

Weigh The Cost of Rejecting The Lord as King

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[0 : 00] Now the Philistines fought against Israel and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines and fell slain on Mount Gilboa.

! Then the Philistines followed hard after Saul and his sons and the Philistines killed Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchushua, Saul's sons.

The battle became fierce against Saul. The archers hit him and he was severely wounded by the archers. Then Saul said to his armor bearer, draw your sword and thrust me through with it, lest these uncircumcised men come and thrust me through and abuse me.

But this armor bearer would not, for he was greatly afraid. Therefore, Saul took a sword and fell on him. And when his armor bearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell on his sword and died with him.

So Saul, his three sons, his armor bearer and all his men died together that same day. And when the men of Israel who were on the other side of the valley and those who were on the other side of the Jordan, saw that the men of Israel had fled and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook the cities and fled.

[1 : 25] And the Philistines came and dwelt in them. So it happened the next day when the Philistines came to strip the slain that they found Saul and his three sons fallen on Mount Gilboa.

And they cut off his head and stripped off his armor and sent word throughout the land of the Philistines to proclaim it in the temple of their idols and among the people. Then they put his armor in the temple of the Ashtaroth's and they fastened his body to the wall of Beth Shan.

Then when the inhabitants of Jabeth Gilead heard what the Philistines had done to Saul, all the valiant men arose and traveled all night and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth Shan.

And they came to Jabeth and burned them there. Then they took their bones and buried them under the Tamarisk tree at Jabeth and fasted seven days.

The word of God for the people of God. Thanks be to God. Please be seated. The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of the Lord stands forever.

[2 : 38] Let's pray. Let's pray.

Lord, we confess that we are unable to understand your word on our own. Our minds are too depraved outside of Christ without your spirit. Our own thoughts are too distracting.

And your meaning, Lord, the meaning of the Holy Spirit who breathed out every word of the gospel and all of scripture. It's lost to us, Lord, on our own. We confess this. And so we ask, Lord, and we pray that by your spirit you'll give us the illumination.

You'll teach us. You'll help us to see what is it that your word points us to. What is the main point of this passage that you have before your church today? Please help the preacher, Lord, to be depending on you with every word.

Please guard the ears of the church against anything that's spoken that's not pleasing to you. And, Lord, though preaching happens through words and through our ears, it's really the ministry of truth by your Holy Spirit through broken vessels to broken vessels.

[3 : 52] And only this you can do, Lord. So we pray that your Holy Spirit will will be pleased, Lord, to dwell with this body that are preaching and receiving of the sermon can be an act of worship to you, that you'll be glorified, Lord, and that you'll apply this to our lives to prepare us for heaven, to warn us about the temptations and the remaining sin in our own life, and ultimately to be utterly dependent on you as our Lord and King.

We ask this for Christ's sake. Amen. Amen. Amen. Well, this last chapter of 1 Samuel, chapter 31, is heavy and dark.

I did spend quite a bit of time praying about and trying to understand what is the point of this last chapter. Why does it end this way? And I came to this conclusion.

You need to evaluate it for yourselves. The point is that we need to weigh the cost of rejecting the Lord as King. Weigh the cost of rejecting the Lord as King.

I heard this preacher is a Reformed Baptist preacher in the Caribbean. And he came to this conclusion looking at scripture. Security, identity, and significance are the three tests of what is your true King, your true God.

[5 : 22] What do you look for to find your security? If I put my security in anything other than God, I've rejected God as King. What do I look for for my identity?

Who am I? If I'm looking to anything other than Christ, that thing is Lord of my life. And finally, significance.

Am I allowing this world, society, men to tell me my significance? Or am I receiving God's promises, the truth of his word? This is your significance in life in my eyes.

And we ought not reject the Lord as our King in any area of life. It comes at a high cost. And as we walk through this tragedy, Saul falling hard, we need to weigh for ourselves as a reminder, as a warning, that high cost of rejecting the Lord as King.

And I've been praying even that maybe some who are here today, who don't even know what I'm referring to, what is it to have the Lord as King of your life?

