

1 Samuel 13:1-15

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Date: 21 October 2018

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[0 : 00] I'm glad to hear you're coming to Musselboro. Can't guarantee you the weather will be any better than it is in Edinburgh, but it's the honest tune, so you should really enjoy yourself when you come next week.

I noticed that it's NIV that you normally have. I'm reading from the ESV, if that's okay. You'll notice the opening verses are slightly different, and I'll explain that just in a wee minute.

1 Samuel 13 is the passage. And we're reading verses 1 through to 15. I was first asked to preach in 1 Samuel 14, so I prepared a sermon, and then I got an email through saying, there's been a change, could you preach in 1 Samuel 13?

So I've had the great joy of studying both these chapters. So there you are. The person who's speaking next week is ill, you know what to do. 1 Samuel 13. Saul lived for one year and then became king, and when he had reigned for two years over Israel, Saul chose 3,000 men of Israel. 2,000 were with Saul in Michmash and the hill country of Bethel, and 1,000 were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin. The rest of the people he sent home, every man to his tent.

[1 : 20] Jonathan defeated the garrison of the Philistines that was at Gibeah, and the Philistines heard of it. And Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, Let the Hebrews hear.

And all Israel heard it, said that Saul had defeated the garrison of the Philistines, and also that Israel had become a stench to the Philistines.

And the people were called out to join Saul at Gilgal. And the Philistines mustered to fight with Israel 30,000 chariots, 6,000 horsemen, and troops like the sand on the seashore in multitude. They came up and encamped in Michmash, to the east of Beth-Avon. When the men of Israel saw that they were in trouble, for the people were hard-pressed, the people hid themselves in caves, and in holes, and in rocks, and in tombs, and in cisterns.

And some Hebrews crossed the fords of the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. Saul was still at Gilgal, and all the people followed him, trembling.

[2 : 29] He waited seven days, the time appointed by Samuel. But Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and the people were scattering from him. So Saul said, Bring the burnt offering here to me, and the peace offerings.

And he offered the burnt offering. As soon as he had finished offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came. And Saul went out to meet him and greet him.

Samuel said, What have you done? And Saul said, When I saw that the people were scattering from me, and that you did not come within the days appointed, and that the Philistines had mustered at Michmash, I said, Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not sought the favor of the Lord.

So I forced myself, and offered the burnt offering. And Samuel said to Saul, You have done foolishly. You have not kept the command of the Lord your God, with which he commanded you. For then the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. But now your kingdom shall not continue. The Lord has sought out a man after his own heart, and the Lord has commanded him to be prince or leader over his people, because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you.

[3 : 46] And Samuel arose and went up from Gilgal. The rest of the people went up after Saul to meet the army. They went up from Gilgal to Gibeah of Benjamin.

And Saul numbered the people who were present with him, about six hundred men. And we'll finish there at verse 15. Now, if you read the commentaries, you will soon find out that there are issues to be discussed with regards to time, dates, and numbers in the opening verses of this chapter.

The recorded statistics in the early part of the chapter apparently are not at all clear. That's why there's a distinct difference in IV and the ESV.

They're not clear in the original manuscripts available. But having said that, I think you'll be delighted to know that we're not going to go down that route anyhow. We're going to leave that important stuff, and it is important stuff, we'll leave it to the scholars.

So let me give you a brief context for the content of the passage that has been given to me this evening. Even although in many respects Israel had rejected God as their king at this particular point in their history, God was still king.

[5 : 13] He was still in control. Their failure did not mean that God was going to be a failure. God never fails.

His purposes will always be fulfilled. They will never be frustrated, even if it is Saul who's on the throne. And we need to keep that in mind.

He began his reign as king of Israel in chapter 10, I think with a degree of promise, really. We know from chapter 11 that Saul was given a golden opportunity to prove to Israel at large that he could save his people from any oppressors.

He was hugely instrumental in bringing relief to the besieged city of Jabesh Gilead on that occasion from the Ammonites. Something the men of Jabesh Gilead never, ever forgot.

