

The Endangered Kingdom

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Preacher: Philip Copeland

[0 : 00] We're going to turn now to our Bibles. We're going to read together and Phil Copeland is beginning a little series this evening in the first book of Kings. So that's in the Old Testament and you'll find it there after the books of Samuel, the four chronicles, first and second kings.

We're in first Kings and in the first chapter and we're going to read the whole chapter together beginning at first one.

Now, King David was old and advanced in years and although they covered him with clothes, he could not get warm. Therefore, his servant said to him, let a young woman be sought for my Lord, the king, and let her wait at the king and be in his service.

Let her lie in your arms that my Lord, my king might be warm. So they sought for a beautiful young woman throughout all the territory of Israel and find Abishag the Shunammite and brought her to the king.

The young woman was very beautiful and she was of service to the king and attended to him. But the king knew her not. Now, Adonijah, the son of Haggith, exalted himself, saying, I will be king.

[1 : 22] And he prepared for himself chariots and horsemen and 50 men to run before him. His father never at any time displeased him by asking, why have you done this?

And so, he was also a very handsome man and he was born next after Absalom. He conferred with Joab, the son of Zeruah, and with Abiathar, the priest, and they followed Adonijah and helped him. But Zadok, the priest, and Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, and Nathan, the prophet, and Shimei, and Ray, and David's mighty men were not with Adonijah.

Adonijah sacrificed sheep, oxen, and fattened cattle by the serpent's stone, which is beside Enrogel. And he invited all his brothers, the king's sons, and all the royal officials of Judah.

But he didn't invite Nathan, the prophet, or Benaiah, or the mighty men, or Solomon, his brother.

Then Nathan said to Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon, Have you not heard that Adonijah, the son of Haggith, has become king, and David, our lord, does not know it?

[2 : 35] Now therefore, come, let me give you advice, that you may save your own life and the life of your son Solomon. Go in at once to King David and say to him, Did you not, my lord, the king, swear to your servant, saying, Solomon, your son, shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne?

Why then is Adonijah king? Then while you are still speaking with the king, I also will come in after you and confirm your words. So Bathsheba went to the king in his chamber.

Now the king was very old, and Abishag the Shunammite was attending to the king. And Bathsheba bowed down and paid homage to the king. And the king said, What do you desire?

She said to him, My lord, you swore to your servant by the Lord your God, saying, Solomon, your son, shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne. And now, behold, Adonijah is king, though you, my lord, the king did not know it.

He sacrificed oxen, fattened cattle, and sheep in abundance, and has invited all the sons of the king, and abides the priest, and Job, the commander of the army. But Solomon, your servant, is not invited.

[3 : 46] And now, my lord, the king, the eyes of all Israel are on you, to tell them who shall sit on the throne of my lord, the king, after him. Otherwise, it will come to pass, when my lord, the king, sleeps with his fathers, that I, my son Solomon, will be counted offenders.

While she was still speaking with the king, Nathan, the prophet, came in. And they told the king, Here's Nathan, the prophet. And when he came in before the king, he bowed before the king with his face to the ground.

And Nathan said, My lord, the king, have you said, Adonijah shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne? For he's gone down this day, and sacrificed oxen, fattened cattle, and sheep in abundance, and has invited all the king's sons, the commanders of the army, and Abiathar the priest.

And behold, they're eating and drinking before him, and saying, Long live king Adonijah! But me, your servant, and Zadok the priest, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and your servant Solomon, he has not invited.

Has this thing been brought about by my lord the king, and you have not told your servants who should sit on the throne of my lord the king after him? Then King David answered, Call Bathsheba to me.

[5 : 04] So she came to the king's presence and stood before the king. And the king swore, saying, As the lord lives, who has redeemed my soul out of every adversity, as I swore to you by the lord, the God of Israel, saying, Solomon, your son shall reign after me, and he shall sit on the throne in my place.

Even so will I do this day. Then Bathsheba bowed with her face to the ground, and paid homage to the king, and said, May my lord King David live forever.

King David said, Call to me Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada. So they came before the king, and the king said to them, Take with you the servants of your lord, and have Solomon my son ride on my own mule, and bring him down to Gihon.

And let Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet there, anoint him king over Israel. Then blow the trumpet, and say, Long live King Solomon. You shall then come up after him, and he shall come and sit on my throne, for he shall be king in my place.

