

How can a kingdom be safe?

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[0 : 00] It's interesting Katie saying choose the jewels because if you were going to choose a chapter to encourage you do probably wouldn't pick one kings chapter two but that's the thing about letting God set the agenda because if we go through a book and listen bit by bit to everything that God says in his word.

If you see what I mean. So let's pray again shall we. Lord as we come to this chapter we pray that we might find that it is true that Jesus is the center of all scripture and that all scripture is profitable and useful that we may live the Christian life as people of faith and love and hope.

We ask it in Jesus name. Amen. Amen. Well let's think about the subject of closure. Now I'm not quite sure what closure means.

Closure is what you do with a door isn't it? You close it. But when people say I want to find closure I don't have closure. It's a sort of thing to do with fairness.

The examples would be like this. If there's a hit and run driver. Some poor person is knocked down and injured by a driver who bumps into them and then drives away and you don't find them.

[1 : 34] And you say we have no closure about this. We want the person to be caught. We want them to be punished. So if they did catch the person and they gave him three days in prison you'd say I can't.

That's not right. That hasn't wrapped this up properly. Unsolved murders. Lots of TV programs about unsolved murders.

Things that happened in the past. New tricks. All these sort of programs. Because something has happened. It hasn't been sorted out.

Nobody's ever been apprehended. We don't have closure. Just recently there's a fresh or continued inquiry into the Hillsborough disaster.

If you don't know the Hillsborough disaster was an awful thing. Many, many years ago when a whole crowd of football supporters ended up getting squashed because of the crowd.

[2 : 38] And people are saying well why did that happen? Whose fault is it? And it's all been gone over again. No one was ever brought to account they say. And when John Humphreys had a go at the people involved on the radio.

He said well if we don't find someone to blame we can't stop it happening again. I'm not really quite sure that's true. But people were saying we can't have closure until the person who is responsible for this has been made to be responsible for it.

And of course there's other things like the Queen's Birthday Honours. Anybody here get knighted? Just looking around. Anybody keeping it fairly quiet?

Lenny Henry got knighted. Didn't he? Sir Lenny Henry. Can you believe that? Anyway. Generous acts do deserve recognition.

There's a sort of rightness isn't there about people being recognised for things that they've done. Right things deserve recognition and wrong things matter.

[3 : 43] And this is a deep truth in the Bible. It's close to the bottom layer of depth. Right things matter.

Wrong things matter. And today the emphasis is really on the wrong things. Not exclusively but mostly. Blame needs to return to the blameworthy person.

Listen. It's a fundamental thing in the way God runs the universe. And the Bible says that when Jesus returns, when Jesus comes as King, that's one of the things he will do.

He will open the books, if you like, and close them again. Because justice will have been done. And that's true. So it's important, importantly true.

You may think, well I don't really need to know that today. Well this is what God's telling us. So these chapters are about the king coming into his kingdom and establishing his kingdom.

[4 : 56] So we're in 1 Kings chapter 2. When the time drew near for David to die, he gave a charge to Solomon his son. So this is about the son of David, the Solomon, the new king.

And the writer of this wants to remind us it's about the establishing of his kingdom. He uses that word in verse 12. The rule was firmly established.

He uses it in verse 24. He says, The Lord has established me securely on the throne of my father David. And he says it in verse 46.

The kingdom was now firmly established in Solomon's hands. It's about the establishing of the kingdom. And one day Jesus will come and establish his kingdom.

Sorry, this chapter also includes death. I wouldn't have chosen this as a subject, but it is a subject.

[5 : 57] It starts in chapter 1 verse 52, where Adonijah is told, If you're a worthy man, not a hair of your head will fall to the ground.

If evil is found in him, he will die. And people die quite regularly through this chapter. David dies, chapter verse 1, verse 8.

It's talking about being put to death by the sword. In that case, he was promised that it wouldn't happen straight away. And various other verses.