[6 : 34] I pray that these warnings from scripture, the Lord will, will persuade you. You don't want to be the Lord of your own life anymore. You want Jesus to be the King of your life. So even though the torn is warnings, I pray that it'll do nothing but encourage you the moment that you are in Christ again, or maybe for the first time as the King of your life.

Four warnings. Number one, weigh the cost of rejecting the Lord as King. Those who do fall severely.

Weigh the cost of rejecting the Lord as King, because those who do reject them fall severely. Look at verse one. Now the Philistines fought against Israel, against Israel and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines.

They fled because Saul was their King. They fled because the Lord of armies, the Lord of hosts was not their King. And they fell slain on Mount Gilboa.

The battle is taking place on a mountain. At least that's how the narrator is painting it. And I think it's for a deliberate reason. Mount Gilboa means heap and bubbling.

[7 : 54] It's those two words put together. So like a hill and the bubbling, like there's springs that come out of this flowing mountain, swelling up with fresh living water flowing down.

And it's the irony of the setting. It's a mountain of life. And it's there were saw and Israel fall and die. That word fall or fell. It appears three times just in this closing of this passage of the first Samuel. It can mean a literal falling by the sword, but it also has that extra weight.

It's the downfall of a dynasty. Saul and each of his sons. No longer on the throne of Israel. The root of this word to fall is slain.

I'm sorry, the root of the word slain. It's also to be profaned or pierced. It's a downfall that is disgraceful. It's public shame.

[8 : 55] And it hints at the desecration of a body. So by saying he was slain, this is exactly what will happen. It's foreshadowing what they will do to his body after he dies.

Verse two says, then the Philistines followed hard after Saul and his sons and the Philistines killed each one of them. The battle became fierce against Saul. Now, this detail is important.

The archers hit him and he was severely wounded by the archers. It repeats it. Emphasis the Holy Spirit breathing out through the narrator who it is that kills Saul or wounds him to the point that he's in retreat.

It's the archers. Isn't that ironic how it's the one, Saul, who always had the spear in his hand, who had tried to pin David to the wall with the spear, tried to pin Jonathan with his spear over and over. He's now the one that gets pierced. And that word archers, it comes from the route to throw or to shoot something. That same route is used to describe the law of God, the Torah, which was to be what ruled over the king of Israel.

[10 : 06] Saul's life had been a slow and steady trajectory of law breaking of disobedience to God's instruction, a life being shot like an arrow away from God.

He took the power over the nation. And now he's receiving a harvest for all of his disobedience that he had been sowing along the way.

Galatians 6, 7 warns us, do not be deceived. God is not mocked for whatever a man sows that he will also reap.

Luke 14, 11, for whoever exalts himself will be humbled and he who humbles himself will be exalted. We'll read there the word that when Saul was hit, he was severely wounded in verse three, severely wounded.

That can also be translated. He was greatly distressed. It's a picture of Saul twisting, writhing in pain and agony like a woman in labor.

[11:11] That's how that word's also used. It captures Saul's physical pain as well as the terror of torment on his deathbed.

If the Lord of armies is not your king. You do need to be afraid. You do need to retreat.

You will live your life. On the run. But if the Lord of armies, if God himself is the king of your life, you do not need to fear.

You do not retreat. You do not stop marching. You can pray in the words that were available to Saul. Deuteronomy 31, 6.

If the Lord is your king, be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of men. For it is the Lord your God who goes with you and he will not leave you nor forsake you.

[12:11] But be warned, brothers and sisters, the way, weigh the cost of rejecting the Lord as king because the downfall of that decision is evident in Saul.

Those who do fall severely. The second warning is this way, the cost of rejecting the Lord as king. Those who do live and die in fear. Those who do live and die in fear.

Look at verse four. Then Saul said to his armor bearer, draw your sword and thrust me through with it. Why? Here's the reason. Lest these uncircumcised men come and thrust me through and abuse me.

Literally torture me. That's what he's afraid of. What are they going to do to my body? Saul, in his dying moments, is most worried now.

Not about God, not a fear of the Lord, but of his body, the body of this life that his soul will soon drop being tortured.

[13:14] He lives and dies in fear. He lives and dies for this life instead of the life to come.