And if you go to the last few verses of the last chapter of Samuel, chapter 31, you will see that it was the men of Jabesh Gilead who risked their lives to bring back the remains of King Saul after the Philistines had beheaded him and then fastened his body to the wall of Beth-shan after they had defeated Israel on Mount Gilboa.

[6 : 39] So the men of Jabesh Gilead never forgot what Saul did for them. However, in spite of what happened in chapter 12, by the time this incident took place in chapter 13, things had turned a wee bit slower.

Saul had become something of a lame duck king. At some point along the way, even although he's going to remain king for many years to come, before he will eventually be replaced by David, the man after God's own heart.

At the end of chapter 12, Samuel, he withdraws, if you read at the end of the chapter there, he withdraws as the theocratic leader of the country. Now that Saul has been confirmed king, Samuel takes a back step.

And in his farewell address, he tells the king and he tells the nation not to be afraid, not to turn away from following the Lord.

He reminds them that God will not ever forsake his people. If not for their sake, then for his own namesake. And Samuel's parting shot in his retirement speech at the end of the chapter is to tell them that he'll not be sinning against God by not praying for them.

[7 : 56] No, he'll continue to pray for them and he exhorts them to fear the Lord and serve the Lord faithfully with all their heart. What Samuel is doing is he's reminding them yet again in characteristic, prophetic manner that it's never too late to repent of their wrongdoing, never too late to change their ways, nor is it too much to ask or even too much to expect such a thing from God's chosen people.

So Samuel takes the back step. He gives his farewell speech. We come into chapter 13 with a certain degree of hope that the future, however short or long, might be, could be, ought to be, brighter and better than the past.

But I would not encourage you to bet your life savings on it. Chapters 13 and 14 actually constitute one large narrative.

But we're confining ourselves mainly to the 13th chapter, the first 15 verses. And as Jim Packer says, we're going to let the text do the talking.

So we want to begin, first of all, by examining the facts. First seven verses. In spite of the uncertainty about the numbers at the beginning of the chapter, it would appear with closer examination that whenever this border incident took place at the beginning of the chapter, it was at a time when the nation of Israel was under Philistine domination.

[9 : 40] Saul had raised a standing army at this particular time. He had a couple of thousand men gathered with him in Michmash, we're told. And we're also told that a thousand men also gathered round his son Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin.

These two towns, I understand, were only about four miles apart. And the chapter opens in John Wayne style, if you know what I mean, with what is a gung-ho commando raid by Jonathan on the Philistine garrison.

The rugged terrain in that area, so we're told, provided excellent conditions for guerrilla warfare. And yes, you could say Jonathan's raid was a successful raid.

You could say that. But on the other hand, it seems only to have served to rouse the anger of the Philistines and precipitate a Philistine reprisal.

Those are the facts. What can we learn from the facts? Well, we know that this wasn't the first or the last time in the history of warfare that a surprise attack had taken place to kick things off, if I can use that expression, in terms of all-out war.

[10:57] Border incidents, which is what this was. Jonathan was involved in it. Border incidents, according to Joyce Baldwin, are a time-honoured method for manufacturing a war that will both unite and galvanise a nation.

And it's hoped, at the same time, it will lead to territorial expansion, as was the case, for example, with Italy in her war with Ethiopia in 1935.

The same could be said of Germany with Poland in 1939. First-strike attacks against unsuspecting targets tend to be cheap victories, as was the case, for example, when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor in December 1941.

It was a great victory for Japan in the short term, but what did it do? It only served to awaken the sleeping giant, the United States of America in the process.

And when you read the first seven verses of this chapter here, the same sort of thing is happening. On this occasion, as Jonathan initiates this border incident, because the text goes on to tell us that Israel began to pay a rather heavy price for this act of aggression, almost immediately at the hands of the Philistines.

[12:24] In some respects, on the one hand, it did unite, it did galvanize the nation of Israel as the Hebrews were called out to join Saul at Gilgal, but on the other hand, look at what happened in verses 5, 6, and 7 among the Philistines.

