

Lesson 1 – 1 Samuel 10-12

Text: 1 Samuel 10-12

Main Characters: God, Samuel, Saul, Nahash, Israelites

Key Passages:

- 1 Samuel 10:9 – God showed Saul signs that changed his heart and helped him to serve God.
- 1 Samuel 10:21-22 – When Saul was publicly chosen to be king, he hid himself among baggage.
- 1 Samuel 11:12-13 – Perhaps the peak of Saul’s reign: he attributed his victory to the Lord.
- 1 Samuel 12:20-21 – Samuel urged the people to follow God fully to avoid distractions.

Main Storyline:

Samuel and Saul woke up early the morning following the sacrifices and feasts. Samuel brought Saul to the outskirts of the city and asked him to send his servant away so that he could teach Saul the Word of God. Samuel then took a flask of oil and poured it on Saul’s head to anoint him king of Israel. Samuel explained that God had chosen him, and thus He had anointed him to be king. Samuel also told Saul about certain events that would transpire on his way home. Just as Samuel had prophesied, the events occurred to Saul, culminating in the Spirit of God coming upon Saul and his heart being changed (likely a reference to the miraculous signs and their effect on Saul’s spirit and desire to serve God). When he arrived at home, he did not tell his uncle what Samuel had told him.

Later, Samuel gathered the Israelites together to formally choose a king. Samuel seems to have been casting lots (or perhaps through the use of the high priest’s Urim and Thummim) to decide who would be king. Eventually, Saul was chosen, but he was nowhere to be found. The people asked the Lord, so eventually they found him in the baggage. When they brought him out, he stood tall above the rest of the people. Though most were glad to have Saul, some were not and murmured against him.

Perhaps as Saul’s first test as king of Israel, a foreign king, Nahash of the Ammonites, sieged an Israelite city, Jabesh Gilead. The elders of Jabesh Gilead asked Nahash to spare them for seven days to see if any would help them, but if none came, they promised to surrender themselves to have their right eyes put out and be servants of Nahash. Saul heard of what was happening and summoned the Israelites together, threatening violence on their animals if they did not comply. Saul’s army totaled 330,000 Israelite men. On the last day before Jabesh Gilead was set to surrender, Saul’s army stormed the Ammonite camp and defeated them soundly. Some of the men called for Saul to kill those who had questioned his ability, but Saul rebuked them, explaining that God had brought victory to Israel that day.

Following the victory, the Israelites went to Gilgal to renew the kingdom. Saul was “made king” again there, and they made many sacrifices of peace offerings to the Lord. Everyone was excited for the new kingdom and the success which the king had brought to Israel.

Samuel took this opportunity to address the people and remind them that, in asking for a king, they had rebelled against God who had not mistreated them in any way. He explained God had punished their ancestors during the time of the judges using many different foreign forces for their disobedience and idolatry, and that God would do the same to them if they continued in disobedience. Their king would remain, but Samuel urged the people to fear and serve God alone. God sent thunder and rain to reinforce Samuel’s message to the people, and they became fearful of Samuel and God. Samuel urged the people to obey God with their whole hearts, lest they be distracted by futile things.

Lessons/Applications:

- 1.) We must not shirk our responsibilities out of fear; trust God to help us obey His commands.
- 2.) When we lose our focus on serving the Lord completely, we get distracted (Matthew 24:14ff).