Hebrews 10, 25 through 31 warns even gathered congregations in this way.

If we send willfully to send willfully to shoot like an arrow away from God, purposefully disobeying, aiming against the target that God has set for us.

After we have received the knowledge of the truth, we ought to have a certain fearful expectation of judgment and fiery indignation. God will devour his adversaries.

God will not lose. Anyone who has rejected God's law dies. For fearful, it's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

And then we see what happens next. Not only did Saul live and die in fear, but the nation goes with them, starting with the person closest to him in verse four.

[14:16] His armor bearer would not kill him for he also was greatly afraid. The fear of Saul spreading like a cancer now. And so what does Saul do is he takes matters into his own hands as was his custom.

And he fell on his own sword. That's another important detail to remember in the next chapter. How did Saul die? According to verse four, he fell on his own sword.

That's called suicide. And it's suicide in a battle zone in a war setting. But think about what Saul did. He didn't just take his own life.

He took the life of God's anointed one. Think of all the times up to this point, how the Holy Spirit would not let David take the life of this man, Saul, that God had anointed.

The word anointed is Messiah. David learned from the Holy Spirit, a high view of God, the authority God had put in place in this anointed office of king of the people of God.

[15:33] And even if this anointed man, Saul, the king, the Lord had put over God's own people was wicked. David was in submission to God. So God would not do it.

So David would not do it out of fear for God. And Saul does not hesitate. He has no fear of God, even in taking the life of the king, even though he himself is the king.

Verse five says, when his armor bearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell on his sword and died with him. You wanted a king like all the other nations.

That's what you got in Saul. You go up with Saul like all the other nations and you fall with Saul like all the world. And so Saul and his three sons, his armor bearers, they all die together that same day.

As goes the king, so goes the kingdom. And it continues to spread when the men of Israel were on the other side of the valley and those who were on the other side of the river. The Jordan saw that the men of Israel had fled and that Saul and his sons were dead.

[16:37] They forsook the cities and fled. Everyone's abandoning. No one has faith in God. It's utter failure for the army. Verse seven says, and then the Philistines came and dwelt among them.

The king fell and so the nation fell with him. This was a special thing God had done. This promised land. It's a picture of the kingdom of heaven coming to earth, intruding in, in time and space and history.

A place where the God creator of all of heaven and earth would dwell with a people and these geographic borders. And now those borders have been violated.

And it's the worshipers of the serpent, the deceiver that are now dwelling in the land that was meant to be kept holy for God to dwell in himself. This realm that God marked off for his own holy habitation.

No longer protected, no longer defended. Weigh the cost of rejecting the Lord as king. Those who do live and die in fear.

[18:02] It's a horrible life and the most horrible death. But if the Lord is your king, you live and die with a confident hope, not in yourself, but in him.

Not in any other king or thing that gives us security or identity or significance, but a confidence in God, my king. And we can pray like Psalm 44, 25 and 26.

God, you are my deliverer. God, rise up. Come to our help. Redeem us for the sake of your steadfast love. Oh, but there's two more warnings.

We need to weigh the cost of rejecting the Lord as king because those who do are trophies of Satan. Weigh the cost of rejecting God as the king of your life, because to do that is to become a trophy now for Satan.

To parade around. Look at verse eight. So it happened the next day when the Philistines came to strip the sling. They're not going to let all their metal and weapons and clothing just be wasted.

[19:07] They're going to take it back, sell it at the pawn shop, whatever the Philistines would do. And they found Saul and his three sons fallen on Mount Gilboa. And they cut off his head.

Do you remember how Saul was introduced to us? He's the most handsome man in all the land. People would look at his face and swoon.

And that he stood. How tall was he? He stood head and shoulders above all the other men of Israel. Not anymore.

Not without his head. They cut off his head. That word for cutting. It's the same word for cutting a covenant. There's a dark irony.

Saul, who failed to keep covenant with God, now shares the same fate as Goliath. The federal representative of God's enemies, Goliath, with his head cut off and carried around by the champion God put forward, David, as his trophy.

[20:18] Now, Saul is related to Goliath. He's also stripped of his armor. This has been something that's been prophesied.