Let's read it to you. The Philistines mustered to fight with Israel 30,000 chariots, 6,000 horsemen, and troops like the sand on the seashore in multitude.

They came up and encamped at Michmash to the east of Beth-Avon. When the men of Israel saw that they were in trouble for the people were hard-pressed, the people hid themselves in caves, in holes, in rocks, in tombs, and in cisterns, and some Hebrews actually crossed the fords of the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead.

Saul was at Gilgal. All the people following him are shaking in their shoes. They're trembling. The Philistines are said to be as numerous as the sand on the seashore, and they are now on the offensive.

Saul's troops in the army of Israel, they're now outflanked, outnumbered, and as we would say, outgunned. It's mass panic, total chaos.

[13:43] The Israelite army is not only deserting, they're apostatizing. They're abandoning God and the ordinary people of Israel by hiding wherever they can rather than standing up and showing themselves willing to fight.

They're trembling. They're quaking in their shoes. You could say that Jonathan's action comes across as a bit of bravado on his part, although King Saul gets the credit, apparently, for what had happened, but it very quickly leads to disaster as far as Israel was concerned.

What are 1,000 men going to do with 30,000 chariots and 6,000 horsemen and troops like the sand on the seashore that haven't a dog's chance?

It's a wee bit like what happened in the Jacobite Rebellion in the 18th century. Just to rake your wee minds a bit in history, Bonnie Prince Charlie, yes, he raises his father's standard at Glenfinnan, rallying the Highlanders in August 1745 when he arrived there from France.

Scottish army came down to this part of the country and after winning battles at Edinburgh and then out at Preston Pans, September 1745, they marched very quickly as far south as Derby in England, thinking victories on the horizon, but because of lack of support and a wrong strategy, they turned back only to be defeated at Culloden by the Duke of Cumberland on the 16th of April 1746.

[15:12] Now, it all started so well, but in a few months it was all over in less than an hour on the field at Culloden. And surely on this occasion, almost 3,000 years earlier, you see something similar taking place.

you would have to call as a result of all this, surely, you would have to call into question the pathetic leadership or lack of leadership of King Saul.

The cracks are now beginning to appear. He doesn't seem to have what it takes to lead the country. He has apparently no clear plans for the battle against the enemy. It's a bit of a hit or a miss. King Saul is showing himself to be something of a square peg in a round hole.

He might be dark and handsome and tall, but he's lacking in courage, he's lacking in confidence, he's lacking in communication skills, and he's lacking in plain common sense when it comes to the decision-making process.

He seems to be causing problems rather than preventing them. He's showing himself to be woefully inadequate. We'll discover more about that as we move on into the chapter just in a moment, even more so when you get into chapter 14.

[16:43] So having considered the facts, if you like, events that have just taken place, come to verse 8 and on from verse 8. Let's get what I think is the main message that God wants us to hear from this chapter for our own lives tonight.

Okay, point number one, I trained in the faith mission, so you're going to get three points. Point number one, examining the facts. Those are the facts. Jonathan, an incident, border incident, he wins the day but arouses the sleeping giant and they find themselves in a big mess.

And Saul, he's over it all. He's messed it up. Here's the second thing, playing the fool. Now, way back in chapter 10 verse 8, Samuel said to Saul, Go down before me to Gilgal and behold, I'm coming down to you to offer burnt offerings and to sacrifice peace offerings.

Seven days you shall wait until I come to you and show you what you shall do. That's what Samuel said to him. Go down before me to Gilgal.

I'm coming down to you to offer burnt offerings and to sacrifice peace offerings. Seven days you shall wait until I come to you and show you what you shall do. Now, whether it was as a result of what was said on that occasion or from another occasion that we know nothing about, we pick things up here at chapter 13 verse 8 with these words.

[18:10] He waited seven days, the time appointed by Samuel, but Samuel did not come to Gilgal and the people were scattering from him.

So Saul said, bring the burnt offering here to me and the peace offering. And he offers the burnt offering and as soon as he'd finished offering the burnt offering, lo and behold, who lands on his doorstep?

