher. In the gospels, you might be able to think of examples of this, but, the demon said to Jesus, have you come to destroy us?

Of course, the answer is yes. That's what Jesus did come to do. In the epistles, I just took Colossians, he disarmed the powers and authorities.

Now, Jesus' work is to destroy all the stuff that the snake does to human beings. Remember, he cast out demons.

Remember the demon-possessed man who lived in the tombs and was uncontrollable and was just almost subhuman like an animal. And Jesus delivered him.

And at the end of that story, he's seated, clothed, in his right mind, sitting at the feet of Jesus. Just a lovely picture of what, the scope of the work of Jesus.

[21:14] And if you follow the Bible right through to the end, the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur. This is one way of looking at the whole story of the Bible, of defeating the evil one, defeating the adversary.

So, that's what they need, a serpent crusher. Let's follow on, let's go back to the story. In verse 4, the messengers come to Gibeath of Saul and the messengers, what it actually says is, they worded the words, but we've got the translation, they reported these terms to the people.

And the people, when they heard about what's happening at Jabesh Gilead, they did what? W something something T.

Verse 4. When the people heard this, they, Isaac, they, what were you going to say?

And what was Greta going to say? They did. Well done. Got a little encouragement. Yep. Good. They wept. Poor things. They wept. You don't blame them, really, do you?

[22:28] Awful. To hear what was going on in Jabesh Gilead. And then the next bit, verse 5, just then, Saul was returning from the fields behind his oxen.

Now, the just then translates what, what in the old language you'd say, behold. And it's an interesting way of moving the story on. So, they're all weeping, ah, but, look, here comes Saul. Behold, here's Saul. Oh, you know, this is a sense, ah, maybe this story will take a new tack now. Behold, just then, Saul was returning from the fields behind his oxen.

And he, this lovely translation, he says, what's wrong with everyone? It doesn't quite say that in Hebrew. It says, what is this to everybody?

Or something like that. But it's quite a nice translation. What's wrong with you lot? You're all crying. Come on, cheer up. You're in miseries, aren't you? Um, I mean, a little question.

[23:30] He's supposed to be king, isn't he? What's he doing farming? Is that, is that right or wrong? It just raises that little question. But, um, he says, what is it with the people that they weep?

And, they repeat to him what the men of Jabesh had said. So, they, they say to Saul, uh, Saul, uh, this is what happens up at Jabesh. They cut a covenant, eyes, seven days, da, da, da.

Uh, they told him the words. Um, and when he heard these words, now this is really good stuff in verse six.

When Saul heard these words, something really important and, uh, special happens.

So, when Saul heard their words, the, the, S something, something, T of God, C something, something, something, E upon him, P something, W, various somethings, L, L, Y.

[24:38] now then, what have we got there? Can you get anywhere with that? Okay, what would you give us? The Spirit of God came on him powerfully. You were going to say?

Same? Anybody want to change that? Well done. Yeah, that's good. A little encouragement. Yeah, the Spirit of God came upon him powerfully. What it actually says, it uses the idea of rushing and the Ruach Elohim, the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon him. It's a fantastic turn of events, isn't it? It's all going wrong. Behold Saul and when he hears the Spirit of the Lord rushes on him.

And it's interesting to see what he does next. What does he do next? What does the Spirit of the Lord the Ruach Elohim? It just sounds more dramatic in Hebrew, doesn't it?

The the Spirit of the Lord. What effect does, in this case, does the Spirit of the Lord have on Saul? Yeah. And he burns with anger. And that's right, it is. It's a sort of hot anger. And he says, whoa, that won't do.

Those nasty Ammonites. We've got to do something about this. We can't just let this happen. As you see, the Spirit of the Lord rushes upon him powerfully. And he burns with anger. So, it's a little picture of the Spirit, the breath of the Lord, and the fire of anger that's in his heart. And it's an interesting, when you put it visually like that, the picture that you have of a sort of wind and flames upon this particular person. It's a rather suggestive picture, isn't it? The Spirit came upon him powerfully and stirred him to anger, sort of indignation, and action.

[26:37] And it's interesting, the Spirit doesn't make him say, oh, well, you know, you win some, you lose some. Well, they're up there in Jabesh. What's that got to do with us?

He has a whole sense that this is important. These are the people of God. This won't do. That's the enemy getting a victory, and he's angry, and he acts.

