

1 Samuel 23

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[0:00] I hope everybody's had a good week. Things are going well for you and things are moving along. We're going to be in 1 Samuel chapter 23. 1 Samuel chapter 23 this evening.

1 Samuel chapter 23 as we continue to make our way through the Word of God and particularly the book of 1 Samuel in the Old Testament. So 1 Samuel chapter 23. We will look at the entire 23rd chapter and our time together this evening.

Not a very long chapter, 29 verses, but we will look at it in its entirety. Let's open up with a word of prayer and then we'll get right into the text with one another. Lord, I thank you so much just for allowing us to gather together.

We thank you for this place, this time, the opportunity. Lord, and the people that we have around us to fellowship with and encourage us in this midweek service. Lord, we thank you for every opportunity we have of opening up the Word of God and we pray that as we open it up, Lord, that you would speak to us.

That you would speak to our hearts. You would speak to our minds. You would help us to see the truth of Scripture. Not just for the collection of information, but Lord, as we always ask, we ask that it would bring application to our daily lives.

[1:10] Lord, that the truth would find hands and feet to live it out. That it would find a life willing to be shaped and molded by it. Lord, we pray for those working with our children and youth in the back.

We ask that you be glorified, Lord Jesus, in every aspect of this building. We pray you continue to lead and guide each one of us. And we ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. 1 Samuel chapter 23.

Putting it in proper context, we want to remember David is on the run. He has fled from the presence of Saul. Saul is pursuing him, going after him.

By this time, he has already went into the land of the Philistines. He got recognized. I don't know what he was thinking. He went to the hometown of Gath, which was the hometown of Goliath. He took Goliath's sword with him when he went into Gath. The leaders of Gath kind of took him before the king. And he had to fake insanity, if you remember. And then he finally was able to get out of the land of the Philistines and came back into at least the land of Israel.

[2:12] And he was there, and his family is gathered together with him. Some kind of outcasts of society have gathered together with him. And all those that are disgruntled with the way Saul is running things, which, by the way, probably was a good position to be in, to be disgruntled because of the way Saul was running things, have kind of collected to him.

So he's got his group of 600 men there. His family's with him. He's taken his mom and dad over to Moab. He's got them to put them there. But his brothers are with him. These men are with him. The priests of Nob have already been slain because of Doeg.

And all this accounts. So we're just putting it in the right context because it helps us kind of stand on some things when we look at the 23rd chapter. You also need to be reminded that there are many psalms.

We will see one of them this evening that coincide with these events that have taken place. There are psalms when Saul sent men to stand outside of David's house and to bring him to himself. There's a psalm that is penned in light of that. There's the psalm that was penned when David had to fake insanity and God delivered him. There's the psalm that's penned when David hears of Doeg's treachery and slaying the priest of Nob and actually destroying the whole city there.

[3:22] So there are many psalms that coincide with this time and we see how the greatest praise is often flowing out of the darkest moments. We see that in particular in the life of David and we see it even in our own lives.

But here we are in 1 Samuel chapter 23 and we'll read the entire chapter and then we'll get right into it. Then they told David, saying, Behold, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah and are

plundering the threshing floor.

So David inquired of the Lord, saying, Shall I go and attack these Philistines? And the Lord said to David, Go and attack the Philistines and deliver Keilah. But David's men said to him, Behold, we are afraid here in Judah.

How much more then if we go to Keilah against the ranks of the Philistines? Then David inquired of the Lord once more. And the Lord answered him and said, Arise, go down to Keilah, for I will give the Philistines into your hand.

So David and his men went to Keilah and fought with the Philistines. And he led away their livestock and struck them with a great slaughter. Thus David delivered the inhabitants of Keilah. Now it came about when Abiathar, the son of Ahimelech, fled to David at Keilah, that he came down with a neophyte in his hand.

[4 : 30] When it was told Saul that David had come to Keilah, Saul said, God has delivered him into my hand, for he shut himself in by entering a city with double gates and bars. So Saul summoned all the people for war to go down to Keilah to besiege David and his men.

Now David knew that Saul was plotting evil against him, so he said to Abiathar, the priest, bring the ephod here. And David said, O Lord God of Israel, your servant has heard for certain that Saul is seeking to come to Keilah and destroy the city on my account.