Samuel. Now, the text tells us that Saul, the king, went out to meet Samuel, the prophet, and to greet him as if nothing of a serious nature has happened.

Saul's pretty good at that. Samuel, however, wastes no time in beating about the bush. He said to Saul, what have you done?

And Saul said, when I saw that the people were scattering from me and that you didn't come within the days appointed and that the Philistines had mustered at Michmash, I said, now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal and I have not sought the favor of the Lord.

[19:24] So I forced myself and offered the burnt offering. What's Saul trying to do here? He's trying to shift the blame onto Samuel's shoulders.

He blames Samuel for what took place by appearing late. And yet, at the same time, Saul admits that he hadn't really sought the favor of the Lord for what he had done.

He makes it clear to Saul, you've done foolishly. Now the agreement was clear. Seven days, remember? Shall you wait and when I come I will tell you what to do.

Samuel said he would be there within seven days to do the needful but time was beginning to run out. Saul's beginning to feel the pressure. What we need to note is that although they were well into the seventh day, the seventh day hadn't finished.

The seven days were not completely over when Saul makes his move. He panics. He makes his move. The clock hadn't struck midnight but Saul couldn't wait and instead he takes the law into his own hands and he offers the sacrifice late, very late, no doubt, on the seventh day but before the seventh day had fully run its course.

[20:37] No sooner had he done so, Samuel arrives and he's on Saul's doorstep. Now in some ways you can sympathize with Saul as he sees things coming apart and as he sees the clock ticking and as he sees as far as his army is concerned that they're fleeing here, there and yonder and as he knows that time is really, really running out and Samuel's nowhere to be seen.

when the ferocious beast of impatience, as John Calvin called it, took over in the life of Saul. It could have been so different. George Swinock, the Puritan, once said, if we would only lengthen our patience we would shorten our troubles. Now what Saul did may be understandable. How would you have fared if you were standing in his shoes seven days? He said he would come in seven days. We're getting near midnight and he's not arrived yet. What he did may be understandable but it's also unforgivable.

It may have been plausible but it's not pleasing to the Lord. God's word is indispensable and he always keeps it. He's never late in fulfilling his covenant engagements.

[21 : 58] He's never in a hurry. He's always in time. At the eleventh hour or at a couple of minutes to midnight so to speak Saul runs out of patience as he tries to put sacrifice before obedience and ritual before revelation.

They have been for the first time but it wasn't going to be for the last time. Wait till you get to chapter 15. On this occasion it's bad enough. He would receive immediate admonition from the Lord through Samuel for doing so but on the next occasion when you get to chapter 15 it's going to be a whole lot worse.

It's going to be a rejection by God and not just admonition. Saul said to him on this occasion what have you done? Do you know that just about sums it up brothers and sisters?

That's the message. What have you done? How often that probing question is asked of different people in the Bible?

And here it is before us in this chapter again tonight. Let me rake your memory a wee bit. Was that not the question the Lord asked Eve in Genesis chapter 3 when she disobeyed the Lord?

[23 : 17] Did he not say to her what have you done? It was exactly the same question the Lord asked of Cain in Genesis chapter 4 after he killed his brother Abel.

What have you done? Later on in the book of Joshua chapter 7 it's the same question asked of Achan when he coveted and stole and then hid the Babylonian garment along with some shekels. What have you done? You know throughout history the Lord is asking the same question of so many different people.

What have you done? And I wonder we're all here tonight you're not here to listen to me we're here to listen to what God has to say.

He's asking of all of us that question tonight. What have you done? Have you deliberately done something anything that you know you should not have done?

[24 : 26] Have I? God had spoken have we trampled underfoot his word?

How many times are we guilty of doing what we shouldn't have done? so often we're guilty of disobeying his word and it's by jumping the gun. We find it difficult to wait for God's time so often we don't wait for him to fulfill the word that he has so clearly spoken to us even kings can be impatient that's what we're learning here.

