

From Samuel to King Saul Selected Scriptures from I & II Samuel

"Therefore Samuel called the people together to the Lord at Mizpah; and he said to the sons of Israel, thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, I brought Israel up from Egypt, and I delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the power of all the kingdoms that were oppressing you. But you have today rejected your God who delivers you from all your calamities and your distresses; yet you have said, No, but set a king over us! Now therefore present yourselves before the Lord by your tribes and by your clans" (I Samuel 10:17-19)

Introduction:

1. The two books of the Old Testament that give us insight into the lives of Samuel and Saul are the books - **I & II Samuel**.
 - The author of I & II Samuel is considered anonymous but most conclude that Samuel wrote or dictated the portion that contains the historical record of events during his life and career.
 - These 2 books cover the lives of 3 important individuals (Samuel, Saul, David) and the historical events that occurred during that period of Israel's history.
 - This period of history covers about 150 years (approx. 1120 B.C. – 971 B.C.)
2. This time in Israel's history represents a shift in which they will no longer be recognized by their loose tribal affiliations with a Judge as their leader, but will experience a more **centralized** government that will have a king on the throne.
3. It is important to realize that although the Israelites cried out for a king and the Lord willingly granted their request by assigning/delegating power and authority to a human king, He remained in sovereign control of Israel and her future! (Isaiah 9:7)

Samuel the Prophet and Priest

1. Samuel was both a prophet and priest but he was also considered by most as the last **Judge** of Israel.
2. By the time Samuel was born, the Israelites (as a whole) were extremely idolatrous and immoral and the need for a strong “spiritual leader” was more evident than ever.
 - Samuel’s “job” was to declare God’s truth to his own people who really weren’t interested in hearing what he had to say.
 - Although Samuel faced many challenges/battles with enemies such as the Philistines, Amorites, and Ammonites; his greatest opposition usually came from his own people.
 - At the time of Samuel’s birth the sons of Eli (the high priest at the time) had become so wicked and perverse that they used their priestly office for personal gain and licentious behavior. Although they would be judged for this, these were dark days for God’s people!
 - Because of the prayers of a godly woman named Hannah; God intervened and blessed her with a child who faithfully served the Lord during a time when wickedness prevailed....even among the people of God. (I Samuel 1-3)
 - Samuel (Judge, Prophet, and Priest), serves as a leader in Israel who transitions the people of God from a “judgeship” to a “monarchy” where they would now be ruled by a king.
 - The events recorded in I & II Samuel are significant in that they provide us with insight of God’s sovereign plan to establish a lineage (through David) that would one day bring about the birth of the Savior of the World which is Jesus Christ. (II Samuel 7:12-16, Psalm 89:36-37, Isaiah 9:7)

3. The story of Samuel's birth as well as his call and commission to ministry by the Lord can be found in I Samuel 1-3.
- Samuel's mother was **Hannah** (a godly woman) who prayed this prayer to the Lord; "O Lord of hosts if you will indeed look on the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, and not forget your maidservant, but will give your maidservant a son, **then I will give him to the Lord, all the days of his life,** and a razor shall never come on his head" (I Samuel 1:11)
 - At a later point when Samuel is beyond the need to be nursed by his mother she in turn will fulfill her vow to the Lord and dedicates Samuel to the Lord:
 - 1) "For this boy I prayed, and the Lord has given me my petition which I asked of Him. So I have also dedicated him to the Lord; as long as he lives he is dedicated to the Lord. And he worshipped the Lord there." (I Samuel 1:27-28)
 - 2) Although we don't know the specific age that Samuel was dedicated (3 years, 6 years or older), the important thing to note here is that this was a unique/extraordinary child and at the appropriate time he understood what it meant to worship the Lord for he did it!
 - I often think of Samuel as the "Paul" of the Old Testament and the "calling by God" on Samuel is more than obvious to be God's divine plan to direct the affairs of the people of Israel during these difficult days of transition. (I Samuel 3)
 - 1) His call by God was **outside** the norm
 - 2) His call by God became **obvious**
 - 3) His call by God was **observed** by others
 - 4) His words were **obeyed** because they came from God
 - "Thus Samuel grew and the Lord was with him and let none of his words fail. All Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel was confirmed as a prophet of the Lord. And the Lord appeared again at Shiloh, because the Lord revealed Himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the Word of the Lord" (I Samuel 3:21)

