

Which Kingdom is Forever?

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[0 : 00] So our passage today is the entire chapter of 1 Samuel chapter 22. 23 verses this time. And it is action-packed.

This chapter has got me, just my mind, I can't turn it off. It's so wonderful. I hope you'll enjoy it. Although I'm sure we'll walk away like we always do with maybe even more questions. So please hear this and receive it as God's inspired, inerrant, authoritative, powerful word for you and me, his people. Remember, all of God's word is breathed out by him, and it's useful for teaching, rebuking, instructing his people in righteousness.

1 Samuel 22. So David left Gath. Remember, Gath is the capital of the Philistines, one of the five cities where Goliath is from. And he took refuge in the cave of Adullam.

When David's brothers and his father's whole family heard, they went down and joined him there. In addition, every man who was desperate, in debt, or discontented, rallied around him, and he became their leader.

[1 : 10] About 400 men were with him. From there, David went to Mizpah of Moab, where he said to the king of Moab, remember, this is a different kingdom.

It's not Israel, and it's not Philistia. It's where Ruth is from. Please let my father and mother stay with you until I know what God will do for me. So he left them there in the care of the king of Moab, and they stayed with him the whole time David was in the stronghold.

Then the prophet Gad said to David, don't stay in the stronghold. Leave and return to the land of Judah.

So David left and went to the forest of Hereth, which is in Judah. Verse 6, Saul heard that David and his men had been discovered.

At that time, Saul was in Gibeah, sitting under the tamarisk tree at the high place. His spear was in his hand, and all his servants were standing around him.

[2 : 14] Saul said to his servants, listen, men of Benjamin, is Jesse's son going to give you all the fields, give all of you fields and vineyards? Do you think he'll make all of you commanders of households and commanders of hundreds, commanders of thousands?

That's why all of you have conspired against me. Nobody tells me when my own son makes a covenant with Jesse's son. None of you cares about me or tells me of your cares or tells me that my son has stirred up my own servant to wait in ambush for me, as he is the case today.

Then Doeg the Edomite, who was in charge of Saul's servants, answered, I saw Jesse's son come to Ahimelech, son of Ahitab, at Nob. Ahimelech, the priest, inquired of the Lord for him and gave him provisions.

He also gave him the sword of Goliath, the Philistine. The king sent messengers to summon the priest. Ahimelech, son of Ahitab, and his father's whole family were priests in Nob.

All of them came to the king. Then Saul said, Listen, son of Ahitab, I'm at your service, my lord, he said. Saul asked him, Why did you and Jesse's son conspire against me?

[3 : 35] You gave him bread and a sword and inquired of God for him so he could rise up against me and wait in ambush, as is the case today. Ahimelech replied to the king, Who among all your servants is as faithful as David?

He is the king's son-in-law, captain of your bodyguard, and honored in your house. Was today the first time I inquired of the Lord for him? Of course not. Please don't let the king make an accusation against your servant or any of my father's family, for your servant didn't have any idea about all of this.

And the king said, You will die, Ahimelech, you and your father's whole family. Then the king ordered the guards standing by him, Turn and kill the priests of the Lord, because they sided with

David.

For they knew he was fleeing, but they didn't tell me. The king's servants would not lift a hand to execute the priests of the Lord. So the king said to Doeg, Go and execute the priests.

So Doeg the Edomite went and executed the priests himself. On that day, he killed 85 men who wore linen ephods. He also struck down Nob, the city of the priests, with the sword.

[4 : 51] Both men and women, infants and nursing babies, oxen, donkeys, and sheep. However, one of the sons of Ahimelech, son of Ahitab, escaped.

His name was Abiathar. And he fled to David. Abiathar told David that Saul had killed the priests of the Lord. Then David said to Abiathar, I knew that Doeg the Edomite was there that day and that he was sure to report to Saul.

I am myself responsible for the lives of everyone in your father's family. Stay with me. Don't be afraid. Don't be afraid. For the one who wants to take my life wants to take your life.

You will be safe with me. The word of God for the people of God. Thanks be to God. Please be seated. The grass withers and the flower fades, but the word of the Lord stands forever.

