

### I Samuel

#### Lesson 16 - Chapter 10 Continued

We continue today in 1st Samuel chapter 10. We ended our last lesson as I expanded the spiritual context in which we ought to view the life of the first human king of Israel Saul (Sha'ul) who had been appointed on God's behalf by the unique priest/prophet/judge Samuel.

It was not Samuel who wanted Israel to have a king but rather several of the leaders of the most influential tribes of Israel who demanded it of him. Certainly no doubt the leaders of the tribe of Benjamin (Saul's tribe) were among those lobbying Samuel to give Israel a king. In hindsight we see that it was really a coalition of the northern tribes of Israel who wanted to go this route of creating an earthly monarchy that reflected all the gentile monarchies that were standard for that era.

I want to review just a bit on last week's lesson as a lead-in to this week's but before I do I want to make a point that I'll repeat a number of times in our study of the 4 books of Kingdoms (Samuel and Kings). And the point is that we must visualize that the bible is the cliff notes of cliff notes. It is but the briefest summary of around 4000 years of redemptive history brought to life through Israel's history. Only the most relevant events are recorded; the ones that have the greatest spiritual importance and the ones that both establish and demonstrate God's character and His justice system, and all of this aiming at the goal of mankind's salvation. And even then it is done so very succinctly and in biblical shorthand (if you would). Thus it is imperative that we take the time and effort to research and learn by whatever means about the customs and operation of the ancient Middle Eastern cultures, and use that as the background and canvas upon which we paint the history of Israel as given to us in Holy Scripture.

The time period of the characters portrayed in the New Testament is no more than 100 years. In contrast the time period of the Old Testament involves several millennia. The time period that the book of Judges alone covers (that ends with Samuel) is 3 to 4 times the length of the period covered by the entire New Testament from Matthew to Revelation. So what we have in the several stories told in the Old Testament is something akin to a series of those green mile marker posts along our nation's highways that (particularly in rural areas) come at about 1 mile intervals. If we assume that what lay in the few square-feet that surrounds a mile marker post is all there is and all that is pertinent then it seems as though our trip is but leaping from one mile marker to the next. If we ignore the huge gaps that lay in between them (which actually forms 99% of the reality through which we are passing) the result is that we don't notice that our route does not consist of a series of singular, lonely, and disconnected mile marker posts but rather our journey is through one continuously flowing, but changing, landscape. The mile marker posts are merely a means of helping us find our way and our marking our progress.

Thus what we are reading about in the story of Saul and his unlikely ascent to the throne of Israel wasn't accomplished in a vacuum; years of unnoticed preparation for this moment had been required and Saul's kingship was also the groundwork for what lay ahead. Just as we can each look to our past and see the most amazing things that the Lord has done to bring us to this point in our lives and we wonder at the miracle of how it was all able to line up in such a way without our having even a hint at the outcome, so it was for all of the biblical characters. The decisions they made were done within the context of their own unique life experiences and situations as they were at the moment of decision. The family, tribal and national decisions made by leaders (even when they were diligently seeking the Lord's guidance) were still accomplished within the context of current Middle Eastern events and circumstances that constructed firmly fixed boundaries as to what the possible range of choices for them might be. Health, weather, terrain, social calm or unrest, peace or war, poverty or prosperity, the ambitions of neighboring nations, the current internal and external political situation, and a score of other factors all played pivotal roles in the biblical narratives and stories. But the challenge for us as students of God's Word is that while most times those factors and circumstances were known to the scripture writers they didn't always record it; so it is up to us to dig into other sources to discover them.

The bottom line is this: Saul was not only a divinely ideal choice for the situation Israel was currently in; he was also a logical and practical selection even though his selection brought with it its own set of challenges that had to be overcome. At this time in history the tribe of Benjamin was allied with the northern confederation (the largest alliance) of Israelite tribes. As we have seen in earlier Torah Class studies, from literally the first moment that Joshua set foot on Canaanite soil Israel split into political factions. It would take a book to explain it (and much would be speculation as to exactly how it all transpired), but we do know (for instance) that 2 tribes (Reuben and Gad) and about ½ of the clans that formed Manassah made the pragmatic decision to settle on the east side of the Jordan River (the Transjordan as it is called in academic circles) rather than enter into the Promised Land. This caused much religious and political tension within the 12 tribe confederation and it very quickly almost came to civil war.

