

MAY 14

1 Samuel 15-16

Just a note here on the passage of time. We don't have a lot of detail as to how old Saul was when certain things happened to him. We're not sure how old he was when he began to reign nor do we know when the following events happened. Here is a suggestion working backwards the beginning of David's rule as king of Judah in Hebron. David was 30 years old when he became king of Judah, also meaning that Saul had just died after 40 years of service. If Saul began to rule when he was 30 or 40, he died when he was 80. So at that point David was 30 and Saul was 80.

When David killed Goliath he was not in the army meaning he was younger than 20. He had two brothers in the army and five brothers who were not in the army (younger than 20) who were still older than David. If that oldest brother not in the army was 19 and if David's mother had had one child a year, David would have been about 14 (16 if she had some sons sooner) when he killed Goliath. David was probably anointed when he was 12 or 13 years old. At this point then, if Saul was 50 years older than David, Saul would have been about 62 years old and this would have been the 22nd year of his reign.

1 Samuel 15

V. 1 These words should have been ringing in Saul's ears, *listen to the words of the Lord*.

Vs. 3-9 Admittedly, this would have been hard for us too, not to get caught up with an easy victory, feeling good and listening to the wishes of the people.

V. 6 The Kenites have links to the family of Moses and Judah, and are good people. Just don't hide in their tents or you're likely to get a tent stake in the head like in the book of Judges.

Vs. 10-11 This was not a good night. It is interesting to me that Samuel cried out to the Lord. Remember Moses crying out like this in the wilderness. It was never good for the people when God was moved to anger. Samuel, like Moses before him, knew that this would cause Israel to suffer.

It should be noted that God's regret is not like our regret. God saw this coming, therefore the test. At this point when Saul did what God knew he would do, God was saddened because of Saul's disobedience. This makes me think about the verse in Romans 9:22, *What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction*. Knowing that people will only scorn Him in their lives on earth is not easy for God.

In Saul making this monument to/for himself, it also shows why he kept Agag alive and saved the best stuff. It was for his self esteem and popularity. This stuff would have been a kind of victory parade. It should be noted that Saul was probably imitating Samuel from 1 Samuel 7:12 when Samuel made a monument and called it Ebenezer. It is clear from what follows that Saul was more concerned with his glory than with God's glory. This Carmel is not the one up by the Mediterranean Sea where Elijah had it out with the priests of Baal. This Carmel is in Judah.

Vs. 12-23 There is a lot in this section. Notice how Saul tries to schmooze Samuel in v. 15, *your God*.

Notice how Saul keeps putting blame on the people and trying to spin all this as obedience. In v. 20, Saul tried to twist reality into some kind of obedience.

Vs. 22-23 These are amazing verses and the force of them really slammed Saul. The issue is always our relationship first and then it is seen in a heartfelt obedience to His Word.

Vs. 24-35 Saul was finally honest, and yet in v. 25 he was only thinking about himself and how to save face with the people. He needed them to see Samuel return with him. What a powerful

image of confused spirituality. I have seen this and it is something you can't fight. Its irrationality defies logic and argument. When a person's ego is placed before honesty with the Lord, everything becomes stained and confused.

Samuel relented and went with Saul, but this also seems like the beginning of Saul becoming dangerous and seriously defensive of his kingship.

1 Samuel 16

V. 1 I don't think that the Lord waited a long time before He spoke to Samuel. We know that God doesn't change His mind, but works according to His foreknowledge, election and purpose. Therefore, choosing a king, and particularly David as king, was not a new plan. If there had been no Saul, and if the people had patiently waited and sought God, David would have been king anyway.

It is another lesson in waiting. The people didn't wait, and God gave them what they wanted. Saul didn't wait at Gilgal, and the people stayed; but had he waited, God would have blessed him. As disciples, we don't want God to work in and around us in spite of ourselves. We want to follow Him, and that often means seeking Him continually over time and waiting for His clear leading.

