

MAY 11

1 Samuel 10-11

1 Samuel 10

V. 1 is probably an emotional moment for Samuel since he had judged and cared for Israel so long. If Saul was a man of faith, this would be a great confirmation for him to follow God boldly.

Vs. 2-8 These signs were meant to increase Saul's faith and give him the motivation to take personal ownership of the charge that was given to him. We have seen some meekness in Gideon, so what we'll see will look like no surprise, but then we'll be surprised later.

V. 6 The fact that Saul is turned into another man might mean the change was for that moment, or he was given some special gift for organizing and ruling Israel, the same way Solomon was given wisdom. I know I'd be overwhelmed if God told me to direct and lead a country, so the Lord must have given Saul a sense of understanding that made organizing Israel seem like a piece of cake.

Vs. 7-8 Notice that in all of the signs of confirmation, going to Gilgal was part of the charge God gave to Saul. It is as if to say, "Just as the other signs will be confirmed, go down to Gilgal and wait." Waiting can be the hardest thing to do, but the signs that preceded the waiting were to help Saul wait confidently. Remember, when Israel came through the Jordan with Joshua, they came to Gilgal and renewed the covenant with God. Since that place had been very important in Israel's history, God is telling Saul that this will be an important meeting.

Vs. 9-13 And it all took place. Notice that the Spirit rushed upon him. This is what the Spirit did to Samson too. Unfortunately, the next time Saul prophesies, it will be to keep him from attacking David. This same saying will be quoted.

Vs. 14-16 This seems like humility, but it will bear a nasty kind of fruit later. Saul didn't have "root" in himself and this deep insecurity will cause great problems later. God is going out of His way to make Saul feel confident.

Vs. 17-19 This is a solemn moment in Israel's history. The attempt for God to rule over the people on the basis of their faith has failed. Compare that to the church. The Lord somehow governs the church without a human king. He is the king. Now Israel will be given a king according to their craving.

Vs. 20-24 God wisely had Samuel use the Urim and Thummim to choose the king. This way no one could say that Kish paid Samuel under the table.

The only thing I would mention here is the attitude of Saul. In v. 16 his silence is noted. In v. 22 he is hiding where the baggage was stationed. How cute.

Vs. 25-27 Notice that Saul's home was in Gibeah, that infamous city. This is seen as negative in v. 27 as Saul allows the disrespect to go unanswered.

As people, we can identify with the awesome responsibility thrust upon Saul. We can imagine the weight and the desire to hide. But, Saul had God as a great resource. The kingship and leadership of Israel wasn't about him; it was about the nation and God. To allow these men to disrespect God was a serious problem. This shows Saul's focus. It wasn't on God or the nation, but on himself. This attitude about himself will eventually get him, Israel, and David into a lot of trouble.

As disciples, we face the same thoughts. But what we've been called to be and do is not about us; it is about Christ, the gospel and a lot of dying people. The easiest way for Satan to neutralize us is to get us thinking and worrying about ourselves. Jesus warned His disciples in Luke 8:14, *And*

as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature.

1 Samuel 11

Vs. 1-4 Notice that God brings about this "disaster," so that He can use it against the bad guys. Since Saul's selection ceremony seemed to lack full confidence in Saul, the Lord provided an occasion where Israel could be confident of the king God had chosen for them.

Did you notice the city that was threatened? It is also famous in the story of the near extermination of the tribe of Benjamin. Remember that there were only 600 men from Benjamin left. The people of Israel destroyed Jabesh-gilead, because they wouldn't fight against Benjamin. But they saved 400 young women to be married to 400 of the surviving men from Benjamin. It is thought that Saul may have had an emotional attachment to Jabesh-gilead, because most likely, his great-great-great-grandmother was from there.

Vs. 6-11 I mentioned before with Samson, that when the Spirit "rushes" on someone, sometimes, it looks pretty angry. Suddenly, Saul was an inspired, organized and deadly guy. Notice there is a separation made regarding Israel and the men of Judah. I don't know if this means it was written after the kingdom was divided, but Judah, as a people and territory, must have had the character of Texas. They were part of the union, but there was something different about them. The king was supposed to have come from Judah according to Jacob in Genesis 49.

V. 11 I think this is that "other person" the Spirit made Saul. Saul knew how to form his army and fight.

Vs. 12-13 The people knew, and I think God did too, that the men who disrespected God and Saul needed to be punished. Saul still wasn't up to the task. Later in his reign, Saul will be direct, brutal and bloodthirsty, but against all the wrong people.

Vs. 14-15 Samuel immediately led the people to Gilgal and officiated a victory celebration where they officially made Saul king. But notice, Saul wasn't required to wait for Samuel for seven days. This is not the event that Samuel told Saul of when he first anointed him. That future meeting in Gilgal would be like a covenant renewal and confirm Saul's reign. That meeting will happen in chapter 13, but it will not go as planned. It seems to me that at *this* meeting in Gilgal, Samuel/God humbled the people because of their desire for a king (Ch. 12) and then told them to come together again for a full consecration of themselves and Saul (Ch. 13). Again, that future meeting in Gilgal will not go well.