For example, verse 25. Adonijah shall be put to death. I won't take you through all of them, but there's a lot of them. There's a lot of death. And Benaiah, however we pronounce his name, seems to be a busy man.

Falling on people by the sword. Throughout this chapter. It's also a chapter about wisdom. Verse 6. Solomon is to deal with Joab according to wisdom.

[7 : 06] And verse 9. You are a man of wisdom. So we're not talking about bad temper. We're not talking about being arbitrary.

You know, just doing what you feel like. This is all to do with wisdom. And you may think, I didn't think wisdom was to do with that. Well, it is. Because that's what the chapter teaches us.

And this is about what the coming of the king meant to five particular individuals. And here they are. Joab, who as we'll see was a violent soldier.

Barzillai, who was a faithful supporter. Abiathar, who was a priest, who just did things very quietly. Shimei, who was an insulter. And Adonijah, who was a scheming, making plans, a usurper.

Usurp means if you take a position that you shouldn't be in. In particular, someone else is king. You say, I'll push him out of the way. I'll be king. That is usurping.

[8 : 09] Now then. So that's what we're going to look at. And if you like, you can count the little numbers here. Because that's how many more slides there are.

So you can, if you really feel you need a sleep, you can time yourself to wake up for 21. Which will be the conclusion. Now before we go any further, I would say we have a problem with this chapter. I'd say when you heard it read, you thought, oh, we have a problem.

And we think, I think we would be thinking, is this actually a good chapter to be reading? Is this a good chapter to be taking on board?

Is it legitimate for somebody to be doing this, executing people? Is it right to be executing people? We might wonder that quite deeply.

[9 : 10] Is it Christian? Is this what Christians do? Is this a Christian thing? Is it sub-Christian? Is it a chapter that Christians would do better to tear out of their Bibles?

Well, it's a good question, isn't it? I would like to change the question a little bit to ask this. When we read this chapter, do we find, is it A, cruelty?

Okay, cruelty is not Christian. Cruelty is not human. Is it cruelty? Is it B, justice? Now justice is a Christian thing.

Or is it C, mercy? Mercy is when God gives you better than you deserve. So we'll have that question in the back of our minds as we go through. A, cruelty.

B, justice. Or C, mercy. So let's follow it through. Solomon takes over from David. David, you remember, was old and frail and probably didn't get out of bed.

[10 : 12] Here's Solomon who goes and meets him. As the time drew near for David to die, he gave a charge to Solomon, his son. And he says, he says two things really. He says, I'll read it.

I'm about to go the way of all the earth, so be strong. Show yourself a man. Observe what the Lord your God requires. Walk in his ways. Keep his decrees and commands, his laws and requirements,

as written in the law of Moses.

So there's a string of things. Decrees, commands, laws, requirements. All the things written in the law of Moses. It's classic Deuteronomy, really, isn't it?

It's saying, this is the way of obedience. And if you follow this perfectly, you will prosper.

Verse, it says, verse 3, you will prosper in all that you do and wherever you go. And that the Lord will keep the promise. Whoops. That the Lord will keep the promise to me.

[11 : 10] If your descendants watch how they live and walk faithfully before me with all their heart and soul, you will never fail to have a man on the throne of Israel. It's a particular contract with the king. And it says that if he does these things, he will be a forever king.

And obedience is good. And God's laws and statutes and requirements are good. And they rejoice the soul. But we don't manage to keep them.

That's the problem, isn't it? That's the problem. That the more we know about God's requirements, the more we realize we actually fail to keep them.

So that's tough on us. If we were the king, that would be tough on everybody else as well. But this is a contract with the king in particular.

And it really explains why the book of kings is so lumpy and problematic. Because the kings didn't do this. And in the end, and God was very patient about this, there was not a man on the throne of Israel.

[12 : 24] If they had kept it, there would not have failed to be a man on the throne of Israel. But they did fail. And the kingdom was not a forever kingdom.

There is one king who has managed to keep all God's ways and laws and requirements and do it in a perfect way.