He felt strongly enough to take brave action. Interesting that sometimes that's what the Spirit does, to impel people, not just to feel things, but to do things, to take on a mission, to go for something, to, and he becomes, I've made this expression up, but I think it's the right expression, he becomes the Spirit-driven king. Yes?

He becomes the Spirit-driven king. He's impelled by the Spirit. We're going to do something about this. And this is, you know, I said this is the chapter where things go right, and I think this is a right picture. This isn't a faulty picture. This is a right picture of who Messiah is. He's the Spirit-driven king, and that's what Messiah ought to be, and here Saul is making a good job of being that.

And I noticed that this idea of the Spirit-driven king isn't just here, it pops up in various places, and here's a quote from Isaiah, a shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse, that's the royal family, and the Spirit of the Lord will rest on him.

[28:08] And we'll follow that up in just a moment, but I'm just trying to say this is the vision of the Hebrew Scriptures, of the Spirit-driven Messiah, the Spirit-impelled Messiah.

And so, did anything like this happen to Jesus? So that's a sort of almost theological question. Is there any sense in which Jesus gives us any evidence that he is the Spirit-driven Messiah?

Did anything like this happen to Jesus? At his baptism, you're going to say that. Was Gracie going to say something? Nope.

Okay. What were you going to say? Sorry? Oh, yes. When he expelled the traders from the temple, yeah, he was sort of angry, wasn't he?

And he did stuff. That's a very helpful thing. Yes. Yeah. But certainly, Jesus was endowed with the Spirit.

[29:18] That's a particular point is made of this in the Gospels, isn't it? That he was someone on whom the Spirit came. In fact, at the beginning of his ministry, he quotes this, the Spirit of the Lord is upon me because as he anointed me to preach good news to the poor.

It's one of the first sort of public pronouncements that Jesus makes about himself actually in the synagogue, I think at Capernaum, but it's in Luke's Gospel.

So, yeah, Jesus fits this bill that he is the Spirit-driven King. He was anointed by the Spirit. He was filled with the Spirit, and the Spirit has never left him.

And then I can ask another question following on. Did Jesus send the same Spirit to his church? Is there any evidence for that in the Bible, that Jesus sends the same Spirit to his church?

Whatever evidence might there be of that? I'm just thinking of that little picture, actually, which is a little bit suggestive, isn't it? Yes? Gracie? Gracie? When he gave his people to speak different languages.

[30:35] That's a great answer. I think we'll give her a round of applause for that. Yeah. Do you want to go a little bit further with that? Isaac? Did you want to say something? Yeah. Yeah.

After Jesus died. When the fire was on their heads. Do you want to add another bit to it? And there was a sound like a... They were in a room.

Is that what... Yeah. Does it say there was a sound like a rushing wind? And tongues of fire came on. So that picture actually works in a secondary way for what Jesus did to his church.

He sent the Spirit upon his church. And on the day of Pentecost. And of course, we're not excluded from that.

We, it says in Romans, are led or driven by the Spirit. Those who are driven by the Spirit are the sons of God. It says in Romans 8.14. And we, I guess in a more leaky, less full way, but in a genuine way, if we belong to God, we have a new impulse driving us.

[31:51] Those who are driven, led by the Spirit are the sons of God. And there's actually both a gift and a duty to be filled with the Spirit.

He says that we're to be a little bit like the Spirit-driven Messiah. We're to be a little bit like Saul ourselves. We ought to care about things.

We ought to get angry about things. We ought to be moved to action on things. Anyway, let's just see. What action does a Spirit-driven king take?

So this is now in verse 7. He took a pair of oxen, cut them in pieces, sent them by, sent the pieces by messengers throughout Israel, proclaiming, this is what will be done to the oxen of anyone who does not follow Saul and Samuel.

So, what he does, the oxen that he was using for his plowing, he cuts them up into little bits, and he sends the bits round in different directions, and he says, if you don't join me in fighting this battle, we will do this to your oxen.

[32:58] I don't know. Are you happy? I mean, he does something, doesn't he? And it works. I don't know what your thoughts are on that particular methodology.

Didn't the Levite do this with his concubine? The Levite concubine in Judges, he cut her up into little pieces and sent her round.

Am I right? Not really. It's not a very nice thing to do. I mean, I don't know whether Saul is going down a little bit down the same road, but anyway, this is what he does, and it does work, because the fear of the Lord falls on the people.