I'll warn you in advance, that some of this early history with Saul is hard to understand time-wise.

For us as disciples in the harvest, we need to patiently follow, remembering every confirmation God has given us in His Word and in our labor. Our service is not about us. It is about the glory of the Father and the redemption found in our Lord. The minute this becomes about us, our work in the harvest is hindered.

John 6:43-71

Looking at v. 59, we see that this talk took place in a synagogue. Notice that there is grumbling mentioned in two places. God is writing this in such a way as to remind us of the murmuring of Israel in the wilderness.

Vs. 43-51 There is a subtle rebuke here. The Father blocks the unbelieving from coming to His Son. Jesus is saying it is understandable that the Jews (Jewish leaders) couldn't grasp what He is saying. If they were taught by God (humble, open, submissive), they would understand. The rebuke is that the leaders thought they were the learned people of Israel who really knew God.

Jesus is telling them they don't know God and haven't been taught by God. And, Jesus is declaring Himself to be the Savior in very graphic terms.

V. 51 We know that Jesus was talking about the sacrifice of His body. They were all struggling with this imagery.

Vs. 52-59 Notice that in v. 53 Jesus responds to their discussion by becoming even more graphic. I think He smiled and pressed them on purpose. Even so, notice that He says they had to eat the flesh of the Son of Man. He directed them to the concept of the Son of Man, to whom they knew they would owe absolute obedience. They were smart enough to understand that what He was saying had something to do with total dedication to the Messiah. This is like a parable, with Jesus' own body as the main object.

As disciples we get all balled up with our "expression" of the gospel, but notice that Jesus is being very cryptic and He's doing it to divide the serious followers from the superficial followers. He's doing it with full confidence that those who the Father is leading to Him cannot be scared away. We need to have confidence when we tell others about Christ. But the confidence isn't in us or our presentation. We simply need to share what the Lord has done. Some will hear and some won't, but we know that God will do His work. Their understanding and acceptance of the message doesn't rest on our shoulders.

Vs. 60-65 This passage is gold for our confidence as disciples. We are told to proclaim. He is the one who draws and redeems. It is interesting to me that this image of eating His flesh and blood and absolute ownership of the Son was too much for many of the disciples. The people couldn't stand it, but neither could His followers. This talk had done what the Father wanted to accomplish and the "chaff" was being blown away.

Notice v. 63. They still were not understanding on a spiritual level. This was like Nicodemus asking how a person could reenter their mother's womb and be born again. What Jesus said wasn't grasped by the mind if the spirit would not surrender to the truth. His words were spirit and life and there had to be faith in His person, in order for the spirit and life to take effect.

Vs. 66-71 This was just as hard a test for the Twelve as for everyone else. For Peter & Co. there was no option. They knew who He was, even if His words were totally hidden and offensive to them. And remember, on the boat ride over, they had had another notable experience and had worshiped Jesus, acknowledging that He was the Son of God. That event had been fully planned by the Father for this very moment. Notice that, for some reason, Judas Iscariot hung on, and Jesus remarks about him.

From this point on, many of Jesus' disciples left and this marks the down turn in His popularity. That great sign, the feeding of the 5000, brought the people into conflict with Jesus. Jesus was more interested in saving their souls than feeding their bellies and meeting their needs.

Psalm 107

Some psalms are broken into three days, but this long psalm is given in one whack. Go figure. We should be able to get some good Bible study 101 lessons here.

I think that the message of this psalm is found in the first three and last three verses. Can you see that? Look for recurring patterns of words. Hint: *Some.....then*. Last year as I read this I was having a bad day and it lifted my heart.

Vs. 1-3 This is the call to praise God for *His steadfast love*. Notice that it is the *redeemed* who are to praise Him. This could be the people gathered after the reign of Saul or the people gathered after the exile. The important thing here is that they realize that they have been redeemed. It makes a difference.

Vs. 4-9 This is the first cycle. To me, this sounds like David, who has finally stopped his wandering and is now at home in Zion, recounting the wandering of Israel since Abraham.

Vs. 10-16 Joseph was a prisoner. The entire nation was enslaved to Egypt. The people in the land became slaves to the people around them. You see how the same themes are recurring although the distress is different.

Vs. 17-22 I wonder if this was the loathing of the manna in the wilderness.

Vs. 23-32 I'm not sure what this is referring to, but it must have been scary.

In all of these verses and in all of God's faithfulness and deliverance, their responsibility was to worship and praise God publicly.

Vs. 33-38 God is the one who gives life and prosperity to the land.

Vs. 39-42 Regardless of how the people were afflicted and crushed, God helped His people.

V. 43 The wise will learn from Israel's history. They will be moved by *the steadfast love of the Lord*.

As we are reading all of this history, God wants us to be overwhelmed too, with His steadfast love and faithfulness.

Proverbs 15:1-3

Wow! Talk about three big verses.

Going backwards:

V. 3 The person who fears God and knows that He's watching,

V. 2 keeps watch over his words and lives in the knowledge God has given him,

V. 1 which gives him wise control over his own emotions and, even in a hard place, he will give a soft answer.

But a fool forgets or doesn't care that God is watching. He lets his mouth run and stirs up all sorts of evil.