

Title: Beware of the Antichrists
Scripture: 1 Samuel 22:6-23
Series: God, the True King!

1. Introduction:

- a. In our last sermons, we spent much time speaking about our sufferings as individuals.
- b. Today, we look at the church's persecution and God's faithfulness to His bride!

2. Verses 6-8: Many antichrists will come: Now Saul heard that David was discovered, and the men who were with him. Saul was sitting at Gibeah under the tamarisk tree on the height with his spear in his hand, and all his servants were standing about him. (7) And Saul said to his servants who stood about him, "Hear now, people of Benjamin; will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards, will he make you all commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds, (8) that all of you have conspired against me? No one discloses to me when my son makes a covenant with the son of Jesse. None of you is sorry for me or discloses to me that my son has stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait, as at this day."

- a. Our passage opens ominously. Saul, sitting under a tree, has his spear in his hand. He is brooding, festering with animosity. He clutches his spear, willing to let it fly against both friends and family. We have seen him do it twice to David and once against Jonathan.
 - i. Brothers and sisters, I want you to immediately tremble before God as we observe the deep darkness of a man that God has abandoned. The once great king with so much potential is now a demonically controlled man. The Bible is very clear. This is where willful disobedience leads. This is the final destination of those that would fight the sovereign God. It is a horrific scene. We learn that those false converts that once proclaimed Christ would eventually hate Him and His church!
- b. The Bible speaks about men like Saul. We read in **1 John 2:18** Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour.
 - i. **Commentary**: John insists that many antichrists have already come. There is Antichrist, and there are antichrists.

Throughout history, antichrist figures prefigure the full embodiment of evil to come.

- ii. We find that a telling characteristic of an antichrist is their willingness to oppose, enter into conflict with, and seek to crush God's people. They are at war with God and therefore hate His church.
 - iii. This is where we find King Saul. In this chapter, the veil slips away, and Saul is seen for the antichrist figure he is. Saul constantly hunts the chosen man of God, and in our passage, Saul murders God's priests and their families.
- c. Tormented by an evil spirit, we find that King Saul has descended into paranoia.
- i. He says, **"...all of you have conspired against me? No one discloses to me when my son makes a covenant with the son of Jesse. None of you is sorry for me or discloses to me that my son has stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait, as at this day."**
 1. Saul accuses his best men, David and even Jonathan of treason.
 - ii. Do you see it, Beloved? Those that reject God and His gospel become obsessed sinners who constantly look over their shoulders!
- d. At this point, there is no reasoning with Saul. There is no pulling him back from the precipice of evil and destruction. Saul has gone too far in His rejection of God and therefore, he is given up to a depraved mind.
- i. We read about such individuals in **Hebrews 6:4-6** For it is impossible, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, (5) and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, (6) and then have fallen away, to restore them again to repentance, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt.
 1. Saul serves as a warning against apostasy. Saul is an example to those that would play loose with obedience and to those that would seek their own glory instead of the glory of God.

3. Verses 9-13: The Abandoned are easily deceived: Then answered Doeg the Edomite, who stood by the servants of Saul, “I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, (10) and he inquired of the LORD for him and gave him provisions and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine.” (11) Then the king sent to summon Ahimelech the priest, the son of Ahitub, and all his father's house, the priests who were at Nob, and all of them came to the king. (12) And Saul said, “Hear now, son of Ahitub.” And he answered, “Here I am, my lord.” (13) And Saul said to him, “Why have you conspired against me, you and the son of Jesse, in that you have given him bread and a sword and have inquired of God for him, so that he has risen against me, to lie in wait, as at this day?”
 - a. If Saul is an antichrist, then Doeg is his false prophet.
 - i. We were informed of Doeg’s presence at Nob when David arrived. Doeg had witnessed the proceedings from afar. An evil man by nature, he took this as an opportunity to advance himself in the eyes of Saul.
 - b. He reports the truth about the facts but not in the context in which they happened.
 - i. The priest had inquired of the Lord on David’s behalf, given David a supply of bread, and armed David with a sword.
 - c. However, in reporting the facts, Doeg accuses the Priests of treason, of being aligned with David. He does not report that David deceived the priests.
 - i. Half-truths and facts without context are always sin. **God is light, and in Him, there is no darkness at all.**
 - d. Beloved, see how easy Saul believes that the entire priestly class has committed treason. A man, under satanic rule, is illogical.