V. 2 Notice that God took Samuel's concern seriously and gave Samuel a plan. Saul had become a dangerously insecure man.

V. 4 Who were they afraid of? Samuel or Saul? If it was Samuel, his judgeship must have been a very "Obey God and no fooling around" kind of ministry to the people. After all, he had just recently slashed Agag to pieces in 1 Samuel 15:33. On the other hand, you wonder if the people understood how deeply dangerous and insecure Saul was and that Saul was keeping his eye on Samuel.

Vs. 6-7 Even Samuel looked at the outward appearance when thinking about a king. Verse 7 is the great global equalizer. It may be that right now, the greatest disciple of Christ, following Him in the harvest, reaching the lost and making disciples, works in the shadows of oppression and will die in obscurity, poverty and injustice. The Lord looks upon the heart and Jesus told His Twelve in Matthew 10:26, *So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known.*

2 Chronicles 16:9 *For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him.*

V. 13 Notice again that the Spirit *rushed upon David*. It was probably after this that David had his run-in with the lion and bear. In a way, it is weird to think that if the Spirit in us wanted to show His stuff, we could do almost anything. I think we see more of the Spirit when we are abiding in Christ and following Him in the harvest. And to think, our work in the harvest hardly ever involves hand-to-hand combat with wild animals.

V. 14 This was in fact *an evil spirit* sent to afflict Saul. To be fair, Saul still had recourse to go to God and ask for healing. The problem was that Saul had departed from God. We can't see yet how deeply dark Saul's heart was, but when we see it, it will be shocking.

Apparently God does this to all of His servants named Saul. The outcome depends on the heart of that particular Saul. The following Saul was in love with the Lord and had the burning heart of a disciple.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10 *So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect*

in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Vs. 18-23 I have to admit that this is confusing, unless Saul had some sort of dementia. When David comes to fight Goliath, Saul seems to have forgotten who David is. It could be that some of this is a summary editorial note, referring to David's entire service to Saul. Still, it makes sense to me that Saul was so brooding about his life and insecurity that he didn't take much notice of the young teen playing the music, upon whom the Spirit and the kingship rested. Interestingly, the Spirit working in David was soothing Saul.

A possible timeline here is that David is about 12-13 here. Saul will reign for about another 17 years. David served Saul off and on, returning to his home. Saul will get better and not need David as much. There will be some years of calm. The situation with Goliath will happen when David is 15-18. By the time David is 20 he will begin running from Saul. David will become king over Judah in Hebron when he is 30, and it is another 7.5 years before he becomes king of the entire nation. This means that David will have 10 years of running from Saul and living in Ziglag (16 months) to cry out to God, learn of God's constant faithfulness and steadfast love, and see God deliver him many, many times. And he'll write some great psalms.

For us as disciples we learn from Saul to obey the Word and love the Lord. Once the mission or a church or an outreach becomes about us, we begin to become like Saul. Loving the Lord keeps us safe and balanced.

As we see the story move on to David, we learn, as we have before, that God often trains His chosen servants through hardship and waiting as they follow.

John 7:53-8:20

Now you probably see the note in your Bible that this well beloved story of Jesus is not included in the oldest and best manuscripts.

There is a time in seminary when you realize that there is another level of maturity that has to be reached in order not to lose your mind, because you understand, begrudgingly, that knowing the Greek and Hebrew doesn't really answer all the questions. In fact, studying the Bible, sometimes, creates more questions and contradicts some of a person's long held beliefs. This is an example thereof.

According to the Bible Knowledge Commentary-NT, pp. 346-347, and everyone else, these verses (7:53-8:11, the story of the woman caught in adultery) are an interruption in the text from John 7:52 to John 8:12. They differ in the quality of the Greek, meaning John didn't write these verses, and the oldest and most reliable manuscripts don't have this story. Apparently it was a story that John told, but never included in his writing. It means that as this story circulated among churches, some copyist, years later, decided to insert this story here. What does this mean for us?