And actually to do more than the Old Testament law required. This king so excellently obeyed that he gave his life for his people.

And therefore God highly exalted him and gave him a name that is above every name. That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow. Only Jesus managed this.

And he is the forever king. He is the forever king. He is the king about whom this is actually written and about who actually fulfills this.

[13 : 26] So that's God's contract with the king. And are we not pleased that there is a king who can fulfill this? I think Jesus is just so brilliant, isn't he?

And it's good that we have such a king. And now David goes on to something. It seems to change gear here in verse 5. And he mentions these people.

Now you yourself know what Joab son of Zeruiah did to me. What he did to the two commanders of Israel's armies. Abner son of Nair, Amasa son of Jephthah. He killed them.

Shedding their blood in peacetime as if in battle. And with that blood stained the belt around his waist and the sandals on his feet. Deal with him according to your wisdom. Do not let his gray head go down to the grave in peace.

And then he mentions Barzillai and Shimei. I'm sorry I'm probably not pronouncing these right. But we know which ones they are. He mentions these people. Joab the soldier, Barzillai who was an old man in the time of Solomon's father David.

[14 : 32] And when Solomon's father David was on the run, Barzillai came out and helped him. And brought food and provisions. So he was a great chap, Barzillai.

And Shimei, who when David was on the run, got up on a bank and threw stuff at David. And shouted rude names at him.

And insulted him. I'm probably getting ahead of myself. Let's look at these in detail. So Joab shed blood, as it says, in peacetime as if in war.

That's verse 5. So let's look at Joab in a little bit more detail. So it's interesting. He was a soldier. He was a man who was great on the battlefield.

A man of aggression and violence. And in the Bible, soldiering as such is not condemned.

[15 : 39] You can be a Christian and be a soldier. And in wartime, there is this contract which is either spoken or unspoken. Which says, we feel so strongly we need to defend what we're defending.

You feel so strongly that you need to defend what you're defending. We fight each other. If you take my life, I know that's what you're trying to do.

And if I take your life, you know that's what I'm trying to do. And that's what warfare is. I think soldiers understand that. But he took that into peacetime.

That's very different. You don't have the right to do that in peacetime. And without trying to make the story too long, there were two rival commanders.

One of them they'd be chased when the war was over and wouldn't stop and killed him. And another one, he was on a peace mission. This was a Massa.

[16:44] And he said, oh, by the way, before you go, I've got a message for you. Or something like that. Took him into an alleyway and stabbed him. He was on a peace mission.

So these were both very wrong things. And the question in my mind is, why didn't David do something about it? He didn't. He just said, it wasn't me.

Joab shed blood twice. Innocent blood. And he turned people who would otherwise have been casualties of war, that would have been understood, to being victims of an attack.

And he became, instead of a soldier, a murderer. And I suspect that he was so strong and big and ruthless and perhaps a strong personality that he felt, I can get away with this.

I can do this. Because, you know, that's me. Ah, if you come in, you've got to listen. And David said, this is interesting.

[17:43] Deal with him, verse 6, according to your wisdom. Do not let his grey head go down to the grave in peace. Those are very solemn words.

Because we always say of somebody who's died, may they rest in peace. But David said, no.

It would not be right for this violent man to rest in peace. Do not let his grey head go down to the grave in peace.

Rather shocking, isn't it? But actually it's very realistic. It's very realistic because death does not automatically mean peace.

It means we certainly leave this world, this life, but it does not automatically mean peace. So I ask, is that for this violent man?

[18:40] Is this cruel? Is it just? Is it merciful? I'll leave that one hanging. You think about that.

Let's look at Barzillai, the faithful supporter. There he is in his old age with a basket. He actually had a lot of provisions. He stood with David when Absalom, that's David's son, usurped the kingdom earlier, grabbed the kingdom.

He was on the king's side. Who is on the king's side? Who will serve the king? Well, Barzillai would. He was practical with his actions. He took provisions to David while he was on the run.