4. Verses 14-15: God’s people are constantly misrepresented: Then Ahimelech answered the king, “And who among all your servants is so faithful as David, who is the king's son-in-law, and captain over your bodyguard, and honored in your house? (15) Is today the first time that I have inquired of God for him? No! Let not the king impute anything to his servant or to all the house of my father, for your servant has known nothing of all this, much or little.”
 - a. Ahimelech’s reply shows his complete innocence. He had helped David as the trusted servant of the king.

- i. David is the king’s son-in-law, captain of the bodyguard, and honored soldier. Why would any priest not help a member of the royal family?
 - ii. Ahimelech proclaims his innocence and that of the priests. The priestly class knew nothing of the strife between David and Saul.

- 5. Verses 16-17: God’s people are constantly persecuted: And the king said, “You shall surely die, Ahimelech, you and all your father's house.” (17) And the king said to the guard who stood about him, “Turn and kill the priests of the LORD, because their hand also is with David, and they knew that he fled and did not disclose it to me.” But the servants of the king would not put out their hand to strike the priests of the LORD.
 - a. Despite Ahimelech declaring his innocence, Saul sentences him and all the priests to death. This judgment is unjust because Saul has not proved his case against Ahimelech.
 - i. This decree of Saul invalidates his claim to the throne. How could an unjust judge be king over Israel?
 - b. Notice Saul’s men refused to carry out his orders: They refused because of the unjustness of the sentence the king gave and the sacredness of the priests of the Lord. Here the king's servants placed their fear of the Lord above their fear of the king.

- 6. Verses 18-19: The world hates Christ and His people: Then the king said to Doeg, “You turn and strike the priests.” And Doeg the Edomite turned and struck down the priests, and he killed on that day eighty-five persons who wore the linen ephod. (19) And Nob, the city of the priests, he put to the sword; both man and woman, child and infant, ox, donkey and sheep, he put to the sword.
 - a. Nobody except Doeg obeys the king and murders the priests. Doeg has no morality to prevent him from killing the priests of God.
 - i. **Commentary**: Force yourself to look at the scene: terror and bloodbath at Gibeah, butchery, and annihilation in Nob.
 - b. Our passage reminds us of the reality of the church’s suffering at the hands of the many antichrists that are in the world.
 - i. **Revelation 2:12-13** “And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: ‘The words of him who has the sharp

two-edged sword. (13) “I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. Yet you hold fast my name, and you did not deny my faith even in the days of Antipas my faithful witness, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.

- ii. Beloved, God knows where we live. Our job is to trust in God amid such suffering, hold **fast** to God’s **name**, and never **deny the faith**.
- c. Saul treated Nob like some enemy city that had been put under the curse of destruction. Our question is, why?
 - i. Because Saul hated David, who is a picture of Christ, he hated any who were aligned with David, a picture of the church.
 1. **John 15:18-19** “If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. (19) If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.
- d. It is interesting to note that Saul carried out the total destruction of the priests’ city, including killing **eighty-five persons who wore the linen ephod, and in the city of the priests, he put to the sword; both man and woman, child and infant, ox, donkey, and sheep.** And yet he failed to obey God when it came to the destruction of the enemies of God, the Amalekites.
 - i. **1 Samuel 15:2-3** Thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘I have noted what Amalek did to Israel in opposing them on the way when they came up out of Egypt. (3) Now go and strike Amalek and devote to destruction all that they have. Do not spare them, but kill both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.’”
 - ii. **1 Samuel 15:18-19** And the LORD sent you on a mission and said, ‘Go, devote to destruction the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are consumed.’ (19) Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD? Why did you pounce on the spoil and do what was evil in the sight of the LORD?”
 - iii. **Commentary**: here is Saul, Destroyer of Israel. Saul joins an infamous company. He stands among the ranks of antichrists in the church’s history.
 1. Pharaoh: who killed the Hebrew babies
 2. Jezebel: who killed the prophets of God
 3. Athaliah: who almost killed the entire line of David and, therefore, the savior.

