

I Samuel

Lesson 15 - Chapter 10

Last week we saw how the decision was arrived at for Sha'ul, son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin to become (what is usually called) the first King of Israel. However in the Lord's eyes Saul was not Israel's first king; rather, Saul was going to be Israel's first HUMAN king. Yehoveh was Israel's king from the moment He redeemed them from Egypt and not in a merely ethereal or idealized sense, but in a fully legal sense. Thus in chapter 9 the Lord (through Samuel) told the leaders of Israel who were demanding a governmental change from a system of Judges to a monarchy modeled after their gentile neighbors, that they were essentially establishing a new legal arrangement and that this legal arrangement would be between Israel and the human king that they demanded. This matter of divine legality is a core issue in the Bible, Old and New Testament, and one that few Christians are particularly familiar or comfortable with.

1st Samuel 10 drags us (somewhat unexpectedly) into several deep spiritual issues some of which may sound (on the surface) like a review however it is going to be more of an expansion or perhaps even an unveiling of sorts. So try to stay tuned in and focused, please, because Christians tend to tune out and have a knee-jerk ho-hum attitude towards the biblical legal codes. It is the modern-day Believer's mantra that we avoid the dreaded "legalism" that is perhaps the Church's chief historical boogeyman. At the same time what the Church typically doesn't realize is that our own Salvation is totally dependent upon the biblical legal code because it is fulfillment of these legalities by Yeshua that qualified Him to be our Messiah and Redeemer Let's begin by addressing this broad issue of law and the biblical legal code by recalling something that Jesus said:

NAS Matthew 5:17 "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill."

Our Savior says two critical things in this single verse that are central to our study today (and also especially to New Testament study). First He says that He did NOT come to abolish the Law (meaning the legal section of the Torah that Jews often call the Law of Moses), nor did He come to abolish the Prophets (meaning He did not come to discard or change what Yehoveh proclaimed would eventually occur regarding Israel's future and mankind's redemptive history). Second He repeats (for emphasis, apparently) that while His purpose and mission is not to abolish, His purpose IS to FULFILL the biblical legal code as well as the numerous ancient prophecies of Holy Scripture (especially as pertains to Him).

I have spoken scores of times about this passage (and the next 3 verses that further cement what I'm about to tell you). I've explained to you that the sense of the word "fulfill" is not to "end" something (not to eradicate or stop something), which is the typical and erroneous

explanation that most denominations offer. Let me quote for you Webster's New World College Dictionary as to the meaning of the word "fulfill". 1) To carry out something that has been promised. 2) To obey. 3) To fill all the requirements. 4) To satisfy all the conditions. All of these 4 variations of meaning of "fulfill" are generally in line with what the Greek word that is being translated (pleroo) intended. A 5th definition is offered and it is to "complete or end" in the sense of to finish writing a term paper, or deciding that your family is large enough so you'll have no more children. If you complete a term paper and turn it in, you haven't also abolished your term paper or the requirement to have one. The arrival of the last child you intend on having (thus "completing your family") certainly doesn't mean that you have abolished your older children or discarded them in favor of something or someone else.

Thus just as He so plainly said, Christ didn't end the biblical legal code; to the contrary He obeyed it. Yeshua didn't erase and discard the Laws of Moses; rather He carried them out to their ultimate purpose and accomplished all their requirements. So was Jesus a legalist? Should we accuse Messiah Yeshua, His disciples, Paul the Apostle and others of legalism because they continued to obey the Law of Moses? Were they not "under grace"? Did the grace offered to them collide with their obedience to the Law? If one is under grace does this, of necessity, separate a person from the obligation of obedience to God's laws?

Let me ask you another question: are you committing "legalism" because you obey your community's posted speed limits? Are you committing legalism because you pay your taxes? Are you a slave to the law because you don't murder people or steal from them?

Here's the point: the relationship that all disciples of Yeshua have with God is absolutely the result of Yehoveh's laws that are written down in His covenants. At Mt. Sinai the God of Israel established the basis of any relationship we might hope to have with Him, and it includes laws and a justice system that enforces those laws. God established and maintains a legal relationship with the people He redeemed, Israel. And that legal relationship continues with those who are spiritually grafted-in to Israel: the Church.