First, it means that we have very reliable documents. Why? Because we have so many manuscripts and so many parts of the New Testament (many more than any other book from those times) that we can compare and know what the original Bible looked like. It isn't that we have 87% and have to guess what that missing 13% is. Rather, we have 120%, and with that, we can compare manuscripts and figure out not only when, but also where, an error might have come into the lineage of a text family.

Second, forgeries, even by the "well-meaning," were never tolerated because the men of old knew what was at risk in the copying and transmission of the Bible. The guy who wrote 3rd Corinthians was high up the food chain, but when he was discovered, he lost his job and pension. He was run out of town, and rumor has it that he worked at Walmart© as a greeter for the rest of his life.

Third, without getting too wishy-washy, it might be that God did allow the story to be included for a reason. The story is true to Jesus' character and doesn't contradict anything. I wouldn't base the gospel on this story, and knowing there is doubt about the story, I wouldn't base a lot of argument upon it. I would recognize in a mature fashion that godly men, and some of the brightest and best Greek scholars, say that it doesn't fit here. Yet, no one denies that it fits to Jesus and the conflict He was having in Jerusalem. I would still use it, but carefully.

Vs. 1-11 Notice that they brought the woman, but not the man. This suggests it was a trap for the woman so that this situation would become a trap for Jesus. According to the law, in the case of adultery, there were always two deaths. The Jews were forbidden by Rome to put anyone to death.

No one knows what Jesus wrote, but whatever happened here, the older and more mature responded first.

Vs. 12-20 After the morning session of teaching, Jesus came into the Treasury or the Court of Women. Jesus' first outburst had come as a procession brought water for cleansing into the temple. Then, He had screamed out that He was the living water. The outburst that takes place here was during the lighting of the giant lamps that hung in this court. Appropriately, Jesus presents Himself to Israel as *the light of the world*. Jesus was very direct. I'll bet His disciples were very embarrassed.

Vs. 13-18 This argument with the Pharisees sounds like what happened back in John 5. The leaders were still stuck on the same petty arguments. But Jesus' testimony was based on both His

words and on the signs the Father had given Him to do. Both His word and His signs were clearly from God.

V. 19 You get the feeling here that the leaders were grasping at any irrational straw that appeared. Jesus' Father could only be God, but they were in denial.

V. 20 Notice, that even though Jesus was in close quarters where even a ninja would have had a hard time escaping, no one laid a hand on Him, *because His hour had not yet come.*

As disciples, we can take courage at Jesus' courage. He risked this to present the truth to save any who would come to Him.

Psalm 110

This is a prophetic psalm pointing to Jesus and it is quoted in Hebrews. Can you see the verses that are quoted by Paul (or whoever wrote Hebrews)? David was very likely the king of the entire nation, having received the promise of his offspring leading Israel. David may have understood that God's promise meant that the Messiah, and therefore, the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham and the promise to Adam and Eve, would come through him. And then, the Holy Spirit rushed upon David and he wrote.

Vs. 1-3 This king will be the King of kings. You see that v. 1 is quoted of Jesus and that all of these verses refer to Him.

Notice here that Jesus was commanded to sit at the right hand of the Father. This had to happen to fulfill prophecy. Jesus, the human king, the Son of Man, was to take this position of victory and authority. I think it was then, and only then, that He could "give gifts to men," that is, send the Holy Spirit.

V. 4 This is the Spirit speaking through David. David had shown enthusiasm and power in leading the people in coming to worship God. When David brought the ark to Jerusalem, it wasn't just smart politics, but David passionately loved God. David knew the nation had to be focused and unified in their worship of God. David had to, and did, lead them to worship, but David couldn't sacrifice. David did foresee that this "Son," would lead Israel in being both a king and a priest. This verse is mentioned in Hebrews.

Vs. 5-7 As both king and priest, the Messiah will execute judgment on the earth.

Proverbs 15:8-10

This sounds like it was written to King Saul, but it eventually also applied to Solomon. As disciples, we cut to the very core of the matter when we remember that we have been saved and now are alive only in Christ. Now as His servants, we serve Him as we pray and pursue Him, following in this harvest.

Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.