Samuel didn't fail Saul he didn't come on the eighth day he came late on the seventh day. it was a testing time for him that's for sure but all of a sudden his patience ran out and he assumes the role of prophet and priest as well as king.

We're not good at waiting are we? I think we I'm speaking about myself we need to take a leaf out of the psalmist book psalm 40 I waited for the Lord my God metrical version and patiently did bear did bear at length to me he did incline my voice and cry to hear.

How long did Abraham wait for the child God promised him? Decades. How long did Moses have to wait until he's ready to lead the people out of Egypt?

[26 : 02] Several decades. How long did David have to wait before he would eventually be crowned king of all Israel? It was a long time. Saul had only to wait seven days and if Saul had only waited a few more minutes on this occasion that's all things would have been a-okay.

Three thousand years have passed since then but those three thousand years I don't think haven't changed anything. In one sense you could say well everything has changed with the passing of the millennia but in another sense you can say nothing has changed.

God hasn't changed has he? He's the same. Humanity is the same. Aren't we just the same? Sin's the same.

Salvation's the same. If anything we're probably less patient in the 21st century than those who lived in the centuries BC because this is so we're told the instant generation our problem is that we want whatever it is now.

But slowness is so very often God's preferred method of working. He's not cold, God's not cold, he's not cruel, he's not callous but he keeps us waiting sometimes to the last minute in order to do his deepest work in our hearts.

[27 : 29] You read on means Saul went on to blame anybody and everybody for what happened except himself of course. No sign of him owning up to his sin, there's no sign of him repenting but Samuel the prophet, he didn't stop when he asked the question of Saul the king, what have you done?

No, he then went on to tell Saul what he'd done. You have done foolishly, he said. You have not kept the command of the Lord your God which he commanded you.

And the same thing is going to be repeated in 1 Samuel chapter 15 when he eventually at the end of the chapter, chapter 15, he admits, I've played the fool and I've erred exceedingly.

Now we need to be careful. What exactly does it mean to be a fool in the Bible? It's not referring to someone who lacks intelligence. A fool in the Bible is not an idiot.

He's not a fool here in the sense that he's got no sense whatsoever. A fool in biblical parlance might be very, very clever, but it's nothing to do with a person's IQ.

[28 : 41] In the Word of God, a fool is someone who at that particular time, that specific moment in his life, he's believing or behaving as if there is no God. That's what meant in the Bible when it speaks of someone playing the fool.

The psalmist says in Psalm 14, the fool has said in his heart, there is no God. That's what's meant when someone is said to behave like a fool. They've become a practical atheist, if not an intellectual and philosophical atheist.

In the Sermon on the Mount, remember how the Lord Jesus drew everything to a final conclusion by telling us, telling the people who were listening to him, that the difference between the wise man who built his house on the rock and the foolish man who built his house on the sand, rested on this very point of obedience with regards to what God had said.

It's as simple as that. You don't need to be somebody with a BD or a PhD to come to terms with this. What was the clear unmistakable difference between the two men in Matthew chapter 7?

They were the same in the sense that they both heard the word of God. No question about that. It's not that one of them heard and the other didn't. They both heard the word spoken by the Lord.

[29 : 55] But the difference is seen in that the wise man is the one who puts it into practice what he hears, whereas the foolish man, he doesn't put it into practice. Saul knew what Samuel said as he spoke the word of God earlier to him, but Saul did not obey what Samuel said.

He didn't do what he was told to do. He went out and he did his own thing when time was running out. And I think that's where so many of us fall down when it comes to the issue, well, many issues. Fellowship with other Christians, membership of a church, personal relationships with others, aspiring to discipleship, and so on and so forth. So often, we do our own thing at the end of the day, and we do it in our time scale.

people. It's so easy. Do you not think, thinking coming along in the car, so easy to be a hearer, but not a doer of the word of God, and that was King Saul's downfall.

Sometimes kings and people in authority, they think they're in a different category to other people. Maybe pastors think they're in a different category to other people in their pride and presumption.