- iv. When men reject God and His “justice,” human beings can become cruel, totally destroying innocent people and at the same time becoming tolerant toward evil.
- e. **Side note:** Beloved, we cannot read about the brutal and ghastly murders of the priests without remembering the prophecy made some 40 to 50 years earlier in **1 Samuel 2:30-33**. Therefore the LORD, the God of Israel, declares: ‘I promised that your house and the house of your father should go in and out before me forever,’ but now the LORD declares: ‘Far be it from me, for those who honor me I will honor, and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed. (31) Behold, the days are coming when I will cut off your strength and the strength of your father's house, so that there will not be an old man in your house. (32) Then in distress you will look with envious eye on all the prosperity that shall be bestowed on Israel, and there shall not be an old man in your house forever. (33) The only one of you whom I shall not cut off from my altar shall be spared to weep his eyes out to grieve his heart, and all the descendants of your house shall die by the sword of men.
 - i. **Commentary:** Do not be offended, Beloved. God is not the author of evil. We place the blame where it belongs on Doeg and Saul, an antichrist. These two men are entirely responsible, but it is also true that these events fulfill the Word of the Lord.
 - ii. When we put these two realities together, we get one truth by which we can take great comfort. Even in opposing God’s kingdom, God’s enemies only bring to pass God’s word! God’s enemies prove the truthfulness of His Word. In their hostility against Him, they carry out His will.
 1. **Acts 2:22-23** “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know— (23) this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.
 2. **Acts 4:27-28** for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, (28) to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.

7. Verse 20: The mercy of God: But one of the sons of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped and fled after David.
 - a. So Abiathar escapes. This priest of God will be associated with David for the rest of his life. He will eventually share the position of the high priest with Zadok during David's reign. But, later, Solomon will banish him "from being priest to God" and sent him to Anathoth, because he would side with Adonijah.

8. Verses 21-23: The consequences of Sin: And Abiathar told David that Saul had killed the priests of the LORD. (22) And David said to Abiathar, "I knew on that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul. I have occasioned the death of all the persons of your father's house. (23) Stay with me; do not be afraid, for he who seeks my life seeks your life. With me you shall be in safekeeping."
 - a. Saul becomes the destroyer of the priesthood, while David is its protector.
 - i. We will learn that Abiathar brought the ephod with him. Therefore, the true priesthood and the divine word of God have officially been transferred from Saul to David. God's word would guide David. By killing the priests, Saul continues to seal his own fate.
 1. Through this tragedy God's saving plan is materialized step by step, even though the participants are not aware of it
 - b. David accepted his responsibility when he was informed of how Doeg killed the priests.
 - i. A believer's sin, although forgivable, has consequences. David's sin is no different.

9. **One final note**:
 - a. **Commentary**: How both men treat the priests of God stands in direct opposition to one another, especially the final words of each man.
 - i. Saul's last words to the priest, "**You shall surely die!**"
 - ii. David's last words to the priest, "**With me, you shall be in safekeeping.**"

- b. Abiathar's escape is no small thing. It is a sign of how God always preserves His people amid terrible destruction. That the church is still around today is also an example of this truth.
 - i. Does Pharaoh kill the Hebrew infants? God saves one to lead them out of slavery!
 - ii. Does Jezebel kill the prophets of God? God reserved seven thousand who would never bend the knee to an idol!
 - iii. Does Athaliah murder the line of David? One of God's faithful servants will hide and protect the last baby, ensuring the rise of the Savior!
 - iv. Does Harod kill all the infants in Bethlehem? One of those toddlers will escape saving humanity!
 - 1. Beloved, we are not immune from the world's butchery, but the world can never wipe out all of God's servants.
 - 2. The Lord does not promise that we will never die for the kingdom of God but that the kingdom of God will never die.

10. Benediction:

- a. **Matthew 6:10** Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Public Reading of Scripture
2 Corinthians 4:7-14