4. Samuel's ministry:

- Just like Paul in the New Testament, Samuel called on the people of God to live holy and obedient lives. (I Samuel 7:3-6)
 - One of the significant events during Samuel's rule as Judge was the desire by the Israelites to have a king to rule over them in their entirety. (I Samuel 8:5)
 - 1) This was brought on by a host of reasons but sad is the notation that Samuel's sons (Joel and Abijah) did not follow the "righteous life" that they were taught and instead participated in similar behavior as that of Eli's sons. (I Sam. 8:3)
 - 2) Samuel was grieved at the request for a King (Vs. 6) but God revealed that the rejection was to Him not Samuel (Vs. 7-9).
 - 3) None of this caught God by surprise and He would have His way in spite of the disobedience of the people.
 - 4) In spite of Samuel's warnings as to what this king would represent and how he would treat them....they wanted him anyway and God granted them their wish as He gave them Saul. (I Samuel 8:10-18, 9:15-27)
 - 5) Much of Samuel's ministry as a prophet and priest fell under the reign of Saul.
 - Samuel will declare to the people of Israel to live right before (I Samuel 12:1-5) and he will appeal to them that they not forget where God brought them from (delivered from Egypt) and to also be obedient to the Law. (I Samuel 12:6-25).
5. Samuel was noted for being a man of **prayer** (I Samuel 12:23) and was even recognized for such by Jeremiah the prophet. (Jeremiah 15:1).
6. "Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for you; but I will instruct you in the good and right way. Only fear the Lord and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you. But if you still do wickedly, both you and your king will be swept away." (I Samuel 12:23-25)

Saul the King

1. Saul's introduction (I Samuel 9):

- “Now there was a man of Benjamin whose name was Kish, the son of Abiel, the son of Becorath, the son of Aphiah, the son of a Benjamite a mighty man of valor. He had a son, whose name was Saul, a choice and handsome man, and there was not a more handsome person than he among the sons of Israel; from his shoulders and up he was taller than any of the people.” (I Samuel 9:1-2)
- 1) Saul's **lineage** was from the tribe of **Benjamin** and not from Judah which would mean that he was not the lineage through whom the Messiah would come. (Genesis 49:10, Matthew 1:1, Luke 3:23-38, Revelation 5:5)
- 2) Saul was noted as being both tall and handsome but other than those features there was nothing overly impressive about him that made him an eligible candidate to be king over Israel.
- “Now a day before Saul's coming, the Lord had revealed this to Samuel saying, about this time tomorrow I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him to be prince over my people Israel; and he will deliver My people from the hand of the Philistines. For I have regarded My people, because their cry has come to Me. When Samuel saw Saul, the Lord said to him, behold, the man of whom I spoke to you! This one shall rule over My people” (I Samuel 9:15-17)
- 1) Saul will become the first King of Israel and the one whom the Lord chose to deliver His people from the oppressive attacks from the Philistines.
- 2) Initially Saul's humility and sense of unworthiness will be evident (Vs. 21) but later and over time he will make some significant errors and mistakes that will subsequently disqualify him to continue to rule as king.
- The prophet Samuel will seek to instruct Saul and provide him with sound advice and instruction as to his own obedience to the Lord and also how to properly lead the people of Israel as their king. (I Samuel 9:27)

2. Saul is chosen (I Samuel 10:17-24)

- “Therefore Samuel called the people together at Mizpah; and he said to the sons of Israel, Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, I brought Israel up from Egypt, and I delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the power of all the kingdoms oppressing you. But you have today rejected your God, who delivers you from all your calamities and your distresses; yet you have said, No but set a king over us! Now therefore, present yourselves before the Lord by your tribes and by your clans” (I Samuel 10:17-19)

- 1) This declaration by Samuel served as a reminder to the Israelites that their continual insistence on having a human king was considered an act of **disobedience**; in that Lord was the One who was their deliverer and they were often too quick to forget that fact!
 - 2) None of this caught the Lord by surprise and as such He had Samuel gather the people together by tribes and family clans to make the selection for their first king.
 - 3) The Lord would in fact take their disobedient act by giving them a king named Saul but in His timing the Lord will establish a divine lineage through King David, “**a man after God’s own heart**”, and it will be through David’s lineage (not Saul’s) that the Messiah would be born.
- “Then he brought the tribe of Benjamin near by its families, and the Matrite family was taken. And **Saul the son of Kish was taken**; but when they looked for him, he could not be found. Therefore they inquired further of the Lord, has the man come here yet? So the Lord said he is hiding himself by the baggage. So they ran and took him from there, and when he stood among the people, he was taller than any of the people from his shoulder upward. Samuel said to all the people, do you see him whom the Lord has chosen? Surely there is no one like him among all the people. So all the people shouted and said; **long live the king**” (10:21-24)
- 1) Saul from the tribe of Benjamin was chosen by **lot**
 - 2) This to me is a rather unassuming and interesting start with a seemingly overwhelming acceptance by the people of an **untested** leader.