Will the men of Keilah surrender me into his hand? Will Saul come down just as your servant has heard? O Lord God of Israel, I pray, tell your servant. And the Lord said, he will come down.

Then David said, will the men of Keilah surrender me and my men into the hand of Saul? And the Lord said, they will surrender you. Then David and his men, about 600, arose and departed from Keilah and they went wherever they could go.

When it was told Saul that David had escaped from Keilah, he gave up the pursuit and David stayed in the wilderness and the strongholds and remained in the hill country in the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul sought him every day, but God did not deliver him into his hand.

[5 : 40] Now David became aware that Saul had come out to seek his life while David was in the wilderness of Ziph at Horesh. And Jonathan, Saul's son, arose and went to David at Horesh and encouraged him in God.

Thus he said to him, do not be afraid because the hand of Saul, my father, will not find you and you will be king over Israel and I will be next to you. And Saul, my father, knows that also.

So the two of them made a covenant before the Lord and David stayed at Horesh while Jonathan went to his house. The Ziphites came up to Saul, it could be a saying, is David not hiding with us in the strongholds of Horesh on the hill of Hekila, which is on the south of Jeshimon?

Now then, O king, come down according to all the desire of your soul to do, the desire of your soul to do so and our part shall be to surrender him into the king's hand. Saul said, may you be blessed of the Lord for you have had compassion on me.

Go now, make more sure and investigate and see his place where his haunt is and who has seen him there for I am told that he is very cunning. So look and learn about all the hiding places where he hides himself and return to me with certainty and I will go with you and if he is in the land, I will search him out among all the inhabitants of Judah.

[6 : 59] Then they arose and went to Ziph before Saul. Now David and his men were in the wilderness of Maon in the Arabah to the south of Jeshimon when Saul and his men went to seek him, they told David and he came down to the rock and stayed in the wilderness of Maon and when Saul heard it, he pursued David in the wilderness of Maon and Saul went on one side of the mountain and David and his men on the other side of the mountain and David was hurrying to get away from Saul for Saul and his men were surrounding David and his men to seize them.

But a messenger came to Saul saying, hurry and come for the Philistines have made a raid on the land. So Saul returned from pursuing David and went to meet the Philistines.

Therefore they called the place the Rock of Escape. Literally means slippery rock. David went up from there and stayed in the strongholds of En Gedi. Here we see what is going to lead up to the first time that David will spare Saul's life which is what takes place in the cave in En Gedi.

But we see really the height of David's fleeing and pursuit and his time in the wilderness. The land that is described for us where David is the land of that region in the Araba is a very desolate land. Many people would say if you go to that land you'd be surprised that anybody would live there let alone for almost 10 years. It is the land that goes a little south of Jerusalem and goes towards the Dead Sea.

[8 : 31] There are pockets of it which is what En Gedi is there's a spring there. There are pockets of it that are very prosperous but then most of it is desolate. David is literally in the wilderness.

Now not a wilderness like we would think of with trees and forests and all this undergrowth a wilderness of barrenness. He's in the land of barrenness. He's in the land of fleeing. He's in the land of desperation.

But here we see in the text before us the character traits of a king. The character traits of a king. Just like when we get to the account of David and Goliath the comparison is really not so much a comparison between David and Goliath because Goliath is a Philistine.

We don't expect Goliath to possess what we call traits that are desirable. Goliath is the enemy of the people of God and we expect him to behave as the enemy of the people of God.

From the very beginning Goliath taunts the people of God and God. He makes a mockery of the people of God and the God that they claim to serve. So the comparison of that battle is not so much a comparison of David and Goliath because we know ultimately that there is no enemy who can resist and stand before God and mock him and get away with it.

[9 : 45] God will be victorious. The true comparison of that battle is really a comparison between David and Saul who's going to stand up and fight the enemy of God. And it is there that we begin to see why God had led Samuel to anoint David in the chapter that preceded that battle to be the next king.

What was in the heart of David and it was a desire to bring honor to the name of God. Here when we begin to see these wilderness years of David we further see comparisons of David and Saul. And we see what the character traits of a king should look like because we see it in what Saul does and doesn't do and we see it in what David does and doesn't do. We see traits that are desirable. They are traits that are befitting of the king. They are traits that are possessed by our king the king of kings and lord of lords and they are traits that actually should be applicable and found within the followers of the king.