He did this at cost to himself and without thought of gain for himself. And I won't take you back and read the whole story. You could look it up. It's rather a beautiful story and a very honorable man.

And you think that was a really, really grand thing that he did. And when afterwards David said, well, let me give you a knighthood or something like that. He said, oh, don't bother with all that. But David says, show kindness to the sons of Barzillai of Gilead.

[19:56] So he can't say to Barzillai. I presume he's passed away. But to his family, to his sons, show this wonderfully rich Old Testament word hesed, meaning the sort of love that sticks, can be depended on and trusted in.

Show kindness, hesed, steadfast love to his sons. Let them eat at your table. They stood by me when I fled from your brother Absalom.

And do you think that is A, cruelty? Or B, justice? Or C, mercy? Now, am I going to get the answer to that one?

I think I need the answer to that. It's not cruelty, is it? I think justice is not the right word either. And I'm not even sure whether mercy is the right word.

It's some sort of generosity which recognizes the loyalty that was shown. So I'm not even sure whether A, B, or C fit.

[21:05] But whatever it is, whatever word you give to it, I think it's something rather beautiful. And I, for one, would not want to tear that out of this chapter. I think remember Barzillai.

Do you, any of you read the Narnia books? No. In the Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, they've been waiting for Aslan to return.

And one of the characters is a badger. And the badger says, well, we are waiting. And we've got good memories. We remember the promises that Aslan would come back.

And we're waiting for him. And we'll keep on doing so. And that's where our hope is fixed. And we're sticking to that. And in that sense, I think Barzillai was a badger. And I hope you're a badger as well.

Waiting for the coming of the king. We'll hang on in there. We'll keep trusting. We'll keep waiting. He'll honor his promises. Barzillai was a badger.

[22 : 06] That will sound very strange on the recording, won't it? Okay, what about Shimei? Verse 8. You remember you have with you Shimei, son of Gerah the Benjamite from Bahurim, who called down bitter curses to me on the day I went down to Mahanaim.

And there's Barzillai. He's clearly on the opposition side. Who is on the Lord's side? Well, certainly not Shimei. And he was practical about this. He actually threw stuff at David and said stuff.

You were a ruin to you. You're a man of blood. Your violence is unjustified. That's what that sort of thing he said. And he was malicious. If he thought he could get away with it, he would say these horrible things to David.

And David says, You are a man of wisdom. Verse 9. Bring his gray head down to the grave in blood. It seems very tough.

And that's what it says. And again, he's saying, I don't want you to let this man, after all he's done, go down peacefully to the grave, sort of with a smile on his face, thinking, you know, I've lived my life well, I've done the right thing.

[23 : 27] No, don't. That's wrong. Because he hasn't. Don't let him go down to the grave in peace. Is that a possible thing to say?

Well, I don't think I would want to say that about anybody, but he's the king. And apparently, it's right for him to say that. Is that cruelty, or justice, or mercy?

Do you know, I think it's justice. Well, we'll find out. So, we get to the point in verse 12, verse 10, David rested with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David.

He'd reigned for 40 years over Israel. So, Solomon sat on the throne of his father David, and his rule was established. So, David rested with his fathers, and was buried.

There's an interesting point about David's burial. He, like most of us, would, well, actually all of us, being buried, would decompose. The Bible says that we go back to dust, we're made from dust, and we return to dust.

[24 : 37] It's a humiliating thing for us, but it's true. So, but David had written in a psalm, you will not let your holy one see decay.

It's an interesting thing. He wrote that in a psalm, envisaging somebody who did not decay in the grave. And later on in the book of Acts, Peter says this about Jesus.

You see, Jesus is the successor to David, because he was raised from the dead. Just as David said, you will not let your holy one see decay.

Jesus was resurrected. The son of David, Jesus, did not decompose. And Peter draws this conclusion from that.

He says, all of you be convinced God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ. So, yeah, the son of David.

[25 : 44] David died and was buried. Jesus died and rose again. And Solomon now reigns in verse 12. So, let's go to the next bit.