And I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel, and over Judah. And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada answered the king, Amen. May the Lord, the God of my lord the king, say so.

[6 : 31] As the Lord has been with my lord, the king, even so may he be with Solomon, and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord King David.

So Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites went down, and had Solomon ride on King David's mule, and brought him to Gihon.

There Zadok the priest, took the horn of oil from the tent, and anointed Solomon. And then they blew the trumpet, and all the people said, Long live King Solomon.

And all the people went up after him, playing on pipes, and rejoicing with great joy, so that the earth was split by their noise. And Anijah, and all the guests who were with him, heard it, as they finished feasting.

And when Joab heard the sound of the trumpet, he said, What does this Shabroor in the city mean? While he was still speaking, Behold, Jonathan the son of Abiathar the priest came, and Adonijah said, Come in, for you are a worthy man, and bring good news.

[7 : 43] Jonathan answered Adonijah, No, for our lord King David, has made Solomon king, and the king has sent with him Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites.

And they had him ride on the king's mule. And Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, have anointed him king at Gihon. And they have gone up from there, rejoicing, so that the city is in uproar.

This is the noise that you have heard. Solomon sits on the royal throne. Moreover, the king's servants came to congratulate our lord King David, saying, May your God make the name of Solomon more famous than yours, and make his throne greater than your throne.

And the king bowed himself on the bed. And the king also said, Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who has granted someone to sit on my throne this day, my own eyes seeing it.

Then, all the guests of Adonijah trembled, and rose, and each went his own way. And Adonijah feared Solomon.

[8 : 58] So he arose and went, and took hold of the horns of the altar. And then it was told Solomon, Behold, Adonijah fears King Solomon, for behold, he has laid hold of the horns of the altar, saying, Let King Solomon swear to me first that he will not put his servant to death with a sword.

And Solomon said, If he will show himself a worthy man, not one of his hairs shall fall to the earth. But if wickedness is found in him, he shall die.

So King Solomon sent, and they brought him down from the altar. And he came and paid homage to King Solomon. And Solomon said to him, Go to your house.

Amen. May God bless to us his word. God, please do have your Bibles open to 1 Kings, chapter 1. Can you hear me? Are you coming through okay? Good. Excellent. Well, when we, the church, come into a time of difficulty, maybe even a time of real danger, and the Lord seems to be so distant and absent, how are we to respond?

[10:29] Well, 1 Kings, chapter 1, I believe, will help us. Before we get into this chapter, let me just give you some introductory points about this new study. that we're in 1 Kings.

Let me say a few things. Firstly, 1 and 2 Kings. Well, when we, the church, come into a time of difficulty, maybe even a time of real danger, and the Lord seems to be so distant and absent, how are we to respond?

Well, 1 Kings, chapter 1, I believe, will help us. Before we get into this chapter, let me just give you some introductory points about this new study that we're in in 1 Kings.

Let me say a few things. Firstly, 1 and 2 Kings, don't be distracted by the fact that there's two books. Actually, they're one book. They're one book. The only reason there's two books is because when they were originally written, they didn't all fit in the one scroll, or it would have been too big to have fitted on the one scroll.

So they're really to be studied as one book. And that's what, God willing, we're going to be doing bit by bit over the next maybe few years, maybe. Depends how often I'm called up to preach here.

[11:46] Secondly, what's in these books? Well, funnily enough, they're about kings. But in the immediate context, the narrative of kings continues on from 1 and 2 Samuel with the closing of the life of David and the rise of Solomon.

And the books cover a colossal amount of history, vital history. Almost over 400 years is covered. And really, you can split the whole book of kings into three big chunks.

In chapters 1 to 11, the focus is on the rise, the rain, and the sad demise of Solomon. And you could really call these chapters a glimpse of glory. Because that's what you see when you look at the reign of Solomon for the most part.

The golden years for Israel as a nation was their pinnacle point of maturity. However, sadly, it doesn't last long. Solomon's heart is seduced away by his many foreign wives.

And he ends up worshipping their many foreign gods. And it's a disaster for the people. And that moves us on to the next big section. From 1 Kings 12 to 2 Kings 17, you have a section all about the divided kingdom.

[12:58] Because as a result of Solomon's rebellion and covenantal unfaithfulness to God, the people of Israel are torn in two. And up in the north, you've got the nation of Israel, 10 tribes.