[31 : 16] They forget there's another pastor, there's another king, to whom we're all accountable, including them in the latter part of the 16th century before he became James I of England.

James VI of Scotland was notoriously rude when attending worship services. I don't know whether you know that or not, but Ralph Davis, Dale Ralph Davis draws our attention to this.

On one occasion, he was seated in the gallery James VI with several courtiers when Robert Bruce, not Robert the Bruce, but Robert Bruce, a faithful minister of the Word of God, got up to preach.

In his usual form, James VI began to talk to those around him during the sermon. On hearing the chatter, Bruce the minister, he's in the pulpit, he paused.

He went silent. And as he did so, James VI suddenly fell silent in the gallery. Bruce resumed speaking, but as he resumed to speak, so did James VI.

[32 : 25] Bruce ceased speaking a second time, and so did James VI. Bruce began to speak again, but when James VI committed the third offence, by starting to speak all over again, Bruce turned and he looked at the king and he addressed James VI personally and directly with these words, and I quote, It is said to have been an expression of the wisest of kings that when the lion

roars, all the beasts of the field are quiet.

The lion of the tribe of Judah is now roaring in the voice of his gospel, and it becomes all the petty kings of the earth to be silent.

I'd love to have been a fly on the wall, see the expression on the face of James VI. But the truth of the matter is, even kings can forget that they are but subjects of a greater king.

In fact, do we not read in Isaiah that we are all grasshoppers? So what is a judge? He's a grasshopper with a wig on. And what is a king?

Well, he's just a grasshopper with a crown on. He's nothing more than that. Kings can ignore the king of kings' decrees and commands and laws, either obnoxiously and blatantly like James VI, or quietly and subtly like Saul.

[33 : 52] In any case, Samuel primarily charged Saul with disobeying the word of God. Saul had behaved like a fool.

he behaved as though God had not spoken. He behaved as though God did not exist. That's what he did. So what have we been trying to do here?

Examining the facts, the first seven verses or so, what was going on, that skirmish. And then we've been looking at Saul playing the fool what he did in the light of all that was happening and time running out.

But time doesn't stand still. Just one final thing. Examining the facts, playing the fool, now facing the future.

The punishment was severe. Read the chapter. There are several things to be noted as we bring all this to a speedy conclusion. In the first instance, Saul's dynasty will not continue in the future.

[34 : 57] He's told that. He would not enjoy an ongoing dynasty. His children would not succeed him in terms of sitting on the throne of Israel. Verse 14 makes that clear. All that privilege would be taken from him because we know that God had already chosen, even at this time, his successor in the person of David, the son of Jesse, who is said to be a man after God's own heart.

At least he was most of this time. David will be someone who is prepared to let God's will, as spoken by God's prophet at the time, to be a guide. At least, most of the time.

It may sound, as you read this, it may sound a stern judgment on King Saul. No dynasty to come.

That may sound rather severe. And it would be easy to think that Samuel has overreacted to events that have just happened.

After all, Saul did wait, let's face it, he did wait for the seventh day. But the point being made is that Samuel is at pains to establish and underline once and for all that Israel's monarchy, of all monarchies, is radically different from every other monarchy on planet earth.

The God of Israel is a precisionist. If he says through his prophet, I'll be down in seven days to offer a sacrifice, he'll be there.

[36 : 25] You may have to wait until two minutes to midnight, but he'll be there. In the nation of Israel, the Lord is king above any earthly king on the throne of Israel, and obedience to him is paramount.

Not just when it comes to time, but when it comes to practice. And that's what was lacking in King Saul. God's king should not function independent of God's word, independent of God's prophet, and even independent of God himself.

Another thing that Saul would have to live with in the future is the fact that his troops, read the passage when you go on, they're demoralized, they're depleted, there's only a few hundred of them left standing.

They hide themselves in caves and holes and rocks and tombs and systems in order to save their skins. Not only did those who followed Saul begin to tremble, but as an army they're completely demilitarized and completely demoralized.