And we begin to see these in David in this chapter in particular. The first trait that we see of the king is a trait of concern. And it is striking in its context and that's why we opened up with that context.

[11 : 01] We wanted to be sure that at any moment we can take any part of scripture and we can pull that part of scripture out and we can read a cool story and we can read an interesting story and we can gain truth from that story but it is only when we read the text in context that we really get the weight of the text.

Right? God put his word together intentionally and he has led the men of God to write the word of God through the spirit of God so that we may understand what's going on as God is moving in the lives of these people.

And when we read it in context when we were told in the first verse then they came evidently David had spies he's a military leader he's a military man he has people that go around his land then they came and told him that the Philistines had attacked one of the cities that was on the border Kelaï is a border town between the land of Philistia and the land of Israel.

Now it is a secure town in that it has double bars and gates on its walls but its threshing floors are outside the city gates. Therefore when the Philistines attacked they would wait until the threshing time so that they could attack those that were working in the threshing and they could take the food and they could pillage and plunder as they desired.

And they were right there on the border. Now remember when God came and told an individual that he would have a son or actually told his wife that they would have a son that son's name was Samson right you remember Samson that Samson would begin to deliver God's people from the hand of the Philistines all the way back to the book of Judges right that Samson would begin to deliver the wording there is particular that he would begin to deliver one of the responsibilities given to Saul by Samuel when Saul is anointed king in Ramah when he's looking for his father's donkeys and Samuel encounters him Samuel tells Saul God has called you to deliver his people from the hand of the Philistines Saul never does that what is striking is when we read this text and then they came and told David that the Philistines had attacked

[13 : 21] Kila David said I think we should go now the reason this is striking is because David had just recently come out of the land of the Philistines at the risk and concern of his own life so concerned was he that he had to fake insanity to get away he wrote a psalm about it that he despaired even of his own life that he was concerned and he cried out for God for deliverance I don't know what he was thinking we don't know what he was thinking we just know that when he left

Nob he grabbed the sword of Samson and he went into the hometown there and he hung out in the land of Philistines and he got in trouble and he didn't find security until he got back into the land that God had given his people we call it the promise land but those past concerns and those past fears don't seem to be factoring in to David's thoughts at the present because David is told that the Philistines had attacked the land of Keilah so David prays and the prayer is not

God you need to send somebody to take care of that the prayer is God do you want me to go take care of that because see there's concern there's concern because the inhabitants of that city are Jewish individuals and it is the king's responsibility to provide and protect the citizens notice that if David is hearing about it surely Saul hears about it we don't see an army or military presence coming from the individual of Saul but we see David's concern David prays about it and God says yes I want you to go there and fight against the Philistines so David goes and tells his men the 600 men I'm sure he has some trained warriors with him and we know that David is a very good leader because we understand that and when we read of his mighty men that they become very mighty men they do some awesome things we read about later on

David has a way of leading individuals and here's one of the great leadership qualities we see David goes before them and says gentlemen I've prayed about this we know that the Philistines have attacked the city God has told me we need to go down there and then his men kind of hesitate just a moment because they say well wait a minute David we're afraid here how much more will we be afraid over there and one of the striking things that we notice in this passage is it says and then David cried out to the Lord God again because see David's concern wasn't just reserved for the people over there David was also concerned for the people that were with him I want to make sure that I'm doing the right thing I want to make sure I heard God right because what I feel like God has told me to do is that we need to go over there and deliver this city from the hand of the Philistines but his men were afraid his men were concerned his men questioned that and rather than getting upset at them about their questioning rather than saying well we shouldn't be afraid he says okay well let's ask God again and he cries out to the Lord God again and says should we go and the Lord answers and said yes I want you to go and it's after that second affirmation David says okay we're going to go see because there is the character trait of concern he's concerned about those that are in need and he's also concerned about those with him we see it all the time and something that we need to remind ourselves in any capacity of leadership in the workplace or the home or the church life wherever it is any capacity of leadership and God has called every one of us to be a leader of some sorts an influencer of others of some sorts it is not enough just to be concerned about the need that's over there we need to also be concerned about the people that are with us that we're supposed to take over there