He's going to be de-robed, dethroned. He's not going to be able to represent the office of king anymore. And then the wording in the original language, according to the experts of what comes next, is interesting.

What it says they do next is left vague. And so I don't want to read more into it that's there. But I also don't want our English to maybe make us miss something that was left vague on purpose. More literally would say this.

They sent throughout the land of the Philistines. Well, what did they send throughout the land of the Philistines? That's what it says. Some have speculated that it wasn't the clothes or the weapons or the armor.

We hear what happens to those next. And so, therefore, what was it that they sent as a message around the land? Some suggest that it must have been his head. Here's proof right here. Look at

the head of King Saul, the king of Israel for yourselves, and know that he is no longer in power. [21 : 28] And that message or that symbol that they were sending around the land was proclaimed. That's a word for a gospel announcement, a glad tiding proclaimed in the temple of their idols.

These pagan demons that they worship and among the people. This is the same Saul now receiving the fate for the glory he stole from God.

He's the one who was very quick to parade himself around after God gave Israel a victory. He's now profaned, laid bare, humiliated, utterly humbled.

They put his armor in the temple of the Ashtaroth and they fastened his body to the wall of Beth-shan. The Proverbs, you know, written by Saul's grandson, Solomon.

They say this in Proverbs 5 to his own iniquities and trap the wicked man. He is caught in the courts of his sins.

[22 : 33] Proverbs 16, 8 pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall. We need to beware of rejecting God as king, becoming a trophy of God's enemy.

But still in the section, there's a surprising twist. Some men from one of these towns in the tribe of Benjamin are called valiant men. So the narrator inspired by the spirit is lifting them up as what they did is noble.

And it's a surprising twist at the end of the chapter. They show this act of loyalty. Take note how it's the men from Jabesh Gilead. And this reminds us of what had happened earlier in the same book. In Saul's rise after being anointed by God, God blessed Saul and gave him an early victory. And what he did was be the instrument through which God defeated the enemy and rescued the people from where?

From the town of Jabesh Gilead. Now in Saul's demise, we're brought back to the same people again. Even though Saul has now broke his covenant with God and been defeated by the army.

[23 : 46] These valiant men take his bones. They rescue him. At least his remains by that very same people. Verse 11 tells us what they did.

How they buried their bones. After burning them. Look at verse 13. Under the tamarisk tree at Jabesh.

Jabesh. And they fasted seven days. They're showing honor to the man who had been their deliverer or the instrument God used. And they're going back to that place, that shade tree at the top of a hill where Saul would use as his headquarters.

From there, he could look all around. And this was like his spot that they wanted to always remember when Saul was their king. They're honoring him even after his death. The Philistines wanted to expose Saul to shame.

And the Benjamites were going out of their way, doing something valiant, sneaking in and robbing that back now to honor their dead king. And the irony here is that it was the job of the king to rescue the people.

[24 : 55] And Saul's fall was so great that now the people are the ones having to rescue not even him, but his burnt remains. If you reject the Lord as your king, you are a trophy of Satan.

But if the Lord is your king, you cry out in the words of Psalm 81 through 3, Give ear, O shepherd of your people. Stir up your might.

Come to save us. Restore us, O Lord. Let your face shine that we might be saved. It's through the shining of God's face that he saves his people.

Well, I think the pattern is incredibly clear. And I just need to ask you this question now. Of whom does Saul remind us? Whomever you are under determines your destiny.

And this was in God's providence that we came to that on our version of the Heidelberg Catechism. The fall of Adam, our first king appointed over Eden.

[26 : 05] Think of all the similarities between Adam in the garden and Saul, especially in the details of this chapter. Both were appointed by God himself.

Adam was appointed over all creation and Saul was appointed over all the kingdom. Both Adam and Saul were given a divine mandate to rule and exercise dominion under God's ultimate sovereignty.

Both failed to obey a specific divine command, choosing their own path over the word of the Lord. Both attempted to shift the blame to others rather than taking full responsibility for their personal disobedience.

Both experienced a loss of their privileged status as a ruler and were eventually rejected from their original calling. Adam was kicked out of the garden and Saul died no longer to rule on this earth. Both saw their kingdoms fall into chaos and distress as a direct result of their rebellion against God. Both narratives conclude with the heavy reality of death following a broken relationship with the Creator.