If you read on, I know I'm not supposed to do this, but towards the end of the 13th chapter, this is for next week, if you read on, the only people left who were found to have a sword or a spear in their hands were Saul and Jonathan.

[37 : 41] The others didn't have any military weapons at all. And the picture is painted of an Israel that hadn't even a blacksmith within its borders. The people working on the land had to go down to the Philistines in humiliation in order to ask to have their agricultural implements, their plowshares, their mattocks, their pickaxes, their axes and their sickles, get them all sharpened.

It was Philistine domination ratcheted up all over the country and total humiliation for the nation of Israel. But by far the greatest tragedy is there in verse 15, where he is of Samuel leaving Saul, note that, going up to Gilgal, while the rest of the people following Saul are said to be going after Saul, away from Gilgal to Gibeah of Benjamin.

What's that telling us? From that day on, Saul is on his own. He's deprived of the word of God. He's no longer in the close company of God's spokesman. There's no word from God being spoken in his ears.

He's without the guidance of God. He's without the presence of God. He's without the provision of God. He's without the protection of God. Now, it's one thing for someone to be distressed.

[39 : 17] It's another thing to be all alone in that distress and to have no anchor that will hold when the storm comes. That's Saul. You read the text, you can sense there's an air of hopelessness around, the despair over everything and everyone.

And yet, there is a rainbow of hope for the nation of Israel. In spite of all that's happening here, and it's in black and white, it's in pen and ink, it's in the Bible. There is a ray of hope. The future doesn't look too good on the ground at the present time here, but there are still the promises and there are still the plans and there are still the purposes of a God who is sovereign.

The God, this God, has already chosen a king after his own heart to reign in the person of David, the son of Jesse, and his day will surely come in God's time, with God entering into a covenant with him to establish a kingdom that will last, how long?

Forever. And a way beyond that, of course, a thousand years or so later, there's the fulfilling of that promise in the coming of great David's greater son in the fullness of the times.

The faithful, obedient king, the king of kings. He'll be born in Bethlehem and at precisely the right moment. God is a precisionist. When his public ministry begins, he'll announce that the kingdom of God is at hand.

[40 : 34] He will set up an everlasting kingdom that will never be shaken. He will be the fulfillment of all the promises, all the types, all the shadows of the Old Testament. And he would then go on to accomplish all that had been agreed in the councils of eternity by the God who is one in three and three in one.

He'll destroy the works of the devil. He'll be given the name Jesus. He'll save his people from their sins. He'll live a perfect life and then he'll conquer death. He'll be raised on the third day and he'll show himself alive by many infallible proofs.

He'll ascend to the glory from whence he had come and he will send the Holy Spirit to indwell his people. He'll make a promise that one day he'll personally return in power and great glory to consummate all things and bring in his kingdom in all its fullness.

What you and I have been looking at tonight, if I can put it to you just in conclusion, is just a tiny little slice of history. history.

His story. History. History. And here we are. And we're called to play our part in his story.

[41 : 46] I think the dominating message that we need to take away with us is found in those words. Just let the Lord search your heart as he needs to search mine.

What have you done? Are any of us in this building tonight, is there even one person you've done something and you know you should never have done it? There's hope.

There's repentance. Seek the Lord and you'll know his forgiveness. The other thing I want to just leave with you is this. Saul's failure, yes, and David's failure because he's going to fail as well, and everybody else's failure, including yours and mine, will never mean that God's a failure because his plans will be fulfilled.

They will never be frustrating. So we're at a wee bit in history. Just there's the timeline. Here's Saul. Here's David. Here are we.

We're along here. What's God requiring of us? The same as he required of them. When I speak to you, do what I say, and my blessing will be your portion.

[43 : 01] Father, thank you for the Bible. Thank you for these historical sections. Sometimes they're quite difficult to unpack and unravel, but there's so many valuable lessons to learn from them.

We just ask that you'll help us to be wise men and wise women. We've heard. Don't let it go in one ear and out the other.

Help us to be the kind of people who put it into practice so that when the storms come, we know you'll be there. And we pray in Jesus' name.
Amen.