I tell you in leadership circles there's really one or two type of leaders there's the leader that will kind of say okay come on and encourage everybody to come along with them and sometimes delay too much and then there's the leader that kind of tends to be more my natural tendency so I have to remind myself of this it is the one who just grabs his sword and pushes ahead and blazes and said I'm going y'all better follow right that's not necessarily a strong suit sometimes it's needed but it's not always a strong suit because then you're you're not walking wisely with the people around you but we see you this trait that's in David and this is a trait of concern it's concern so the first character trait we see of the king is a trait of concern the second thing we see is caution which seems to be kind of odd but it's it's needed there's caution David goes and the Lord uses him and his mighty men or he uses him and his men of 600 to wage a great battle against the Philistines and they deliver not only the city but they also plunder the

Philistines they take loot from them they take their animals and they really they plunder them and and it's really a great battle it's a great victory and they're there and he's just delivered the the city of Keilah he's delivered them from certain loss financial loss from physical loss from personal loss right he's been there and he's delivered them and the word gets around him because Saul hears that David's there and Saul's like hey okay we can go there we've got him because if he shuts himself in this city he can't get out there's double bars and double gates we understand that so he's putting himself in this place and notice where it says Saul Saul was going to ransack the city right so all doesn't seem to be concerned about the inhabitants of the Jewish people he's just concerned about self motivation he wants David so he's going to go attack the city in his own kingdom to get the man that's not concern right and so David hears about this David says well he's certainly he's coming so this is where we see his caution by this time Abiathar has come to David you remember Abiathar

he's the only one that survived the slaughter of the priest of Nob his father was Ahimelech who had been the priest that gave him

[19:17] David the sword and the bread there so Abiathar has now made his way there this is where we introduced in the last chapter that Abiathar comes to David now we're told in this chapter exactly where he came to him he came to him at Kelah the city so that's where he's at so when he shows there now look at this again we see the sovereignty of God God brings a priest into David's presence who has just fled a city that has been ransacked by David's enemy right which is cause for caution because even though David has come in the victor and delivered the city his very presence is endangering the city because David went to Nob the entire city of Nob was ransacked and if you need a you know a reminder of that here's Abiathar who comes in he's there so David hears that Saul is coming so now he doesn't have to just pray he brings the ephod out which is he lets the priest be the priest and they want to ask God he asked God a question no is Saul coming will he attack the city and will the people of the city hand me over right now natural thought is well

I have just delivered this city surely they'll take care of me careful don't put too much trust in man there's a first level of caution right don't put too much trust in man since I'm their deliverer surely they will take care of me but he's concerned he doesn't want his presence to be the end and the demise of that city but he also doesn't want to be present and then they'll hand him over so he asked and God says yes all these things are going to happen Saul is coming and the people will hand you over so he flees which again is another sounding thing the reality that David was bold enough to go wage war with the Philistines but yet fled from the presence of Saul why because we have to know when God has called us to fight and when God has called us to flee there's caution he didn't go in self-confidence he didn't go in self-assurance he didn't go with well if we can win this battle over here surely we can attack that I mean who is Saul you know he didn't do that we understand we'll see later on he spares

Saul's life twice that we know of but we see here the caution that he has he didn't make an assumption when we read the scripture especially the Old Testament we see God's people get in trouble because they make assumptions since I was victorious over here surely I will be victorious here we see it as soon as they come into the promised land right they march around the walls of Jericho the walls of Jericho fall down they go in they completely demise the city and again and then there's another city right after the city of Ai which is a very small city and they all we don't need we won this one against this well fortified city we don't need everybody over there we can go over there there's no quit there's no crying out to God there's no God what's the battle plan it's like just send a few men over there and then they they defeat it at Ai why because they made an assumption assumptions are dangerous grounds for the people of God David here just won a great victory a victory that is probably highly unlikely that his men were afraid to go to but yet he makes no assumption because he operates in caution and the caution is I would rather walk in faithful obedience to what

God calls me to do than to stand in my own strength and assume that I'm going to be the victor so he waits and he hears you need to leave so he leaves and he flees the city so he goes into the wilderness and says that Saul quit pursuing him but then we get this great text here that tells us in verse 13 then David and his men about 600 arose and departed from Kelai and they went wherever they could go right so they just went wherever and when it was told Saul that David had escaped from Kelai he gave up the pursuit and David stayed in the wilderness in the strongholds that is caves and rocks and all this stuff and remained in the hill country of the wilderness of Ziph and I love this and Saul sought him every day but God did not deliver him into his hand okay Saul sought him every day he had people that would tell him oh he's in Kelai or he's over here in Ziph he had people that would tell him right he had spies he had people that were there we know David had them as well but Saul was a very cautious man this is why Samuel had to have a reason to go into the city of David to anoint