Let's pray. Lord, we ask that by the power of your Holy Spirit, you'll please help us to behold by faith the spiritual kingdom of Jesus Christ and the war in this world against the kingdom of Jesus.

[6 : 24] Lord, we pray that you'll help us to understand this passage as your Holy Spirit intended it all along and that our faith in Christ will be strengthened.

We ask this for your glory. Amen. A crown is merely a hat that lets the rain in. That's what Frederick the Great, the king of Prussia, had to say about it.

He knew that the crown was a symbol of kingdoms of this earth, not practical. And it's not just a literal kingdom. It's anything we hold on to and put our hope in for our security.

Think of all the things that will soon be gone, could be stripped away from any one of us at any time. Health, title, a loved one, an office, that thing that gives us security, a job.

None of these kingdoms of this world will last, will they? Charles Spurgeon made this observation. A man who is filled with himself has no room for God.

[7 : 42] And a man who thinks his kingdom is eternal has forgotten that he is but a tenant at will and the landlord is coming to collect the keys.

Saul is a king who forgot this or never learned this lesson. And the theme of this passage as I want to walk us through it is a question. Which kingdom is forever?

Which kingdom is forever? forever? All the odds are stacked against the kingdom of heaven. And this wonderful chapter has at least six scenes.

I've used six as our dividing point, but sometimes within one scene they're in two different places in just a matter of two or three verses. So let's do our best to understand this passage and with God's help to apply what he wants us to learn from it.

The first scene is look at chapter 22 verse 1. Where is it? Where's the first scene? It's the cave. The cave.

[8 : 48] Verse 1 says David therefore departed and escaped to the cave of Adullam. From the outside if we were to travel in Israel we would see yellow stone that looks a little bit like red rocks here but yellow or down what should be called the garden of the God.

You know it looks like that on the outside and then from inside the cave it's massive. It's like this massive room and you can see the blue sky out on the outside of it. It's in southern Israel.

We don't know how far shepherd boy David would have wandered with his sheep exploring all the nooks and crannies of this geography but this was the cave where he ended up. And notice what's interesting is that we get insights into what's going on in the rest of Israel through the main characters that we've been following until now.

We read that when his brothers and all his father's house heard of it they went down there to him. So now it's become public news.

David and Saul are not on good terms and it makes sense for those related to David who might also be viewed by Saul as a threat to get out of town quickly escape to the mountains.

[9 : 59] David we're told Jesse had eight sons and David was the youngest later on in Chronicles it says six brothers so it's possible that one of the brothers died young before he had children therefore he wasn't listed later on.

But this is a big household in addition to all of their servants. Remember they're just a couple generations away from wealthy Boaz who owned a lot of fields and so we can understand quite a

few people there.

And then verse 2 of chapter 22 gives us even more insights. Apparently the word spread David who Saul is trying to hunt down he's in the cave of a dolem and people start whispering and everyone who was in distress everyone who was in debt and everyone who was discontented literally bitter of soul gathered to David and he became captain over them.

There were about 400 men with him in addition to their families and others. God's anointed David in a cave hidden from sight from the perspective of the world yet the power of his person draws the distressed the hunted the weak those who don't like Saul's kingdom they run to him.

God raises up an army of those that ultimately God has caused to hate the dominion of darkness those who are sick of the pattern of the world gather around God's anointed.

[11:40] Isn't that a great scene for us? A hidden kingdom and an army of bankrupt soldiers which kingdom is forever?

Saul with all the land the weapons the official army or this ragtag group out of sight Benjamin Keech commented David's kingdom began in a cave with men in debt so the kingdom of heaven is not made of those who are whole but the sick this is the condition of the church in the wilderness it is a gathered people separated from the world's kingdom acknowledging no captain but the anointed one that's us church we're in the time of wilderness from the eyes of the world we're weak and the church it's not the kingdom that you'd want to put your money on but those who came to God's anointed were ones who rejected the kingdom of Saul they were bankrupt they were in debt and so the Lord Jesus receives not those who are self-righteous he says come unto me all you who are weary heavy laden he said blessed are the poor in spirit spiritually bankrupt come to him Jesus Christ the true anointed one not based on merit but based on your need of him and that's the application for this first scene in the cave now the second scene is a place where it couldn't be more different in many ways look at verse 3 where's the next scene take place it's the palace in Moab the palace in Moab in verse 3 so David goes next to Mizpah the capital of a different nation called Moab you remember the name of David's dad I think you kids know this one what was David's dad's name Jesse Jesse's dad was Obed so David's grandpa Obed was half Moabite he was the son of Ruth and Ruth married Boaz and Ruth if you remember was from Moab and they were immigrants to Bethlehem at least