And in the south, you've got two tribes in the nation of Judah. And as you read through that section again and again, you see that the kings that are put in place in these nations, while some of them are fairly good, on the whole, it is a really dire demise.

And as you come to the end of that section and into the big final section of the book, you see that the nation of Israel in the north, they've drifted so far away from the Lord because of their king's unfaithfulness, they end up in exile in 2 Kings 17.

And in the last chunk of the book from 2 Kings 18 to 25, it's all really focused on the southern kingdom of Judah. And you see their kings, some of them are good, two in particular are good, they try their best to reform the nation, but it's too late.

By the end of the book, Judah as well are carried off as a just punishment from the Lord into exile in Babylon. So in summary, you have these three sections, a glimpse of glory under Solomon, a divided kingdom, and then you have Judah's dire decline.

[14:23] And the last thing I just want to say by way of introduction is maybe having said all that, you started to switch off because you think this is just dull history. It is not.

This is the living word of God. This is not a boring and dull history book. This part of the Bible is God's living and active word. And as the Apostle Paul says in Romans 15, it's been written for us. That is for you and me at this stage in salvation history to teach us to instruct us. There's loads of things I could see here, but let me just give you some of the things that we will learn if we give our hearts to a diligent study of the book of Kings.

Some of them are very obvious, I know, but let me say them to you anyway. If we study Kings diligently, we will get to know the Lord our God better and better. For Kings, primarily, is God's book about God.

We will learn precious truths about his character, about his dealings, about what he's like, the truth, about his sovereignty, his righteousness, his holiness, his just judgment. Also, his grace and mercy and tender compassion.

[15 : 35] We will also get to know the power of the Lord's word as we see it rise up kings and thrones and then also, like that, bring them down again to nothing.

We will also find that kings, just as we've been singing there in that hymn, will correct, rebuke, train in righteousness. In other words, this book has plenty to teach us about how to live the Christian life today as those people who live in God's greater kingdom, the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And just on that note, as we study the book of Kings, we will see that again and again, it is a book that points us forward to him, to Jesus Christ and his perfect kingdom.

For example, when we look at Solomon and his reign and all of the great blessings that came upon his people because of his wise ruling, that is a little picture of the Lord Jesus, the greater king who will reign and rule, who does reign and rule in a wiser and greater way than even Solomon and brings greater blessings to all of those who bow the knee to him.

Now, of course, as I say, there are many more reasons why we should study kings, but we must get to the text. Let's not waste any more time. Let's look at chapter one in three sections this evening. And as we go through, we'll think about the implications for us today as God's people.

[17 : 00] Here's the first section. Verses one to ten, we see the kingdom in danger. The kingdom in danger. A few years ago now, I watched a movie and the start of this movie takes place in a little kind of local shop, food shop.

And the camera focuses in on this little, very frail and fragile old lady. And you feel absolutely heartbroken as you watch her slowly shuffle up to the counter and she struggles to handle her coins and hand over the money and count them out on the counter for the man behind the cash desk to pay for the milk that she's buying.

And as the film goes on, you begin to realize that this elderly lady is actually Margaret Thatcher during the final years of her life.

She's unrecognizable. Apparently, she was called the Iron Lady during her time. But not so at the end of her life.

She's a shadow of her former self. And that's very much the scene that we read of in verses one to four. It is roughly 970 BC and David, King David, the great king, the great warrior, the man after God's own heart who ruled over his people for many years is very old, frail, fragile.

[18 : 23] He's lying in bed and he cannot get warm. And his servants make this pretty bizarre, I think, pretty unsavory attempt to warm him up with the beautiful Abishag.

But nothing happens. And he is unfit to rule, it seems. And his life seems to be petering out. And therefore, the kingdom that he's in charge of looks weak and frail.

And in verse five, a real threat rises up. And that real threat is the threat of bad leadership. Look at verse five.

Now Adonijah, the son of Haggith, exalted himself, saying, I will be king. So as David lies dying, his eldest surviving son at this point, Adonijah, decides to claim the position of king for himself.

He doesn't wait for his father's words or more importantly for the Lord's words. He says, I will be king. He lifts himself up. He also surrounds himself with a kingly entourage of big chariots, horsemen, 50 big guards to run in front of him wherever he goes.