Of course what entitles us and obligates us to that legal relationship between God and all members of His Kingdom is our faith and trust in His Son, the Messiah Yeshua. And ironically the legal relationship is formed from a mutual love between God and we, His worshippers. I did NOT say that Salvation comes to us by following God's Laws; but the legitimacy of Our Savior, Yeshua, indeed WAS established by His faithfulness to God's Laws and to bringing about what the Prophets foretold. Let me illustrate another aspect of how it is that as Believers we have agreed to subject ourselves to a way of righteous living that is defined by and expressed in God's laws and ordinances. As an American citizen living in Florida do you have a legal relationship with England? No you don't, but if you go there you will be subject to some of their laws. If you voluntarily become an English citizen (even a dual citizen of the USA and England) THEN you have established a legal relationship with England and are now subject to ALL of their laws. You will receive the benefits of that legal system as well as the consequences of violating its laws.

Yeshua is Our Messiah because He met all the biblical legal requirements. That is, He did not sin. What is sin? The breaking of God's legal code. Does obeying all of our American laws

make you or keep you a citizen? No. Neither does obeying all of God's laws make you or keep you a citizen of Heaven. But there are varying degrees of consequences when you don't obey God's laws. Generally speaking God's grace offered through trust in Jesus mitigates those penalties so that we are not eternally destroyed.

Now, from a legal standpoint God has made it clear that He is king over those who He has redeemed. In turn Israel agreed that God was their king. Thus those who are redeemed are subject to the laws set down by the king. But now Israel wants to change the deal. The Lord has warned Israel that they are going to be subject to the justice that the new HUMAN king of Israel administers and it will be different than the justice that the Lord administers (even though ideally it shouldn't be). And this is because the new king is a flawed and fallen human being. Thus the issue that underlies everything from this point forward in Holy Scripture is this: who will be our king and what legal system will he administer upon us? What will be his characteristics, and with what God will he affiliate? This is important because man WILL be ruled by a king, and that king will establish and administer a legal code. This is because we have been created by Yehoveh to desire and need a strong ruler over us; otherwise we will go astray from the laws the king has established and all will be chaos.

With this as a background let's read 1st Samuel chapter 10 together.

READ 1ST SAMUEL CHAPTER 10 all

In the first verse we see Samuel anointing Sha'ul's head with oil as indicative of his being chosen as king. Please notice that there really should be no chapter break between the last verse of chapter 9 and this first verse of 10; the action is continuing. Saul's young servant has been dismissed and told to go on ahead, Samuel is walking and talking with Saul, and suddenly out comes a flask of oil and the surprised Saul is solemnly doused with it.

We must not let this simple act flash by us because right out of the gate we stumble upon a deep spiritual meaning that can be easily overlooked. Up to this point in the bible anointing with oil as a means to establish authority (usually divinely ordained authority) was reserved for matters concerning the priesthood. What makes Samuel's act all the more curious is that in chapter 9 we saw Saul given a priestly portion of the sacrificed animal at the dinner banquet sponsored by Samuel. In other words, we have a man being established as the king of Israel but yet there is an aspect of his position and status that denotes some kind of priestly connection as well. I'm certainly not the first bible expositor to notice this; the question is how much to make of it, what ought to we take from it, and where does it lead us?

Anointing with oil is a symbol of endowment with the Spirit of God. When Sha'ul was anointed by Samuel's oil he was consecrated as king and the office of king of Israel was inaugurated as a divine institution. The merciful God of Israel had no intention of putting Saul in charge of His people and then abandoning him or them. But it also indicated that the king of Israel would be in some fashion on par with the priesthood.

The priesthood was the Lord's proxy to bestow gifts of the Spirit upon the Lord's people. Now Israel's earthly king would be the vehicle and medium of bringing divine grace upon the

members of his kingdom. This king (Saul) would be set-apart, made holy, under the direction of God. This king would also be set-apart from the rest of the nation he would govern, just as the Levites were set-part from the other 12 tribes for service to god, and the Priests set-apart from the Levites. It was the Lord's will that that this human king not only enforces God's legal code (the Law of Moses) but obey them himself.

Samuel tells Sha'ul that Yehoveh is authorizing him to be prince, **nagid**, over God's inheritance. Here we ask, again, why if a king is being designated that the scriptures keep referring to Saul as a prince or a captain? I mentioned last week that somewhat recent discoveries have revealed that one use of the term **nagid** was as the king-in-waiting. An illustration might be that a **nagid** is the crown prince in the sense that the king's son was already chosen to assume the throne when his father vacated it (usually through his death). Yet in the bible, just as in most societies, some terms carry multiple meanings simultaneously so an alternative meaning of **nagid** is that he is a higher authority's representative. Thus a captain of an army is subservient to the general, and a prince is subservient to his king. Probably as used here **nagid** carries this dual sense of Sha'ul being both an underling to the ruler (Saul was under the authority of God) AND also he was next in line to be the highest ruler (Saul was chosen to be king but had not yet officially assumed the office). Essentially this scene in the first couple of verses of chapter 10 was of a private anointing between Yehoveh, Sh'mu'el and Sha'ul.