Ruth was and when he gets there David says to the king of Moab please let my father and mother come here with you till I know what God will do for me I love how in just one verse we see a man submitted to God and the submission to God it's waiting upon the Lord and also not passive at the same time I am going to take my parents there under the protection of the king of Moab but I'm also going to wait on the Lord and to see what he will do the true king of God's people will do the will of God patient not passive Matthew Henry commented David does not say till I know what I shall do for myself but what God will do for me are you needing to wait upon the Lord these days in your life David leaves his parents in the hand of this king but his heart is waiting upon the Lord in verse four so he brought them before the king of Moab and they dwelt with him all the time that David was in the stronghold in God's providence the commandment that we focused on from the moral law today was the fifth one and here's David under persecution in distress and yet by God's power giving us a beautiful picture here of obeying the fifth commandment under his father and mother even in a really hard situation so David says what will God have me do and he also says where will God have me go remember in verse three David says till I know what God has and now what God has for David is answered in verse five will you look at verse five the prophet Gad said so this is God giving David a prophetic word of guidance do not stay in the stronghold depart and go to the land of Judah this is significant for only reasons the

[16:13] Holy Spirit could know so David departed and went into the forest at Hereth when we thought he was going to be okay he'd taken provisions took care of his parents put himself in a stronghold he's buckling down he's got an army of 400 God sends him somewhere less safe go down into Judah more into the open in the forest and look how it turns out look at verse six when Saul heard that David and the men who were with him had been discovered in other words that's the very next thing that follows from obeying where God sent him is being discovered by Saul it's no accident this is God's direction which kingdom is forever the one who listens to the Lord patiently waits on God even when it seems foolish in the eyes of the world Andrew Fuller drew a wonderful application from this true faith does not outrun providence but waits for a clear warrant the command to go into the land of Judah was a command to return to the place of promise and danger

it teaches us that we are safer in a forest by God's command than in a castle of our own choosing amen well that's what we get at the scene that begins in the palace of Moab and ends in the forest of Judah the third scene is this a tamarisk tree

I had to look up what is a tamarisk tree and in the USA they are an invasive species that destroy others but in Israel they're native so I don't I'm not going to read any symbolism into it it just was a tree up on a high place in the land of the Benjamin tribe Gibeah capital the headquarters for Saul and it was common for there to be these big trees on high places which it gives you shade in an arid nation and a good vantage point to look out over all the land and see the major trade routes coming through if there's foot soldiers posing a threat you've got a good place to look at it from well in this next scene beginning at verse 6 the focus moves from David to Saul when Saul heard that David and the men who were with him had been discovered Saul was staying in Gibeah under a tamarisk tree and the Hebrew word is at Ramah and that made me immediately think of Samuel remember Samuel is from those mountain peaks called Ramah but it's just the same

Hebrew word and it means a high place I wondered though because the Hebrew makes you think of Samuel if it's also supposed to like help us foreshadow what's about to happen next how God prophesied through Samuel something to do with the priest of the line of Eli do you remember that so keep that in the back of your mind as you heard that Hebrew word for high place and notice the picture that is painted for us in God's word in our mind's eye of Saul up on a high place where you can see all around no one can sneak up on him in the shade with his spear in his hand Saul sits there plotting murder with a conscience obviously seared and hardened by the world and by Satan and all his servants are standing about him what he says next in verse seven gives us an insight into his spiritual condition he's a troubled man full of suspicion and inward misery verse seven hear now you

