

FIRST SAMUEL

Lesson 38: Chapter 22: The Longsuffering of God; Space to Repent.

24 March 2017

God is able to use evil people and even enemies of His people to accomplish His work. This doesn't excuse those whom God used; they also will be judged for their wickedness. We'll examine the heart conditions that led to the terrible acts committed against God's people, specifically a priestly family. Then we'll observe how the end result was a fulfillment of God's promise to remove that priestly family.

Most importantly, we'll see that God's promises are sure, no matter how much time passes before their fulfillment. What we choose to do with that space of time will mean the difference between eternal damnation or eternal life.

Vss. 6-8 A person who is not right with God will be miserable; their life will become meaningless. Material things will not satisfy. You'll envy those who are blessed by God and hope for their destruction.

Vss. 9-23 An immigrant from among God's enemies will gladly assist in destroying God's people. A government not ruled by God, will set ungodly people (Doeg) in leadership positions. These leaders will take actions with no respect or regard for God or for the truth.

An unjust government will seek to eliminate anyone *perceived* to be in opposition to their rule, with no regard for justice, due process, or human rights.

GOD'S PROMISES ARE SURE

1 Sam. 2:27-33

Why didn't God save His priests? Because this was the fulfillment of God's promise. Ahimelech descended from Eli, whom God promised to cut off completely (1 Sam. 3:12).

110 years had passed, but what God promises, He will certainly fulfill—in His time (Num. 23:19). The passing of time may convince some that God didn't mean what He said about judgment. Therefore, they'll live wicked lives, believing that they won't be judged (Ecclesiastes 8:11).

Principle: if a government delays judgment against wicked men, others will see that sin is not judged and they'll not fear judgment. Sin will continue and will escalate.

Parents: when you warn your children of consequences for disobedience, but then you don't follow through with the necessary punishment, you are contributing to an unruly society that doesn't fear judgment or the consequences of sinning.

God is not willing that any should perish (2 Peter 3:9). God will be merciful and longsuffering and patient with you, giving you space to repent, but eventually your time will run out; and when the time comes for judgment, there will be no remedy (**Prov. 29:1**).

“God is not a man, that he should lie” (Numbers 23:19). When God speaks of certain death, damnation, and judgment, you’d better figure out what His remedy is, because He’s telling the truth.

Second Peter 3:1-11

Scoffers (those who ridicule you, your faith, and your Bible) will point to the Lord’s delayed return (vs. 4) as proof that there’s no judgment of God. Their scoffing is proof that the Bible is true!

People who don’t know the truth of God’s word have chosen to ignore it (vs. 5). The word of God is powerful; by it, the world exists. And by it, the world will perish as it did in the past. Until that time, God patiently waits for men and women to repent and receive salvation through the blood of Jesus Christ.

Don’t let the delay convince you that there is no judgment. Let it make you grateful for God’s mercy and grace as He gives you space to repent.

Habakkuk 2:1-11

This chapter contains a long list of sinful acts perpetrated by unjust men. One would wonder why God didn’t do something about all that sin. The answer is in verse three. God has **“an appointed time”** for His judgment, but don’t mistake the delay for a false promise. **“It will surely come, it will not tarry.”** Just **“wait for it.”** God didn’t lie. When judgment comes, it will come so quickly, you won’t have time to repent. Now is the time to repent.

Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon (Isaiah 55:6-7).