Sha'ul would rule over God's inheritance. What was God's inheritance? Actually, the word inheritance is translated from the Hebrew **nahalah** and it is probably better translated as heritage than inheritance. Inheritance by definition only means property, but heritage can refer to anything that comes from a prior legal relationship. Further it is implicit from the Lord's promise to Abraham that any "inheritance" included both land and people. So Saul would be divinely authorized to rule over BOTH the Lord's land and the Lord's people.

One can only imagine that Sha'ul is stunned, doubtful, a bit scared, and not too sure what to make of all this. To help alleviate Saul's skepticism Samuel now gives him 3 predictions that, when they come true, will demonstrate that God is in control and hopefully set Saul's mind at ease.

The first prediction (in verse 2) is that after leaving Samuel Sha'ul will find two men in the area of Rachel's Tomb and these men will approach Saul and tell him that his father's donkeys have been found. Further that his father is now so worried about his son's extended absence that he has lost all concern for the missing donkeys. Where was Rachel's Tomb? Well there are actually multiple traditions about this. Some think it is in Ramah (Samuel's home town) because Jeremiah 31:15 mentions Rachel weeping for her children there. Others point to Scripture saying that Rachel died and was buried on the road from Bethel to Ephrath. There is also the modern traditional place of Rachel's tomb near Gilo, just outside of Bethlehem. Some think it may be near Kiryat-Ye'arim.

After Saul has this mysterious experience near Rachel's tomb, verse 3 says that he is to continue traveling to a place called the Oak (or Terebinth) of Tabor (**Elon Tavor**). Although this place is certainly somewhere near Beit-el, its exact location has been lost to history. There

Saul will meet 3 men; one is carrying wine, another 3 goat kids, and the 3rd 3 loaves of bread. They will give Samuel two of the 3 loaves. This has nothing to do with traditional Middle Eastern hospitality. Beit-el was still a major holy site for the Hebrews, and there was an altar of sacrifice there. These 3 men were some type of holy men or priests who were on their way to sacrifice at the altar of Yehoveh as the goats, bread, and wine are all typical sacrificial elements. That they would offer Saul 2 of the sacrificial loaves (and that Saul was instructed to accept them) is significant if not downright strange. Once again we see Sha'ul being included in ritual (or given an honor) that is normally reserved only for the priesthood.

Next, in verse 5, he is to journey to a place called **Giv'ah** of God (**Gibeah-elohim**). Interestingly it mentions that there is a Philistine fort located there at this place that in English means "hill of God". This is a place probably about 3 miles north of Jerusalem. When he gets there it gets even more strange; a group of **nabi**, prophets of God, will be on their way down from this high place (the hill of God) accompanied with a group of men playing a number of musical instruments used for praise. These men will be prophesying. Suddenly the Ruach of Yehoveh (the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit) will descend upon Sha'ul, and HE will start prophesying just as these prophets were!

There's a lot here so we'll go about this one subject at a time. First; notice that we have 3 separate signs or predictions from Samuel that will be used as proof of God's anointing of Saul. That there were 3 signs in and of itself indicates a divine connection because the number 3 in the bible is symbolic of divinity and completeness. The proofs offered are NOT for the benefit of anyone except Saul. In other words (to use a rather dramatic literary phrase) Sha'ul is on a journey of self-discovery. He has supposedly been chosen and set-apart by God, and given great authority, position, and responsibility, but thus far the only reason for him to even believe that this is so is because a very old man poured some olive oil on him and told him this was the case. Remember this whole scenario was a total surprise to Sha'ul who wasn't looking to be a king; he was only out searching for his father's lost donkeys when suddenly, in a matter of hours, his world was turned upside down.

Would you take some stranger's word for such an enormous transformation in your life? Would you believe it if someone who said they were God's spokesman told you that the Lord had placed you in a position of authority over God's people? Especially if you didn't feel any difference, or see any difference, or experience anything supernatural? Sha'ul needed some kind of proof to believe that this was real and these 3 predictions were intended to be that proof.

Second, what is meant by "prophesying" (Sha'ul met these men who were prophesying and then he prophesied)? The answer to this question has always been troubling to bible scholars. It seems to have meant different things at different times, and even has alternate meanings according to the context. We in the Western Church tend to think of this as excited speech. At other times we see it as a person being given a so-called "word from God" that is usually meant to be circulated to others. A rather scholarly term for this is kind of prophesying is ecstatic speech, usually as how we think of what occurs in Pentecostal or charismatic congregations. However the more we learn of ancient Middle Eastern cultures (and ancient Hebrew culture particularly) the less we can so confidently say that such excited speech is

actually what is being indicated in Scriptures by the term “prophesying”.