[27 : 19] The fall of both of these kings as federal heads results in the fall of all those they represent. Whichever king you are under determines your destiny and mine.

We're either under Saul or we're under the anointed king. We're either under Adam or we're under the second Adam, Jesus Christ. We're either under the dominion of darkness or we've been translated to the kingdom of light of Jesus.

Whomever you are under determines your destiny. In chapter 31, we have the final scene of God's first anointed king.

Remember all the details that we've just gone over together. He died on a hill that was called bubbling spring. His bones were put under a shade tree where he used to rest and comfort.

The hill where he died was a place of great bloodshed. It was a victory for Satan and Satan's army. And his death resulted in the slavery of God's people.

[28 : 31] If we're among those people, at that moment we would be crying out with them, God, are you not true to your promise? Are all of our hopes now buried with King Saul's bones?

By God's grace, we have the full counsel of his word and we can look ahead. We must do that. We need to behold the true king that all of scripture points to.

And this is the Lord Jesus Christ. Romans 5:19 says, For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one man's obedience many will be made righteous.

There is another anointed one, the true Messiah, Jesus Christ. He said, I have come down from heaven not to do my will, but the will of him who sent me.

And our Lord Jesus Christ came to do battle on another hill. In Mark and Matthew, we read the name of this hill is Golgotha, the Hebrew word for skull.

[29 : 37] Not a hill of bubbling life, but a hill of death. We read that they clothed him with purple and they twisted a crown of thorns and put it on his head and began to salute him, mocking saying, hail king of the Jews.

Brothers and sisters, we need to put our eyes on this anointed one, this king, Jesus Christ, the only worthy king for your life and mine. His tree is not a shade tree.

There's no leaves on the cross. Our Lord Jesus did not die in fear. He died like a man, the only righteous man, enduring the torture of the cross.

Marvel at the strength of King Jesus. And bow to him. Him who committed no sin, nor was defeat found in his mouth when he was reviled, did not revile in return.

When he suffered, he did not threaten, but committed himself to him who judges righteously. On that hill was blood shed again, but it was blood. Of the second person of the Trinity and the person of Jesus to purchase God's people out of slavery.

[31 : 04] Galatians 3:13 says Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us. And he rose from the dead and his resurrection confirmed his victory.

Revelation 1:18. He says, I am he who lives and was dead and behold, I am alive forevermore. And I have the keys of Hades and of death.

So we've run to Jesus as our king. We embrace him as our king. Jesus defeated sin, Satan, death. And he did this not because he lacked anything.

He did this for you and me who will run to him as our king now. He did this for the whole host of the Lord's army. First Corinthians 15:22 says for as an Adam all die.

Even so in Christ all shall be made alive who follow him and trust him as king of kings. Hebrews 2:14 and 15 says that through the death of Jesus, he might destroy him who had the power over death.

[32 : 14] That is the devil and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. Our Lord Jesus sets us free from slavery.

We worship him as our king. He came on this mission and he did all of this for you and for me because God is true to his promises.

Amen. Exodus 15:13. God says this. I'm sorry. We say this of God. God, you have led us in your steadfast love us, your people whom you have redeemed and you guide your people by your

strength to your holy abode.

God will dwell with his people again. Follow Jesus as our king. Now we find our security in him. We find our identity in him. We find our identity in him.

And we find our significance and belonging as a foot soldier in the kingdom, in the house of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let's pray and thank him for ruling over us as people.

[33 : 23] Oh, Lord, we praise you for how you take the tragic fall of our own sin, Lord. And you redeem it by the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Lord, we pray that the work of Jesus will be so clear to us. We pray that we'll spend just a moment weighing the cost of rejecting you and run to you right away.

That we will flee the enemy. As our king and the bondage and the fear of man will flee from that, Lord. I pray that you'll help us to be tired of trying to run our own lives.

And act as though we're our own kings. Please bring all things into subjection to yourself, Lord. Beginning with our own hearts, our own households, this church, Lord.

We ask all of this for your glory. Amen.