Benjamites he's reminding them you're loyal to our tribe so it's the king causing division within a nation will this son of Jesse I wonder if that's deliberate as well remember Saul heard that David has been discovered and his family is no longer in Bethlehem with all their land where's Jesse now will he give every one of you fields and vineyards well obviously his own family lost all of that what is he going to give you that I can't will he make you captains of thousands and captains of hundreds and then in verse eight he says all of you have conspired against me it's almost like instead of just comparing himself to David now he's just complaining and whining and there is no one who reveals to me that my son has made a covenant with the son of Jesse and there is no one of you who is sorry for me this is

Saul's tone Spurgeon observed Saul accuses everyone of conspiracy because his own heart is not right with God he complains no one is sorry for him for the selfish man always believes the whole world is in debt to his sorrows while he ignores the grief he causes the Lord's anointed that's the end of Spurgeon's demolition of Saul which kingdom will last forever Saul rages Benjamin Keith pointed out against the covenant between his son and David because Saul cannot comprehend a covenant based on love and divine election rather than political advantage you know in Corinthians the church that's in covenant with God based on God's divine election and love for us in Christ before the foundations of the world that's an aroma of death to the world but to those who are sick of the pattern of the world it's an aroma of life they're drawn to that the quote goes on as Saul viewed the covenant between

[22 : 08] Jonathan and David as a conspiracy so the carnal mind views the secret purposes of God in the covenant of grace as a threat to its own earthly sovereignty which kingdom lasts forever that's the end of the tamarisk tree scene per se because now we have another character catching up with us from the previous chapter look at verse 6 I'm sorry verse 9 then answered Doeg the Edomite the Edomites were descendants of Esau who did not want the covenant blessing and he was set over the servants of Saul we're told in the previous chapter he was the chief herdsman there's a little reminder remember Saul's the one always chasing his donkeys around he's not a shepherd among the sheep he's the one driving a herd and this is his chief herdsman and he said

I saw the son of Jesse going to Nob to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub verse 9 he's bearing true witness right verse 10 he inquired of the Lord for him and gave him provisions and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine he mentions the sword of Goliath the Philistine specifically this has been preserved you could say in the national museum you know this is something we're very proud of and God is reminding him this victory was of my power my doing and this symbol of my power working through man is going to this anointed one and now Doeg while technically these words

were true the way in which he said it the effect it had on Saul omitting the fact that the priest also had words and questioning and thinking through and was acting in innocence following God's moral law all of that's left out of his report

Spurgeon commented Doeg is the very pattern of a malicious tongue he tells the truth but with a lying intent he saw the son of Jesse at the house of God but his heart was with Saul's spear as the next actions make very clear verse 11 so the king sent to call Ahimelech the priest the son of Ahitab and all his father's house the priests who were in Nob and they all came to the king what a sight that would be all of the priests of the line of Ahitab meaning descendants of Eli and before that descendants of Aaron all traveling now taking time coming all the way to give their audience to the king Saul in verse 12 Saul said hear me now son of Ahitab doesn't even call him priest mediator representative of the most high

God no fear of God no respect for the office that God appointed he answered here I am my Lord Saul says why have you conspired against me you and the son of Jesse and that you have given him bread and a sword and have inquired of God for him that he should rise against me to lie in wait as in this day well we don't know the body language of king Saul we know the spear is always in his hand and put yourself in the position of this priest the himalek showing up being accused having this malicious witness set him up what testimony would you give for those who have legal training notice also a very broken courtroom here we could call this scene the hellish courtroom Saul's the prosecutor he's also going to be the judge

Doeg is the witness he proves to be a malicious witness who also turns out to be the executioner it's a courtroom from hell verse 14 so Ahimelech answered the king and said who among all your servants is as faithful as David bring it on King Saul he's the king's son-in-law he goes at your bidding he's honored in your house in other words I have no idea that you're against him I'm a priest doing what priests do that's my job verse 15 did I then begin to inquire God for him far be it from me I didn't begin then I consult with him I minister to him because he's an Israelite anyone in God's covenant I'm going to serve and minister to let not the king impute anything to his servant saying Saul don't throw on me guilt that I didn't deserve in this case