Prophesying in the bible often seems to be accompanied with music, tambourines, and dancing. Therefore in this context it could be very much akin to simply praying or signing out loud, in public celebration of the Lord. At other times it seems as though prophesying is speech that comes from someone who is almost in a trance, where they’re having some kind of vision or semi-awake dream from God. In the era of the Prophets (where a Prophet was an official office and a Prophet was widely recognized as being God’s earthly messenger) the speech generally consisted of a divine warning or pronouncement of a future event or a direct instruction to a king. In New Testament times prophesying was generally associated with teaching God’s written Word, or making a commentary on Holy Scripture, although (especially with John) apocalyptic revelation of the future could also be involved.

Third, it’s interesting to notice the progression of proofs that were created for Sha’ul’s benefit. The first one consisted of 2 men who merely **spoke** a word of truth to Saul. The second one consisted of 3 men who **gave** something (consecrated bread) to Saul. And the third one consisted of a yet larger (but undefined) group of men who seemed **to call down** the Spirit of God upon Saul. The first sign was words (prophetic words), the second sign was physical but holy, and the third sign was purely spiritual in nature.

If you have been paying attention this ought to be sparking a recognition of something similar that has happened with you; or at least (if you have attended a church) ought to sound familiar. But if that little tingling or mental alert that you’re starting to feel doesn’t do it for you, look at the last half of verse 6. There it says that after the Holy Spirit falls upon Saul, he will prophesy, and THEN he will be turned into a new man! Does that sound like Pentecost or even more generally, the act of Salvation?

Oh but it gets better; verse 7 says that once all these signs have come over Saul he is to go ahead and do whatever he feels led to do because God is with him. Actually, most literally, what is said is that Saul is to “do what your hand finds”. Compare this with the prophet Nathan’s answer to King David in 1 Chronicles 7:3 where he says, “Whatever you have in mind, go ahead and do it, for Yehoveh is with you”. I have little doubt that the statement to Saul and the statement to David mean essentially the same thing. It means to surrender yourself to the divine impulse, with the assurance that IF it is of God He is with you and is directing your movements. And somehow this is in co-operation with your own mind and free will. Is this not exactly what a Christian today would call the Holy Spirit leadership of the Believer?

Folks, it’s all about patterns; God patterns. Our understanding of God and of His Word is predicated not on searching His Word for “why”, but rather “which pattern”. The New Testament did NOT establish any new patterns; they but fulfilled earlier ones. When we toss aside the Old Testament, then we toss aside the establishment of patterns of God and so we can’t and don’t recognize them in the New with the result often being that we come up with some rather off-the-mark explanations. Here we see in the Old Testament a pattern established that will be seen again (and God’s people are supposed to recognize it) in the New Testament. That pattern will be followed both by Messiah Yeshua and by His followers.

I want to pause, now, and to establish a little broader context for what we're reading. A search for patterns inevitably will give us clues, if not answers, to the PURPOSE for why certain things happened and were recorded in God's Word. All but the newest to the bible know that Saul, as Israel's first king, eventually failed miserably. God rejected him, Israel rejected him, he was constantly at war, constantly disobedient to the Laws of Moses and he committed suicide on the battle field as his forces were losing. Saul was, predictably, a failed king because he was essentially given the task to rule God's people as God would rule His people. And no man will ever be able to do that without falling short.

But I think we need to recognize that King Saul not only demonstrates a failed king but also represents a type of failed Messiah. Don't let my use of the term Messiah in this context bother you. Judges were Messiahs, deliverers (though, of course, lesser Messiahs). Kings were expected to deliver their people from the hands of their enemies. So do not misunderstand my intent by thinking that Saul was appointed by God to necessarily be Israel's ultimate Messiah, nor does Saul's failure neither to deliver God's people nor to behave in pure ways mean that he was a type of anti-Messiah. Rather the installation of Saul as king is but a recorded example to prove that ultimately only God Himself is perfectly suited to **rule over** His people, and only God Himself is perfectly able **to save** His people. Can you see that part of what is going on in the Old Testament is to show Israel that God is their real king, high priest, and savior? Was not Yeshua declared to be Israel's king, high priest, and savior? And is not Yeshua, God? Do you see how this all goes hand in glove? God can unfailingly rule and save, but man cannot (even though mankind in general thinks we do not need God because we can rule over and save ourselves). Saul was the kind of king and Messiah men choose due to our evil inclinations (the type that will necessarily fail). Yeshua is the kind of king that no man would choose, but IS the kind that God chooses because He is the type, and of the substance, that cannot fail.