I don't know why it's translated terror. Fear is a perfectly good word, isn't it? The fear of the Lord fell on the people, and what did they do? Boys and girls, this is in now verse 7.

The fear of the Lord fell on the people, and they, what did they do? Has Bethany got a thought there, or she just, she was thinking.

[34:10] The fear of the Lord fell on, and what did they do? We don't know. Yeah? Excellent. I think you deserve a round of applause, because you were the only person brave enough to have a go at that one.

Yes, well done. They came out as one man. Well, what have we got here? They came out together as one. They came out as one man. So he produces a sort of, Saul, this is the king, produces a unity amongst his people, a unity of purpose, and the sort of drivenness, spirit drivenness that Saul has communicates itself to the people, and they say, yeah, we're going to do that.

I hope he won't cut up our oxen now. I know. This is, the fear of the Lord. Fear of the Lord is a really good Hebrew, Old Testament theme.

It's a wholesome thing to fear the Lord, to have respect and reverence for God. Our lodger was telling us about her work in KFC down London Road, and she says that at a certain time of the day they get teenagers coming in there who are rude, aggressive, untidy, make a mess, don't care, disrespectful, no respect.

And we don't want to treat God like that, do we? Disrespectful, don't care, who do you think you are telling me anything? The fear of the Lord is the opposite of that. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

[35:53] The fear of the Lord falls on these people. Please don't think that in this sense fear and love are opposites, because they're not. We can love the Lord with all our heart and strength and soul and mind and fear the Lord all in one breath.

And my example of that would be if you had a little tiny baby, you might have done this or you've seen it, and Daddy throws the baby up in the air like that.

Yep, that's right, and catches them when they come down again. And it's an act of love, but you would hate to drop the baby, wouldn't you? I mean, there's a fear there and there's a love all together in that action.

It's just an example that fear and love can coexist. Anyway, the fear of the Lord comes, and I'm just going to pop in here. You know, Christian, we have the fear of the Lord, don't we?

We would fear to grieve Him. We would fear to dishonor Him. Perhaps we don't fear that enough.

[36:59] Perhaps we don't fear Him enough. We're more frightened of other people's disapproval. We're more frightened of, I don't know, being left out. We ought to fear the Lord as the deep thing.

Anyway, let's move on. A spirit-driven king, oh dear, this has all gone funny, hasn't it? Mobilizes, I don't even know what I wrote. He brings the people together, he mobilizes his army, and tell us the numbers.

What are the numbers, folks? How many army are there? Because he counts them, and this is one of the things that an army commander does before he gets into battle. How many tanks have we got?

How many chariots have we got? How many soldiers have we got? How many did they have? Anybody tell us in verse 8, 300,000 of which Israel and, yep, and 30,000 of the men of Judah. Yeah, so Judah was one tribe and Israel sort of counts for all the other ones. Put them together, you get 330,000.

[38:18] I mean, numbers sometimes are interesting. I can't get anything out of 330,000 at all. I noticed that in the New Testament the Lamb's army is 144,000, which has got 12 Old Testament, 12 New Testament, and multiplies them together and multiplies by 1,000.

I can't do anything of that with 330, so we will just move on. And when they've got all together, they send messengers to the men of Jabesh, Gilead, boys and girls, what does the message say?

They send this message back, they must send it back pretty quickly, and they say, tomorrow, by the time, what? By which time?

By which time? What do you think? By the time the sun is hot, you will be rescued.

Okay, I think, well done, yes. By the time the sun is hot, you will be rescued. So, this is the good news that the men of Jabesh, Gilead get.

[39:30] By the time the sun is hot tomorrow, we will be rescued. So now, let's put yourself in their position. We're told a little bit about their reaction.

Yes, we are, in verse 9. What does it say about their reaction? ... Yeah?

It says they related. In Hebrew, it says they rejoiced, which is fine, isn't it? So, they go, yeah, like that. Should we do that just to wake one another up?

So, let's imagine we're the men of Jabesh, Gilead. We've heard that tomorrow, by the time the sun is hot, we're going to be rescued, and we go, yeah! That's right. Okay. So, they rejoiced.

And it's interesting to think that the way their joy operates, because it hasn't happened yet, has it?

So, their joy operates through faith, because they believe the message, and it operates through hope, because they look forward to something that they haven't yet got.

[40:39] And it's an interesting comparison with the Christian life, isn't it? Because we go, yeah, good news, but we're doing that because our final salvation hasn't happened yet.