[27 : 19] I am innocent is what he's saying or to any of the house of my father for your servant knew nothing of all of this little or much I had no idea of all your conspiracy theories King Saul priest gives a bold witness and at the cost of his own life he speaks well of God's anointed one he stands up against this tyrant and this is his highest duty to bear witness for the savior for the deliverer the anointed messiah even if it cost you your life verse 16 the king said you shall surely die a himalek didn't consider his plea of innocence and he extends now the punishment beyond the one who he thinks has messed up unto him and all his father's house verse 17 then the king said to the guards who stood about him turn and kill the priests of the

Lord because their hand is also with David and because they knew when he fled and did not tell it to me I love how Spurgeon takes this scene and helps us to see a pattern in all the Old Testament that continues on in the church in previous chapter Saul's spear had missed David so now Saul turns it against the priests of the Lord here's the pattern it is the old story of the serpent trying to bruise the heel of the woman seed when he cannot reach the head he strikes the members of the body don't we see that over and over and over and over that's the end of Spurgeon's quote and now Saul gives a command for the servants to kill the entire line of priests and this command was null legally not a legitimate command because it contradicts the law of

God himself could the command of the king of kings is the one that appointed these priests to do their job and to have the right of a due process but the servants of the king would not lift their hands to strike the priests of the Lord and this refusal by the guards it's a good example for us that when man's government commands the slaughter of the innocent we must!

So Doeg the Edomite turned and struck the priests and killed on that day 85 men who wore a linen ephod the linen ephod if you remember that's what the priests would put on to indicate they're going to now go and had they've been purified they will now perform their duties as priests this is a horrible slaughter think of the significance of what's happening here the priests were men who had been set apart for the Lord they belonged to God this is Saul robbing God and by doing so cutting off at the same time anyway for him or the entire nation to now have peace with God mediated to them through the ceremonial law Saul is excommunicating himself from

God verse 19 also the entire city of Nob the city of the priests Doeg went and struck with the edge of the sword both men and women children listen to these details and nursing infants oxen and

donkeys and sheep with the edge of the sword which kingdom is forever remember in 1 Samuel 15 God told Saul to go and do exactly that to the wicked enemies the Amalekites and instead Saul kept the cattle and gave it to the people and let the king live even the king of that pagan nation that hated God now in verse 18 Saul is Saul and

[32 : 01] Saul declaring war against Jehovah! Yahweh the Lord of hosts Saul's heart is now fully revealed his true allegiance is disclosed and his bondage to Satan as his master is proven and visible for all to see someone observed only a heart outside of the covenant with God could be so hardened as to butcher nursing infants and priests alike Collins pointed out the city of Nab became a city of martyrs in a single day the linen ephod the priestly garment they wore was no protection against the sword of Doeg but it was a badge of glory in the sight of God that white linen stained with blood a self sacrificing priest and a nation of priests you could say following that pattern of all people it was

Napoleon Bonaparte who at the peak of his power wrote this down Alexander Caesar Charlemagne and I have founded empires but on what did we rest the creations of our genius upon force Jesus Christ founded his empire upon love and at this hour millions of men would die for him amen brothers and sisters we must learn also from Ahimelech's example and the entire house of his father the cost of being with God's anointed bearing witness to him it may involve the loss of all of our earthly things yet our union to Christ secures for us a place with him in his city whose foundations no creature can threaten amen and this is our encouragement even from this bloody scene at the town of

Nob well the last scene for today is back where we left David in the forest of Judah now one of the sons of Ahimelech in verse 20 the son of Ahitab named Abiathar escaped the priestly line could not be fully extinguished until the Lord Jesus Christ came to fulfill it God would preserve a priest he would establish that office and Jesus Christ will one day fulfill it and fill it forever more so this priest fled after David if you look back at verse 5 we're told where David was it was the forest of Hereth which is in Judah you see what God is doing he's giving David and all those in David's army a mediator for God's grace and also direction from

God even in the forest he has all they need for life and righteousness verse 21 Abiathar told David that Saul had killed the Lord's priests if you remember back to 1st Samuel chapter 3 verse 14 God said through Samuel I believe it was I will judge Eli's house forever for the iniquity which he knows because his sons made themselves vile and he did not restrain them so you see how even this horrible slaughter is ultimately under the sovereign good all directing hand of God our confession of faith chapter 5 paragraph 2 says all things come to pass unchangeably and certainly in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God who is the first cause thus nothing happens to anyone by chance or outside of God's providence yet by the same providence