[19 : 32] And I take it as we go through the verse, I take it here that in verse six, the author is actually painting him in a very negative way. Verse six, the author seems to be saying he's a product of lousy parenting.

David never disciplined Adonijah as he should have. And we're also told that he was not just handsome. This guy was not just handsome. He was very handsome. Very handsome indeed. And if you know your Bible well, that should be ringing all sorts of alarm bells in your head. People who are very handsome in first and second Samuel are often terrible leaders. Think of Saul, first Samuel nine, Eliab, first Samuel 16, Absalom, second Samuel 14.

These men were all described in the same way, physically impressive, very handsome. And yet the three of them were all rejected or were lousy.

lousy leaders didn't take the position of king. And Adonijah, our author implies, belongs to that class. In other words, here is a man who should never, ever be king over God's people.

[20 : 45] And yet he manages to sneakily gather together some big names to support him. In verse seven, we're told that he recruits the support of Joab, who of course was the commander of the army, and Abiathar the priest.

And in verse nine, what he does is he sets up this party to celebrate him becoming king with the rest of his brothers, every one of them except Solomon, and all the royal officials of Judah.

And they come to this feast with this self-appointed king. And at this point in the narrative, if you didn't know how the story went on, you would be sitting there feeling the tension.

You're thinking to yourself, will this ghastly man take David's throne? It will be a disaster for God's people. David is lying here on his deathbed. He knows nothing about any of this.

Well, we will see what happens in just a moment. But let's pause and think about just two implications that rise out of this text for our lives as the people of God today.

[21 : 50] Here's the first implication, and it's this. ungodly leaders are a real serious threat to God's people. And you can see that throughout the whole of Scripture.

You can see it through the whole of the Book of Kings. We'll come up against this team again and again and again. And you can see it outside of the Bible through church history. Bad leaders are never a good thing for the people of God.

And also, I take it there's a spillover implication for all leaders in God's church today. I take it this passage encourages us to utterly shun the same heart attitude as Adonijah.

It's so interesting. When you read all the commentaries, I read a lot of commentaries on 1 Kings over the last few months. Some of them I will never touch ever again. But in every single commentary I looked at, every single commentator compares Adonijah to Diotrephes, who is mentioned in 3 John 9.

What does it say about him? It says, he loved to put himself first. Lust for power, lust for position are not the marks for any in Christian leadership amongst God's people.

[23 : 04] I think this should challenge every single one of us in the church family who has been given some sort of a position of authority from the pastors to team leaders, to growth group leaders, release the word leaders, to parents, to husbands.

You are the God-appointed heads of your household. We are not to share this power-hungry, me-first heart attitude of Adonijah. Instead, we are to share the mindset of the Son of Man who came not to be served, but to serve, to give his life as a ransom for many.

But the second implication that rises out of these verses is this. If we, the church, face a time of peril, if we come under threat today, then we must not panic.

Friends, we must not panic. For this text in 1st King is actually nothing new. It's just one of the many texts throughout the Bible where the kingdom of God comes up against real danger and yet the kingdom never fails.

Listen to Dale Ralph Davis on this point. He says this, The kingdom often passes through such times as this. Here in David's nearing death is a transition point in the kingdom of God.

[24 : 20] One of those crucial situations where a wrong move, a false step, a stupid turn could spell disaster. How frequently today we are deluged with various crises that the church faces.

We hear of all the perils that she must meet in these dark days. He goes on to say, I do not wish to downplay these crises or this crisis element in 1st Kings but the church has repeatedly triumphed in such times.

Such times where she's had to walk along the edge of disaster. And he says this, Apparently there is a mighty hand that steadies the church.

And friends, as we move on to look at the next section of this chapter together, that is what we're going to see or rather, that is what we're not going to see.

An unseen hand. The author doesn't tell us explicitly about the Lord's activity in all this. However, his activity is always assumed sovereignly at work, quietly in the background, using the faithful actions of his servants to bring his plans and purposes in place.

[25 : 33] So let's look at this section, this next section of the text. Verse 11 to 40. We've seen the kingdom in danger but now we see the kingdom defended.

So in verse 9, Adonijah's parties in full swing. He and his supporters are feasting away together and they're gathered at this place called Enrogel which was a spring, that was about 700 yards south of the city of David.