David he knew that Saul was watching every day Saul is searching for him the enemy is on the prowl every day but God did not deliver him the reason I love it is because the very next verse which brings us to the third thing not only is there the trait of concern and caution there's also the third trait of confidence because it says and then Jonathan went to him it tells us now David became aware that Saul had come out to seek his life every day by the way he's seeking him while David was in the wilderness of Ziph and Horesh okay so now David knows the enemy is coming after me every day it's really a defeating time right it's kind of a belittling time okay well now no

longer am I just out here not only I'm in isolation now I'm really in threat he's come out to me David became aware of that and Jonathan Saul's son arose and went to David at Horesh and encouraged him in God I love the simplicity of this every day Saul searches for David and can't find him but Saul's son Jonathan goes straight to him he said well yeah it makes sense well it only makes sense because God did not let Saul find David but he led

[24 : 51] Jonathan to David because confidence comes from fellowship of like-minded individuals at a time when fear is probably setting in and David knows full well that Saul wants to kill him he knows full well that he's pursuing him every day he's living his life on the run he knows that Saul searching for him every day and it's only the providence of God that's keeping Saul from finding David at that moment Jonathan comes in and it says encourages him in God some translations say strengthens his hand right he reminds him of God's purposes for him he says David my father is not going to kill you you will rule Jonathan says and I will stand beside you now Saul does not find him David does rule but Jonathan never stands beside him but he encourages him in God in a moment he needed it why because the encouragement of like-minded brethren is needed in desperate moments this is why we read in the book of Hebrews forsake not the assembling together of one another it's not just because these pews need someone to hold them down so they don't run off it's because when we walk in difficult seasons and we're in a difficult moment and when we are reminded sometimes that the enemy is pursuing us every single day which by the way our enemy's name is not Saul but it starts with a name Satan and he does pursue us every single day in this wilderness we call life and when we are reminded of the reality that it is only the providential care and concern of

God that keeps him from really destroying us and when we are reminded of that reality we need other believers to come beside us and encourage us and then we need to go beside other believers and encourage them Jonathan comes to him and encourages him and renews his confidence in what God has called him to do so he moves forward confidently this is a wonderful thing the one another is in scripture right it's a wonderful thing and I love the simplicity of the statement that Saul couldn't find him but Jonathan walked straight to him it's not that Jonathan knew more than Saul is that Jonathan was walking in faithfulness that Saul was not we don't see anybody coming beside Saul and encouraging him right if we're comparing we see people pandering to Saul but we don't see anyone coming beside you you know Saul what you're doing is right we don't see that we see people pandering to him and wanting you know blessings from him they won't they want what he's got because he's the king and they want to be enriched by him but what we don't see is anybody coming to him and supporting him the way we see David being supported he's got the responsibility of all these men he's got the responsibility of his concern he knows his life's at jeopardy and he knows the life of everybody around him is at jeopardy and God brings Jonathan to encourage him what a wonderful thing what a wonderful thing the

Billy Graham Evangelistic Association if you if you have a good chance to go to the Cove in North Carolina you need to do it and you go to the Billy Graham training centers there and you go down the bottom floor of the Billy Graham training center one of the things that Billy Graham always promoted and I think the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association still does it when when Billy Graham did his crusades he always would go to the local church and call him to be an Andrew be an Andrew be an Andrew right called Andrew ministry and it's a big thing down there in the bottom of it like that and it's reason because every time you open up the New Testament and you encounter Andrew he is bringing someone to Jesus that's all you ever see Andrew doing in that final week of Christ when there's these Greeks that have these questions right Andrew's by the way the one that brings the boy with his act lunch to Jesus and Jesus blesses and feeds the five thousand when the last week of Christ the passion week of Christ people have all these questions and they go and ask Andrew and Andrew's like you know what I don't know the answer to that but come on I can tell you who we can find and they bring them to Jesus right so Andrew's is always a person he doesn't do it we don't see him doing much else in scripture it's all we see is every time somebody comes to Andrew he's like well let me tell you about Jesus let me take you to him right so just be an Andrew it's an encouragement right that's that's kind of what Jonathan was in the Old