God arranges all things to occur according to the nature of second causes either necessarily freely or in response to other causes the mind blowing humbling sovereignty of God through his providence for his people for his glory for our good that his word will always be true and then we have this wonderful verse 22 and 23 so David says to Abiathar I knew that day when Doeg the Edomite was there that he should surely tell Saul what happened and I have caused the death of all the persons of your father's house David's admitting his weakness he doesn't see the sovereignty of God that we just professed he's blaming himself and he could tell something in the body language of Doeg the Edomite and even them him and Abiathar were or Ahimelech the priests were faithful to do what they thought was right even knowing this is might how it turned out and now listen to verse 23 and in one sense the whole chapter builds to this wonderful verse

[37 : 31] David says to Abiathar the only survivor stay with me do not fear I wonder how David could say that at this point and he seems to have even more confidence he says for he who seeks my life shall seek your life but with me you shall be safe where does this confidence come from go back one more verse again in verse 22 he doesn't he's missing God's providence!

so we don't know how much time passed between verse 22 and verse 23 but what we do know from the Psalms trusting that the superscription to the Psalms are inspired is that in this crazy chapter David and drawing David near to him and breathing out scripture through David in these moments of crisis Psalm 34 and Psalm 52 both say they were breathed out through David during the events of chapter 22 so we get some insights from these Psalms that might answer that question of how can David have such confidence in verse 23 in Psalm 52 David describes himself as surrounded by those whose tongues cause destruction with their razor sharp teeth he feels weak

and powerless and hunted down and then in Psalm 34 he says I am a poor man now here's I believe the source of the strength and the confidence it comes from God ministering to him though all of that's true about my setting and about myself David cries out in I cry out to the Lord the Lord is near to those who come to him with a broken heart he saves the contrite in spirit and only that ministry of God can explain verse 23 stay with me do not fear for he who seeks my life seeks your life but with me you shall be safe Benjamin Keech marveled at this how this comfort is the comfort of every distressed soul that flees to Jesus Christ our enemies are his enemies our safety is bound up in his life Abiathar lost an earthly home in Nob he saw it all be covered in blood but he found an eternal security in the company of the anointed one Spurgeon if the sword reaches Abiathar it must first pass through the heart of David you see the beautiful picture for us Collins advises us when we're reading passages like this to know a shadow look for the substance as the shadow of a man moves so he moves so the shadows of the Old Testament follow the person of Christ in the substance of his offices as prophet priest or king you see how God preserved in chapter 22 a priest and God preserved a king one mediates by offering up the blood of a lamb to God for the forgiveness of sins the other is a lion who unites an army and the Lord has brought the two offices together shadows of a lion lamb in Judah Jesus Christ is the lion lamb of Judah preserved prepared anointed by God he is the priest he is the lamb he's the king he's the good shepherd brothers and sisters under Adam's curse and our own sin piled on Satan stood with a spear in his hand pointing at each one of us unleashing all his assassins to devour us but Jesus Christ put himself between us and sure death the spear has to go through me before it will get to my people and it did our Lord Jesus on the old bloody wooden cross disarmed the devil he conquered death he crushed the enemy's head [42 : 10] Satan is powerless inside of Christ's kingdom and it begins in Judah then Judea and Samaria all of Israel and to the ends of the world including all of us from every nation tribe and tongue and we we are welcomed as our call to worship reminded us in Romans we are welcomed by King Jesus Satan is powerless in his kingdom until the devil can destroy the king of glory as someone put it he cannot touch the humblest most bankrupt soul that has ever fled to find refuge in Jesus Christ amen Jesus says to you and me stay with me do not fear the safety of his army the safety of us his sheep it's guaranteed by the presence and the power of Jesus Christ the good shepherd as believers we are hid with Christ in God the body they may kill his word abideth still his kingdom is forever amen let's thank him and praise him oh lord thank you for how you show us your kingdom for how by your spirit you draw us into your kingdom thank you for the reality and the power of your kingdom help us to know you lord to stay with you and to not fear we long for that day lord when your glory will be on full display for all to see and until then we pray that you give us more faith to trust you lord that your word will not fail your kingdom is forever amen as