We are trusting the message, and we are living in hope that it will come through in due course. So, they're in the same sort of position that we are in.

They're living by faith, they're rejoicing in hope, but they haven't actually yet got the full thing. So, I think that's interesting. Did I do the sun there? I wasn't looking.

Yeah, okay, there's the sun getting hot, and they're rejoiced. Whoa, there they are rejoicing. And they have to wait till tomorrow. So, they're rejoicing in hope. Tomorrow will come, but not just yet. They're waiting in hope. I'm sorry about that, I don't know why it's gone all funny. So, let's see what happens next.

[41:40] Next, there's the spirit-driven king up on the screen. There's snaky Nahash, and the action of the spirit-driven king brings the people together and mobilizes his army, and his army smote, I think that's the word, it says slaughtered, does that write?

They smashed them, they smoked them, until it says, I'm just looking, what does it say? Those who survived were scattered so that no two of them were left together, so there was no remnant.

Yeah, they were scattered and no two of them were left together as a remnant. You know the Hebrew word for remnant, it's shiar, and you know that because one of Isaiah's children was called shiar jashub, which is a remnant shall return, so you knew that anyway.

It says here there's no remnant, so there's no remnant, there's no remnant to return, there's no left-overness, there's a completeness of judgment, and God shows his grace to us by leaving a remnant.

If the Lord had not left us a remnant, we would have been like, I can't remember what it says, is it melons and a cucumber feed or something like that, we would have been smashed out completely if the Lord hadn't been gracious and left a remnant, and that's, salvation is a gracious remnant.

[43:21] You know, we should have been, by rights, we should have been subject to judgment like every single other human being, but if we're believers, the Lord has left by grace, he's passed over and left a remnant by grace, but he doesn't leave a remnant for this, these people.

And there is this great battle. The next day, Saul separated his men into three divisions, and during the last watch of the night, while the Ammonites are sitting there thinking, oh, we're going to smash these men of Jabesh Gilead, when we've had our porridge, when we've done our press-ups in the morning, we're going to go, and before they'd even woken up, bang, in comes Saul, and during the last watch of the night, they broke into the camps of the Ammonites and slaughtered them, smashed them, till the heat of the day.

It's a great victory. Well done, Saul. Good man. Well done, Israel. You know, really, the right victory against Nahash, the serpent.

And of course, this idea of a great battle that smashes the serpent is a deep theme in Scripture. It's there in the book of Revelation, portrays it very graphically. you know, we think of the last day as being a day of judgment. That's a courtroom metaphor.

[44:55] But also, the last day is a great battle when the adversary and all his henchmen are defeated, thrown into the lake of fire.

It's likened to a massive battle. And this is like an army picture, isn't it? Like a spiritual warfare picture, like a fighting picture.

The army of the snake versus the army of the spirit-driven Messiah, who's Jesus. And I'm just going to ask you, whose side are you on?

Well, amen. Yes. I mean, it's a binary question, isn't it? You're either on one side or the other. and I would like to invite you to make sure you're on the right side, to make sure that you've signed up with King Jesus and you've said, I'm on your side.

I make a covenant with you. You make a covenant with me. I will serve you. You're my king. I know I'm not much, and I know I'm very fickle, and I know I'm very weak, and I'm very sinful, but I want to be yours.

[46:12] And on that last day, that would be the victory side, wouldn't it? Right. So the actions of the spirit-driven king.

He was moved to anger and action. He mobilized his army, and together they saved the people of Jabesh Gilead, and together they defeated the snake. There's some ways in which this is not like Jesus.

Jesus certainly defeated the adversary. He certainly enlists us in his army, but when he fought the decisive battle against Satan, there's a big difference between the way the battle was fought for Jesus and for Saul.

Any thoughts on that? In Saul's case, he got everybody together, and their combined forces defeated Nahash. When Jesus on the cross, he did it alone.

He didn't get help. No one helped him. I looked around, what does it say in Isaiah? I looked around for someone to help, and there was no one to help, no one.

[47:29] So I did it myself, says the Lord. And of course, this is what Jesus did. So this is unlike the picture here. Our Savior defeated Satan single-handedly.

Yeah? He's that good, he could defeat Satan single-handedly. And on the third day, he alone rose from the dead and spearheaded, as it were, the new kingdom.