We'll come to see why that's significant in a short time. But not everyone is at that party. Did you notice? Not everyone. In verse 11, we meet one of the men who was not invited and that's Nathan. Nathan, the faithful prophet of the Lord that he used time and time again to take God's word to David. He hears about what Adonijah has done and he decides of his own volition that something must be done to alert the uninformed king who is lying in his deathbed.

And so verse 11 to 14, Nathan approaches Bathsheba. Please look at verse 11. Now Nathan said to Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon, have you not heard that Adonijah, the son of Haggith, has become king and David, our Lord, does not know it?

[26 : 53] Now therefore, come, let me give you advice that may save your own life and the life of your son Solomon. So Nathan is deeply aware of what is at stake here.

He's aware of what will happen or could probably most definitely happen to Solomon and Bathsheba should Adonijah take the throne. Adonijah will wipe out any threat to his throne.

And so Nathan tells Bathsheba to go at once to King David and to speak to him. Just look at verse 13. Go in at once to King David and say to him, Did you not, my Lord, the king, swear to your servant saying, Solomon, your son, shall reign after me and he shall sit on my throne?

Why then is Adonijah king? Now in 2 Samuel there is actually no mention whatsoever of David making such a vow to Bathsheba.

But go home later on and read 1 Chronicles 22, 9 and 10. 1 Chronicles 22, 9 and 10. You will see there that Solomon is clearly announced to be God's choice as king, the Lord's choice and that David had spoken freely about it to other people.

[28 : 09] And at some point in the past, it's not mentioned in Samuel, David must have told Bathsheba about this vow. And you know, I actually think that Adonijah knew about it as well.

I think he knew that David had his eyes set on Solomon as a successor and that is why back in verse 10 he didn't invite Nathan or Solomon to his party. So anyway, in verse 14, Nathan finishes off his master plan with Bathsheba and he says, Bathsheba, once you're done speaking to King David, reminding him of his vow, I will come in immediately as another witness and I will affirm what you have just said.

I will confirm that everything you've said is true. And so they go, they act, they don't sit back passively and they put the plan in place.

They kick it into action and it runs like clockwork from verse 15 to 27. Bathsheba goes to David and she tells him about Adonijah and she reminds David of his vow.

And as soon as she finishes speaking, Nathan comes in and confirms everything that Bathsheba has said is true. And so by the end of verse 27, David is no longer ignorant, he's in the know and he realizes the kingdom is in danger and his faithful servants are in danger too.

[29 : 36] And miraculously, I think miraculously, David springs up back to life again. In verse 28 to 37, he is a man full of gusto.

I think what we see here as the great Bob Fowl says is the true David on display here once again. A man so full of zeal for the Lord's honor and for the Lord's covenant promises that he springs up into immediate action.

One commentator puts it like this. Back in 2 Samuel 7, God was the one who would establish David's dynasty and yet, the assurance of that promise seems to call for a component of human responsibility.

God had promised David a kingdom that would last forever and David dare not be apathetic towards what would happen to it. So that's what drives David here.

Zeal for the kingdom. In verse 28, he calls immediately for Bathsheba who seems to have gone away for a bit. He comes back in. He reaffirms his vow to her. Yes, Solomon will be king.

[30 : 41] He swears by the Lord. And then he calls together an anointing team consisting of Zadok, Nathan, and Benaiah and gives them strict instructions of how to go and anoint Solomon to ensure his ascension up to the throne.

And in verse 38 to 40, boom, boom, boom, it happens rapidly. Zadok, Nathan, and Benaiah, they follow David's instructions perfectly. It runs like clockwork again. Perfectly.

And Solomon receives all of the authentic anointing treatment unlike Adonijah. And he's set up officially and publicly revealed to be the new king of Israel and Judah. He is publicly seen to be the Messiah at that time. And he will take the throne of his father, David, once David dies.

And in verse 39, the streets are so full of noise. Everyone is celebrating. My dad would love this detail. There were loads of bagpipes there. My dad is looking at me in horror right now.

[31 : 46] My dad loves bagpipes. There were bagpipes in the streets. There were people shouting with joy, screaming, praise the Lord. Here is the king. Well, before we look at the final section, let's just pause and think about the implications of this for our lives today.

And again, I want to mention two things. Firstly, I think there is a real lesson for us when we look at Nathan. Everything, humanly speaking, humanly speaking, everything hinges on him and his decision to take action, to defend the kingdom by informing Bathsheba and then going with her to speak to King David.