So, change of scene. Adonijah's one small request. Now, Adonijah, the son of Haggith, went to Bathsheba, Solomon's mother, and Bathsheba says, oh, haven't seen you for a while.

Last time your name was mentioned, you were trying to take the throne from my son. What have you come for? Do you come in peace? And he says, yes, I've come in peace.

And then he says, Adonijah had planned to seize the throne in cahoots with Joab and Abiath, the priest. And he says, I've come in peace.

And he says, I look back on all of that. I look back on all of that. You know, the kingdom was mine. Slight exaggeration. Kingdom was mine. All Israel looked to me as their king. Maybe another slight exaggeration.

[26 : 47] But things have changed. That's true. And the kingdom has gone to my brother. That's true. And it's from the Lord. Well, I'm glad you've come to that conclusion because I didn't think you were thinking that way.

Apparently you are. It's from the Lord. And now, I've just got one small request. One small request. Just a little thing. What could it be? An extra sugar in your cup of tea? Another slice of toast? What could it be? And he says, do not refuse me on this.

This is the word return, which crops up a lot. The thing that really returns is blame. But the writer uses the word return quite a bit as he goes through.

Don't turn me back on this. Okay, what's the one small request? Verse 17, please ask King Solomon. And he will not refuse you to give me Abishag the Shunammite as my wife.

[27 : 48] Now, Abishag was the beautiful woman who had been used as the hot water bottle for David. You remember? When he was old and cold. And they brought in this beautiful woman to warm his bed up.

And that's as far as it went, we're told. But nevertheless, that was where she had been. And he says, I just like this one thing. Abishag is my wife. So Bathsheba, Solomon's mum, says, okay, I'll go and do that.

I'll go to Solomon. I'll go and ask him. So she goes to speak to King Solomon. The king stands up to meet her, bows down, and gives her a throne to sit on herself.

And she says, almost in exactly the same words that Adonijah has fed to her, I have one small request. Do not refuse me. And the king says, oh, if it's a small request, you know, could be a couple of slices of toast.

No problem. Make the request. I will not refuse you. And she comes out with this. Please can Abishag be the wife, you know, your father's hot water bottle lady.

[28 : 56] Can she be the wife for Adonijah, your older brother? And Solomon says, what are you talking about?

Why do you request Abishag for the Shunammite for Adonijah? You might as well request the kingdom for him. After all, he's my older brother. Yeah, for him and for Abiathar the priest and Joab the son of Zeruiah.

And King Solomon swore by the Lord, may God deal with me, be it ever so severely. If Adonijah does not pay with his life for this request, and now, as surely as the Lord lives, he who has established me securely on the throne of my father David and has founded a dynasty for me as he promised, Adonijah shall be put to death today.

I think we could honestly say he doesn't like the idea too much, does he? Ah! Ah! That's the kingdom you're talking about. And I detect in this the hand of the old, the old trio, trio, Adonijah, Joab, and Abiathar.

They're in that as well. Now, this is not just one small request. This, says Solomon, is a capital offense. He'll pay with this with his head.

[30 : 20] Now, what do you make of this? Is this a paranoid overreaction? Or is it the discernment of a carefully planned and executed deception?

What would you have done? And the thing that we have to understand is that the royal woman is the glory of the king.

We saw this through the life of David, that part of his kingship is to have a bride. In those days, they did it in a different way.

They had multiple brides, but one of the glories of the king was to have the bride. And when Absalom tried to take over from David, one of the first things he did was take his father's wives and claim them as his own.

That was his way of saying, I'm the king now. I've got the royal bride. And we have to understand that. Now, Bathsheba didn't seem to twig that. But now I've told you, you've got the idea of this.

[31 : 34] So what was Adonijah really doing? He was saying, here's a sneaky, sneaky way for me to become king. And I think it's a little bit like in the Garden of Eden.

What's the one small thing? Now, Satan's one small thing was all you have to do is to take that fruit. I've done a banana because you were thinking it's an apple, but it doesn't say it's an apple.