Isn't he great? I mean, he did that all by himself for us. I think that's really great. Jesus died, it should pass tension, he died, boys and girls, can you fill in the, yeah?

Correct, alone, he did it all by himself. I think that makes him even more amazing. Yeah. Now, what have I got going here? Right, let's just finish the chapter, verse 12.

The people then said to Samuel, so this is another somebody said, people said to Samuel, who was it that asked, shall Saul reign over us? Because you might not remember, but in the previous chapters, there was a bit of doubt about whether people were really convinced about Saul.

[48:38] Who said, shall Saul reign over us? Turn these men over to us that we may put them to death? Okay, who was it who wasn't that keen on the king? Let's put them to death.

And boys and girls, do they say, is it yes to that or no? They say, yes, we will turn him over to death? Or no?

Gracie? No. You think no? Anybody else think no? You think no? Hands up everybody, just see if anybody else is awake. Shall we put them to death? Answer no.

Who is that awake? Yes? No, they won't. Who wouldn't have Saul as king? They deserve to die now, this minute. Saul says, not today.

Not today. No. No one will be put to death today, for this day the Lord has rescued Israel. That's a lovely answer, isn't it?

[49:42] It's quite a significant one. Not putting people to death today for rebelling against the king, because today is a day of salvation, a day of rescue.

you. It seems to really work to take that thought and say, actually, that's where we are at at the moment, isn't it? That there are people who do not follow Jesus.

Now, shall they be just slaughtered straight off today? Answer no, because today is a day of salvation.

Today is the time of grace. Today is the time where there is an opportunity to change your mind and to say, actually, I was wrong about Jesus.

I do need to be on his side, and today I'm going to follow him. Not put to death today. Today is a day of grace. One day there won't be an opportunity to change your mind.

[50:45] That's right, isn't it? One day it will be too late. Who knows when that will be? I mean, get run over tomorrow by accident. That will be it.

But now is the time to say to Jesus, yeah, I do want to follow you today.

To those who reject him deserve to die, well, yes, they do, because what they've actually done is chosen death. Without Jesus, there's only sin and death and darkness and wrath, but not today.

Today's the day when you can turn. So let's look at what happens right at the end. So in verse 14, they say, let's go to Gilgal and there we'll renew the kingship.

I don't know quite how that works, whether they're saying we anointed him as king, but we're going to sort of reaffirm it and say, yep, we're all up for that. We're going to renew the kingship.

[51:50] Let us go to Gilgal and there renew the kingship. So the people went to Gilgal and made Saul king in the presence of the Lord. And what I put up there is Saul did seem to become king in stages, but here's a significant stage of confirmation.

In verse 15, it's done in the presence of the Lord. So the Lord sort of looks down on this. People are doing this, seeking to honour him, and he says, yes, this is right, honouring the king.

And it says that as they did so, they sacrificed fellowship offerings before the Lord, and Saul and all the Israelites held a great celebration.

What it actually says is they rejoiced greatly. I think that idea, here's the king, here he is, we rejoice greatly. So, that's got us to the end of the chapter.

And just to think the things that you might have wanted to take away with you, we thought about Nahash, the snake, the enemy who wants to bring shame.

[53:02] And we thought about covenant, which is the place of safety. And we thought about the cry for help, which is a good cry, Lord have mercy, pray that every day, the spirit driven king who's filled with indignation and action.

And then the people who rejoice in faith and hope, waiting for the full rescue that they've been told about. We thought about Jesus, the spirit driven king who actually fights the battle alone and decisively wins.

We thought about the final day, which is a day of battle, the great battle, and just said one day it will matter who, whether you accepted God's king or not, doesn't show so much now, but one day it will really matter.

And just at the very end, they offered fellowship offerings before the Lord. I'm not ever so good at the Levitical offerings, but I think the fellowship offering is a way of saying thank you.

And I think as we get to the end of this chapter, we can say thank you too, can't we? Amen. We're going to sing.

[54:19] We're going to sing from the squalor of a borrowed stable, by the spirit of the virgin's faith, to the anguish and the shame of scandal came the saviour of the human race.

And it goes on to say, now he's standing in a place of honour, crowned with glory on the highest throne, interceding for his own beloved till his father calls to bring them home.

Then the skies will part as the trumpet sounds, hope of heaven or the fear of hell, but the bride will run to her lover's arms, giving glory to Emmanuel.

So let's stand and sing this to close.