Humanly speaking, if Nathan hadn't carried out that faithful service, then he would have been in disaster. We saw a similar thing this morning, didn't we? If those early supporters, Ananias and those unnamed brothers in the text and Acts hadn't supported the apostle Paul, then Paul wouldn't have been encouraged to go on in his ministry.

We see the same thing here. Human responsibility really matters. And humanly speaking, Nathan, what he did was key. He didn't panic. He didn't sit back passively.

But he sought to defend the kingdom. And I think there's a real lesson in this for us today as servants of the Lord. Lord, when we, the church, face a time of peril or danger, then we are not to sit back passively, shrink away, and think, let's let go and let God.

[33 : 20] No, we are to carry on walking by faithful obedience to the Lord, seeking to make decisions that will bring about the good of the kingdom and the good of the church. Listen to how one writer puts it.

It's very good, this. I couldn't better this, so I thought I'd just read it to you. He says, I do not think this text is grabbing me, by my jumper and telling me to be a Nathan. But surely it implies that one's service in Christ's kingdom has a real dignity about it.

And that one can never tell how crucial one's servant's labor may prove to be. Or to use a quote from the great Bob Fowle, we are not Nathan, but we have, anyone?

Nathan's God. And he is the God who often uses the faithful acts of his servants to advance his kingdom and to bring about his plans and purposes.

And friends, as I said earlier, even though this passage here doesn't make explicit mention of the Lord's activity, he is the one who is sovereignly at work through all of this. God has made no spectacular, miraculous intervention in human affairs here.

[34 : 34] He had not struck down Adonijah with a sudden illness, nor had he sent a bolt of lightning from heaven to spoil his celebration, but rather, at the right time, at the right situation, he had simply inspired the minds of his servants and their thoughts to move them, and he also gave them the exact right words required to turn the events round.

It's a way our God works. Isn't that so encouraging? It should be. That should thrill us to see that actually this is how the Lord can use our obedient acts of service.

So remember that and let it spur you on to trust in him and to walk faithfully with him more and more. The second thing that rises out of this section of the text for us to reflect upon again is this. Humanly speaking, the fate of the kingdom is what stirred David to action. And as servants today, I think it's good for us to ask these questions of our own hearts.

What stirs us to life? What catches our zeal? If I was to honestly look back over the past year of my life, what is it that has stirred me to action?

[35 : 50] What is it that I have been passionate about and had gusto? Again, listen to Dale Ralph Davis. This is from his great book on kings. Speaking about this very point, he says this, Is it our career?

Is it our car in the repair garage that still hasn't managed to be diagnosed and fixed? Is it my inability to find the right curtains for living room windows? Is it getting the grades that I need at school to get into university?

Or, do the first three petitions of the Lord's prayer move, grip, and stir up my heart? He goes on to say this, What stirs us reveals us.

And must we not confess that frequently only our comfort zone has the ability to ignite any real zeal in us? Friends, as individuals and as a church, I don't think this zeal is something that we can drum up within us.

This is not a moralism point I'm trying to make here. This is something that the Lord gives us. And so I think as individuals and as a church, if we feel zeal is lacking in our hearts for the Lord's kingdom, let's look to the Lord and ask him to work in our hearts in the same gracious way that he clearly worked in King David's heart.

[37 : 14] Give me zeal for the kingdom and to serve. Well, briefly, let's look at our final point this evening. So far in the narrative, we've seen the kingdom in danger, then we've seen the kingdom defended, and in verse 41 to 53, we see the kingdom's demands, which is submission.

So in verse 40, up in the city, remember the streets are full of bagpipes, full of celebration, everyone is shouting at the top of their lungs with great joy that King Solomon is now the new anointed king who will take over from King David.

Meanwhile, in verse 41, several hundred yards away, Adonijah and his party guests, they're sitting there tucking into their puddings at the end of their meal, and all of a sudden they hear this music coming and this noise coming from the city.

And this is almost comical, this scene. Joab, he says to everyone, what on earth is that noise about? What is going on in the city? And in verse 42, he's not even finished asking his question, that it just so happens that Jonathan arrives.

Jonathan, the son of Abiathar, the priest. And just look at verse 42, look at what Abiathar says. And I think as he says this, he's full of pomp. He says, ah, Jonathan, my son, yes, come in, you may enter into this royal party.