Since Genesis we have seen that men need a king. Men also need a high priest (a Mediator between God and man) and men need a Savior. A man coming only from the corrupted seed of Adam will never be able to fill those roles in perfection. But inevitably, because of mankind's fallen nature, we WILL as a race of creatures hope for (look to) a MAN like us (a human being) to rule over us, to act as god and solve our problems, and to save us. It has eventually happened in virtually every culture, all throughout history. It is happening worldwide, and even in America, today (right before our eyes). And the epitome of this man who in the End Times will appear to be everything mankind thinks it wants and needs is the man the Scriptures call the Man of Lawlessness; the anti-Christ.

As we move on in 1st Samuel 10 we come to verse 9 where this amazing statement is made: that as soon as Sha'ul was anointed with oil God gave him a new heart! It almost feels as though we have traveled through a time tunnel from 1020 BC to 30 AD because central to Christianity is that upon a sincere profession of faith in Jesus Christ we are considered as a new man with a new heart. What does it mean that Saul became a new man and got a new heart? It means that Yehoveh so affected Saul's inmost being that he became as a new person with a new understanding. It's not at all that Saul began to feel differently, having deeper emotions; it's that he thought differently. Recall that despite the Greek and Western culture seeing the word "heart" as indicating the seat of our feelings and emotions, in bible

times it was referring to the mind, the seat of the will and of conscious thought.

Then when Sha'ul arrived at the place called the Hill of God (*Giv'ah elohim*) and found the group of prophets (that Samuel told him about) the Spirit of God descended upon him and he began to prophesy in similar manner as these prophets. When a group of people who had known Sha'ul for a number of years witnessed this happening, they were stunned and perplexed. Everyone knew that Sha'ul didn't come from a line of Prophets, nor had he ever been declared a Prophet. He wasn't trained in these ways, was an ordinary man, and so how could he possibly know what he now seems to know and speak this way?

READ ACTS 2:1 - 13

The Holy Spirit acting upon men with such profound effect as to make them speak in ways that didn't seem possible, or to see things they couldn't possibly see, certainly happened in the New Testament, but it also happened centuries earlier in the Old Testament era.

I'd like to end today's lesson with some food for thought. We have spent this time together exploring how we ought to consider Saul and his life in a much broader context and how (as our study of the books of Samuel continues) Saul will compare and contrast with the ideal king of Israel and the divine savior (both of which most of the Hebrews rejected). So let's take an abbreviated look at just how eerily similar Saul's life pattern compares to Yeshua's, with the glaring difference being that the former is but a natural flawed man, while the latter is the incomparable, the perfect, the divine God/man.

As I list this life-pattern of Saul, think about and picture the similar pattern that played out in Jesus' life.

1. He was born into a small family in a small village...
2. He was humble, agreeable, and very conscious of his family duties.
3. As an adult, he is given the mission to search for his father's lost possessions and bring them home.
4. He runs into a strange seer/prophet out in a remote location; one who had been expecting him.
5. The seer/prophet recognizes the man as the one God has chosen to be king over His people
6. The seer/prophet anoints the chosen one, in a private and simple ceremony.
7. The Holy Spirit of God then descends upon him.
8. Now empowered by the Holy Spirit the chosen one begins to prophecy and profess God's Word and do mighty deeds.
9. He is taken to a high place and there finds his arch enemy (in Saul's case, the Philistines).
10. Some mysterious Men of God minister to him at this high place called the Hill of God.
11. Until the right moment the chosen king hides his new identity from the public at large and refuses to openly acknowledge that God has anointed him as king
12. Few of the Hebrews have any faith in him and don't believe that this man can possibly save them.

Add to this the several references we looked at today of Saul being given the Priests' portion and being anointed as a priest is anointed for holy consecration and we see that just as Yeshua is king and priest, so is Saul honored as king and priest.

The ultimate contrast between the failed Messiah (King Sha'ul) and the successful Messiah (King Yeshua) is that Saul is the first physical king of Israel and Yeshua will be Israel's last physical king. But in an even larger picture we see a historical circle completed: the divine God of Israel is their original king and deliverer, then because of the people's rebellion they demand that one of their own race become their king and deliverer, and then after an inevitable series of failures (finally as history comes to a close) the divine God of Israel appears, wrests back control from the corrupt and failed earthly ruler, and once again the Lord becomes the perfect king and deliverer for Israel.

We'll continue in 1st Samuel chapter 10 next time.