3. Saul's war with the Philistines (I Samuel 13)

- “Saul was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned for forty two years over Israel” (I Samuel 13:1)
- “Now the Philistines assembled to fight with Israel, 30,000 chariots and 6,000 horseman and people like the sand which is on the seashore in abundance and they came up and camped in Micmash, east of Beth-aven” (I Samuel 13:5)
- The people were confused at the overwhelming power of the Philistine army:
 - 1) “When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait (for the people were hard pressed), then the people hid themselves in caves, in thickets, in cliffs, in cellars and in pits” (I Samuel 13:6)
 - 2) “Also some of the Hebrews crossed the Jordan into the land of Gad and Gilead. But as for Saul, he was still in Gilgal and all the people followed him trembled” (I Samuel 13:7)
- Saul's impatience and lack of self-control cost him his crown
 - 1) “Now he waited seven days, according to the appointed time set by Samuel, but Samuel did not come to Gilgal and the people were scattering from him” (I Samuel 13:8)
 - 2) “So Saul said, bring to me the burnt offering and the peace offerings. And he offered the burnt offering” (I Samuel 13:9)
 - 3) It was the function of the Priest and not the king to offer the burnt offering which brings a rebuke from Samuel against Saul.
 - 4) “Samuel said to Saul, you have acted foolishly, you have not kept the commandment of the Lord your God, which he commanded you, for now the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. But now your kingdom shall not endure. The Lord has sought out for Himself a man after His own heart and the Lord has appointed him as ruler over His people because you have not kept what the Lord has commanded you” (13:13-14)

4. Saul's continual warfare (I Samuel 14)

- “Now when Saul had taken the kingdom over Israel, he fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab, the sons of Ammon, Edom, the kings of Zobah, and the Philistines; and wherever he turned he inflicted punishment.” (I Samuel 14:47)
- “He acted valiantly and defeated the Amalekites and delivered Israel from the hands of those who plundered them” (I Samuel 14:48)
- “Now the war against the Philistines was sever all the days of Saul; and when Saul saw any mighty men or any valiant man, he attached them to his staff” (I Samuel 14:52)

5. Saul's disobedience (I Samuel 15)

- “Then Samuel said to Saul, the Lord sent me to anoint you as king over his people, over Israel; now therefore listen to the words of the Lord. Thus says the Lord of Hosts, I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel (Exodus 17:8-16), how he set himself against him on the way while he was coming up from Egypt. Now go and strike Amalek and utterly destroy all that he has, and do not spare him; but put to death both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey” (I Samuel 15:1-3)
- “But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were not willing to destroy them utterly; but everything despised and worthless, they utterly destroyed” (I Samuel 15:9)
- “Samuel said, has the Lord as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of divination and insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. **Because you have rejected the word of the Lord He has also rejected you from being king**” (I Samuel 15:22-23)
- “Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death; for Samuel grieved over Saul. **And the Lord regretted that He had made Saul king over Israel**” (15:35)

6. Saul's replacement (I Samuel 16)

- It was because of Saul's **disobedience** that he lost the favor of the Lord and as such he would also lose the rights to the throne of Israel as their king, and any sort of dynasty for his heirs to rule after him.
 - 1) Saul does have children and one of them (Ishbosheth) will have a brief rule (though not really recognized as a king) concurrently with David for approximately 7 years (1000-993 B.C.).
 - 2) After Saul's disobedient act of not destroying the Amalekites he will continue to rule and he will develop quite a loyal following which will create some significant challenges to his replacement (David) in uniting all of the tribes of Israel and Judah to follow just one leader.
- The Lord chooses David to replace Saul as King over Israel
 - 1) "Now the Lord said to Samuel, how long will you grieve over Saul, since I have rejected him being king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and go; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have selected a king for Myself among his sons" (I Samuel 16:1)
 - 2) "And Samuel said to Jesse, are these all the children? And he said, there remains yet the youngest, and behold, he is tending the sheep. Then Samuel said to Jesse, send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here. So he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, with beautiful eyes and a handsome appearance. And the Lord said, Arise, anoint him; for this is he. Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward. And Samuel arose and went to Ramah" (I Samuel 16:11-13)
- David will arise to the forefront in his confrontation with **Goliath** and will eventually become the recognized leader of Israel and Judah.
- After the death of Saul, David will officially be declared King of Judah and Ishbosheth will be declared king over Israel which will begin a short civil war between the tribes. This is recorded in II Samuel 2-4.