It just says it's a fruit. So I thought I'd draw a banana. So here's a hand clutching for that fruit. It's just one small thing. That's all it is. Actually, this is complete life and death.

And what he's doing is grabbing for the throne, grabbing for the kingship. It's a bid for wisdom. In Genesis, the fruit is desirable to make you wise.

But here's Solomon who is wiser than that. And it's also via the deception of a beautiful woman. So it was Eve, if you remember, who Satan went to Eve and says, you know, one small fruit, it can't be a real problem with that.

[32 : 43] It's very good for you, full of nutrition, beautiful, makes you wise, gives you knowledge and so on. And that's how sin came in. And it's the same sort of thing here that the Satan in this, who is Adonijah, is saying through Bathsheba to try and get to Solomon.

But this time it doesn't work. It's defeated by superior wisdom. And Benaniah, Benaniah, is called into operation.

So, verse 25, King Solomon gave orders to Benaniah, son of Jehoiada, and he struck down Adonijah and he died. So he gets, you know, that's it.

The serpent is crushed. Is that cruelty? Is it justice? Is it mercy?

I don't think there's any mercy there. He was given a chance, wasn't he, from his first, the first time he tried to take the kingship, he was given a chance.

[33 : 53] Well, actually he was given a chance, wasn't he? He was told, if you're a worthy man, you'll be protected. So there is mercy in there. That was from chapter 1, verse 52. Should have noticed that.

But, mercy rejected, he just gets justice. You've tried to destroy the kingdom and you pay with that for your life.

Try to destroy the king, God's king. Let's think about Abiathar, the high priest. So we're in verse 26. Here he is, sneaking in.

Now, Abiathar doesn't say anything in this text. It's all done on the quiet. There's his name sneaking in as well. But he's been involved, as Solomon detects.

And he, we're told, verse 26, to Abiathar the priest, the king said, go back to your fields in Anathoth. You deserve to die. But I will not put you to death now.

[34 : 58] I'm going to spare you. Because, with my father, you shared with him in his hardships. You carried the ark of the sovereign Lord.

You did good things. And that's not nothing. But, you've chosen the wrong side now. And you're going to be removed from the presence of God. And there's a prophecy which is fulfilled through this as it happens.

Is this cruel? I don't think this is cruel. I think there's mercy in it because he says, I'm not just going to kill you. I'm going to take into account the good things that you did in the past.

So there's justice tempered with mercy, I would say here. Would you agree with me? And what about Joab? Verse 28.

When the news reached Joab who had conspired with Adonijah, though not with Absalom, he fled to the tent of the Lord like Adonijah had done.

[36 : 02] Took hold of the horns of the altar. When King Solomon was told that Joab had fled to the tent of the Lord and was beside the altar, Solomon ordered Benaiah, son of Jehoiada, go and strike him down.

This is the man who shed innocent blood. And Benaiah has to have two goes at this because he's inside the holy place hanging on to the altar.

It does say in Exodus, you can't do that if you've committed murder. Particularly if you've done it twice. Benaiah goes back just to check and the king says, No, strike him down, bury him, and clear me and my father's house of the guilt of innocent blood that Joab shed.

The Lord, verse 32, will return on him, will repay him, will return on his head the blood he had shed. There is in the Bible a returning, a fairness.

The evil things that have been done, you can't just walk away from them. Maybe in this life you can, but in the end it will come back on your own head.

[37 : 19] And interestingly, he says, this also affects my kingdom because if I'd let this happen, my kingdom would be guilty, but guilt is removed from the throne of David.

So Benaiah killed him. Is that cruel? I don't think that's cruel. Is it just? I think it is just. Is there mercy in it?

Well, David let him get away with it for a long time. So it was long overdue. But I don't think he escaped justice. Let's look at Shimei.

This is now in verse 38. So the king sent for Shimei. He was the insulting one, you remember, who threw sticks and stones at David and cursed him.