[38 : 45] You are a worthy man to enter our presence. Come on, come in, tell us the good news. I reckon Abiathar was expecting Jonathan to say that the news about Adonijah had hit the city, and that's why they were rejoicing.

Well, just imagine the shock and the horror that must have flooded into their hearts when Jonathan replied, no, I'm not stepping one foot into this building because I don't want to be part of this party. Why? Because Adonijah is not the king. King David has made Solomon king. And Jonathan tells them everything that happened, every detail is mentioned.

He doesn't miss out any detail at all. And what do all of Adonijah's guests do in response to this gospel message that the Lord has set his king in place?

What do they do in response to the gospel that they hear? Verse 49, they tremble. They tremble in fear. And like that, they exit the building.

[39 : 46] They leave. They scarp. They go home because they do not want to be seen to be rebelling against the Lord's true anointed king. They flee from Adonijah.

And just look what happens to him in verse 50. He is so terrified of God's true king, king Solomon that he grabs onto the horns on this altar, probably the altar where he carried out the sacrifices mentioned back in verse 9.

And he cries out that he will not move from that spot until king Solomon swears that he will not put him to death by the sword. And just notice Solomon's reply, verse 52.

I think it's a reply that is full of promise for his reign. It is a good sign that his reign is going to be good. It is a very discerning, measured, and wise reply.

Verse 52, Solomon said, If he will show himself a worthy man, not one of his hairs shall fall to the earth. But if wickedness is found in him, he shall die.

[40 : 51] In other words, Solomon says that if Adonijah surrenders and submits to him as God's true king, he will have nothing to fear. But if Adonijah rejects God's anointed, if he rebels and seeks to set himself up as a rival king, well that's a different matter.

That is wickedness, and it's punishable by death. And he will face the wrath of God's anointed if he does that. And in verse 53, Adonijah seems to comply.

He pays homage to the king, he submits. And so Solomon sends him home. But the question that you're left asking at the end of the chapter is, how long will that last?

How long will that last? And tragically, it doesn't take long for Adonijah to show that his submission to Solomon is purely superficial, purely skin deep.

Come back next Sunday night, and God willing, we will look at 2 Kings 2, and you'll find out what happens. But friends, that is the demand of God's kingdom. God's kingdom demands of all of us,

every single person, even today, the demands have not changed.

[42 : 11] Submission, willful submission under God's anointed king. That's what it means to be a Christian, to come under the rule of King David's greater son, the Lord Jesus Christ, the risen Lord of all.

That's what we're looking at again this morning. The one who's been raised from the dead, to be Lord over all people, everywhere. And the gospel proclaims to us, if you submit to him, if you surrender your life to him and trust in him, love him as your king, live under his rule, stop rebelling against him, and turn your life to him, you will have nothing to fear, oh, you will have nothing to fear at all.

But if you turn away from him now, if you reject him, if you refuse him, then it's a different matter completely.

You will face him as an enemy when he comes to bring in his kingdom in all its fullness. I remember hearing that at a camp as a young man, who was about, well, not a young man, I was a teenager, 16, and the camp person giving a talk, I can't remember his name, the summer camp, he said, you and I will meet Jesus, whether we want to or not.

Everyone will, we all will, and the Bible begs with us all, it's what we looked at this morning, repeatedly, turn to him now, trust in him as your savior now, so that you'll be greeted as a friend, as a faithful servant on the last day.

[43 : 43] All those who do that will be accepted into his perfect, eternal kingdom forever. forever. But reject him now, and friends, it will be a different matter on that day.

So friends, have you bowed to him? Have you submitted to him? I pray that you will, if you haven't done so already. Well, amen.

Let's bow our heads, and I'll pray for us. Almighty God, gracious heavenly Father, we praise you that your mighty hand has guided your church throughout all the ages, and that your kingdom is truly unshakable.

we marvel at the way in which you have worked, even through flawed, flawed servants, and through faithless servants many times.

But we praise you for the Lord Jesus Christ, our King, and we ask that you will fill our hearts with great zeal to serve him and his kingdom all the days of our lives.

[45 : 04] we ask that you will use our efforts as a church to advance the gospel of your kingdom here in this city and beyond. Lord, you don't have to use our deeds, you don't have to use our efforts, but we ask that you would, and we pray this in Jesus' name and for his sake.

Amen.