Testament is he went to David and said let me remind you what God's going to do and what's not going to happen and he gives him confidence to move forward which leads us to our final thing and that is consistency and I alluded to this when I started but it's consistency David needed to hear that because the Ziphites were about to pander to Saul again the Ziphites were about to turn now

David's down here in the Arabi he's in the wilderness the desolate area and the city of Ziph is the closest ones to him the Ziphites hear that he's there so they're watching him so they go to Saul and say hey we know where David is David's down here and Saul's like oh that's wonderful great praise the Lord thank you for letting me know I appreciate your concern for me if you'll go watch him a little bit closer tell me where all of his haunts are tell me where he hangs out tell me how he moves and I'll be down there directly so Ziphites do that and they go before Saul and Saul comes down there and this is where we get him going around the rock and again it's amazing God called David to pursue the Philistines but he uses the Philistines to take Saul away from David because God has a way of using nations and people as he wants to so this is where Saul and his men go down here and they get David around this rock and they're chasing this picture right they're going around and the word picture is that Saul had split his company and David is getting encircled he's going to get trapped on the back side of the mountain because the men of Saul are coming around and at that moment word comes to Saul that the Philistines have attacked so Saul calls off the pursuit so we have this the rock of escape what's amazing is there's a psalm written about that time Psalm 54 to be exact and I'll turn there you don't have to turn there if you don't want to Psalm 54 is a psalm which David pens and if you read the heading and the introduction to them which I encourage you to do when you get to the book of Psalms it says for the choir director on stringed instrument a mascal of David when the Ziphites came and said to Saul is not David hiding himself among us right after Jonathan came and encouraged him and here's the psalm very short psalm save me oh God by your name and vindicate me by your power hear my prayer oh God give ear to the words of my mouth for strangers have risen against me and violent men have sought my life they have not set God before them say lie behold God is my helper the Lord is a sustainer of my soul he will recompense the evil to my foes destroy them in your faithfulness willingly I will sacrifice to you I will give thanks to your name oh Lord for it is good for he has delivered me from all trouble and my eyes look with satisfaction upon my enemies one thing that we find whether it be Saul sending people to wait outside [31 : 51] David's house to get him and he's had to let down through the window or David happen to go to the land of Philistia and faking insanity to get out or of him hearing of Doeg the Edomite seeing him at Nob and therefore slaying the priest of Nob and ransacking the whole city or when the Ziphites go and they betray him and they hand him over to Saul the consistent thing we see is praise from David many of these Psalms especially in this grouping in the 50s if you read them come from these times the difficult times the hard times when he's getting chased around the rock his response is a response of praise he declares his trust in God many of them are similar because the circumstances were the same the people the players in the game had just changed names but his life is in jeopardy he's being pursued he's wrongfully being accused all these things and many other things to say but rather than self-vindication he goes to God exaltation right I'm gonna praise you oh

God I trust in you you are the redeemer and the vindicator of my soul you are the one who fights my enemies and we see this this is why when Saul is literally put into the hand of David he doesn't kill him because the consistency is a trust in God not a confidence in self the consistency is praising and trusting God's got it all in control rather than having to fight to make sure it happens he's consistent one thing that we can say about Saul who's actually sitting on the throne at this time is he was very inconsistent sometimes he wanted David playing the harp next time he wanted David speared to the wall sometimes in the same setting now I know David has some setbacks and some failures we have Psalms that match those two right Psalm 51 a penitent Psalm of when David did the unthinkable brokenhearted but it's good to see him even in his highs and his lows even in his great moments in his weak moments there's a consistency of crying out to God and this is what God calls us to do right he calls us to live lives of character traits of consistency it's not enough to trust him in the great times but that we must consistently trust him in the difficult season consistently trust him in the dark seasons and consistently walk in obedience with him in every season there's concern there's caution there's confidence and there's consistency these are the traits of a king these are the traits of our king and these are the traits that he's called us to have as we rule with him and we sit with him upon his throne as the Bible tells us in the book of Revelations 1st Samuel chapter 23 thank you my brothers so