Now what happens to Shimei? Verse 36. The king sent for Shimei and said to him, build yourself in house in Jerusalem and live there, but do not go anywhere else. The day you leave and cross the Kidron Valley, you can be sure you will die.

[38 : 22] Your blood will be on your own head. It's the thing about returning. Your blood will be on your own head. The day you do this, you will surely die. Have you ever heard a bit in the Bible where it says, the day you do this, you will surely die?

Sorry? Yes, in the Garden of Eden, wasn't it? The day, this is the deal. You're safe here, but the day you do the opposite, the day you refuse these boundaries, is the day you die.

And he swore about this, verse 42, did I not make you swear by the Lord and warn you, on the day you leave to go anywhere else, you can be sure you will die.

But what actually happened was, three years later, some of Shimei's slaves had absconded, they'd gone away, and Shimei got on his donkey, and off he went to get his slaves back.

Now, what was he thinking? Because the king had said to him, you stay here, you're safe, the day you cross that boundary, you die. But he said, oh no, I've got to get my slaves back, and off he went.

[39 : 39] Was he thinking at all? Had he just forgotten? He broke the oath that kept him safe. And Benaiah goes into action again and kills him.

Verse 44, you know in your heart all the wrong you did to my father David, now the Lord will repay you, will return to you your wrongdoing, return it on your own head.

King Solomon will be blessed, and David's throne will remain secure before the Lord forever. So Benaiah goes to Shimei, strikes him, and kills him. Is that cruelty?

I don't think it's cruelty. Is there mercy in it? Well I think there was, because he said, if you stay here, you'll be safe. But if you don't, you'll die.

And that was, I think there was justice there. So what have we seen with these five different people? In God's kingdom, under the hand of the king, what people have done returns to them.

[40 : 45] What people have done returns to them. And there is such a thing as evil, and there are such a thing as enemies of the kingdom.

They had a heart against the king, like the violent man, Joab, who thought he could be violent whenever he wanted and get away with it. Like the one, Abiathar, who just quietly conspired behind the scenes.

Nobody really knew, but Solomon could see what was going on. And, click, the malicious man, Shimei, these are the enemies.

One day Jesus will return as king. And he will see into hearts. And he will see all the things that people have said and done, perhaps violently, people who thought they got away with it.

Perhaps just very quietly and respectably, people who have really conspired against the king.

Perhaps in the columns of the Guardian or Telegraph.

[41 : 53] BBC thinks they're very nice people, but really it's against the king in a quiet sort of way. People have been malicious to God and his kingdom and his people.

And Jesus will bring back what they've done. I think that's a very serious and a very solemn message. It's an awesome message.

No one will get away with anything when the king comes back. And in some ways that's good news because people say, well we wanted closure on this and we never found who the criminal was.

Well, God knows and God will bring closure. But please notice, it isn't just hit and run drivers that God has in his sights.

What he's looking at is what was the attitude to the king. And I tremble to say how many thousands upon thousands of people either deliberately or quietly are not on the Lord's side.

[43 : 08] if you're here and you know that that is you, that you're not on the king's side, please do something about it straight away.

And as the psalm says, blessed are those who take refuge in him. Run to the king. Ask the king's forgiveness. Ask him to forgive you and accept you and take you into his kingdom because it's an awful fate to be found on the day the king sorts things out to be against him.

But there are badgers as well. Paul describes them in Romans 2 verse 7. Those who by persistence in doing good seek glory and honour and immortality.

That's the genuine Christian heart, isn't it? It's been difficult. You have ups and downs. But I want to keep on, Lord.

I want to keep on seeking you. I want to keep on living for the world to come. I'm so often inconsistent but really I want you and your honour and your glory and this is me trying the best I can to do that by your help, by your grace, by your spirit and the Lord says I know that.

[44 : 43] And one day I will say well done good and faithful servant. Sit at my table and you sit at my table and you never have to go home again.

Just sit at my table forever. which one of those would you be? ■ a team.