And once the other 9 ½ tribes did enter Canaan they, too, began to further split into factions. Oftentimes geography played a key role in forming these factions. The USA naturally has a greater interest in harmony with Canada and Mexico than it does with Poland or Brazil because of proximity. Due to the great expanse of the oceans that historically isolated the populations of the continents from one another, so it is that the lack of daunting geographical boundaries between nations and people brings interaction and a blending of societies and cultures.

Israel has a natural barrier of mountains that automatically separates the Promised Land into northern and southern regions. And then there was the Jordan River that was a historical boundary of regions and nations and at that time flowed at a far greater rate than it does today and thus formed a substantial barrier. The north is generally more fertile than the south, so more food could be grown and thus a larger population supported in the central and northern parts of Canaan than in the desert-dominated south. The mountains also served to act as a transportation barrier and thus a communications inhibitor between the Israelite tribes of the north from those of the south so relationships between were harder to maintain.

Then there were natural rivalries among the 12 tribes that in some cases had to do with who the mother of their tribal founder was. Judah's mother was Leah, the less favored wife of Jacob, but a legal wife with wife-status nonetheless. Ephraim and Manessah's mother (grandmother actually) was Rachel, Jacob's most favored wife. Dan's mother was one of Jacob's concubines, Bilah, while Gad's mother was another of Jacob's concubines Zilpah so their national status wasn't as great as Ephraim and Judah's. Even how they were organized by Moses and camped together in the Wilderness had to do with family ties; as an example Judah, Issachar and Zebulun formed one unit (camping together on the east side of the Tabernacle) because their common mother was Leah. And we see these relationships carry over at times into Israel's new circumstances of a settled life in Canaan.

So the selection of Saul and what comes immediately after his coronation begins to make a lot more sense when we take these kinds of circumstances into consideration. There were REASONS that things happened as they did in all of the biblical stories and I'll point out some of the more outstanding and important circumstances as we go along.

As we ended our last lesson we discussed this wider spiritual context of considering Saul and all that he represented as including that of a sort of failed Messiah. Remember, while because of our perfect and infallible Messiah in Jesus of Nazareth we tend to think of a Messiah as a one-time for all-time happening, in reality the word messiah is simply a rather common Hebrew term, *mashiach*, which means "one who delivers". Every *Shophet*, judge, of Israel was a *mashiach* whose rise to prominence was brought about by the Lord in order to rescue and deliver one tribe or another from foreign oppression. And since a true deliverer is one who Yehoveh raises up, then there will be similarities among them because God is consistent. The same goes with the matter of kinship; Saul as Israel's first human king and Yeshua as Israel's last MUST have similarities and of course they do. In fact as we look at Saul's life we see a pattern emerge that is substantially followed by Christ, and I gave you a dozen points within the pattern that compare favorably. Of course, the most critical aspect of the pattern has to do with who is carrying out the pattern. The rise of Saul was due to the impulse of men rebelling against the Lord and was a sort of punishment or consequence for that rebellion. The rise of Yeshua was at the impulse of God, men had no hand in it, and so Christ was 100% successful.

Let's re-read a portion of 1st Samuel chapter 10 and we'll talk some more about this.

### RE-READ 1ST SAMUEL 10:17 – end

God had revealed His choice of Israel's first king to Samuel and Samuel informed Saul that he was it. God was not for this in the sense that God wanted Israel to have a human monarchy, but rather it was that God was giving to Israel what it was that their rebellious and ungrateful character demanded: a human replacement for God. It is a characteristic of the Lord that He will at times give His people what they demand even though it is both offensive to Him and naively destructive for them. It is a God-principle that sometimes getting exactly what we want is more of a curse than a blessing. We even have a rather modern Western anecdote that says essentially the same thing: "Be careful what you wish for, you just might get it". I'm not saying that the election of Saul is a curse on Israel, per se, but it cannot be denied that Saul would be

a total failure and caused Israel great harm.

At a private ceremony somewhere in the territory of Zuph, Samuel anointed Sha'ul as king, but at this point no one else was aware of this transaction. But now that Saul had a little time for this astounding turn of events in his life to sink in; and as a result of Samuel's 3 predictions coming true it proved to Saul that indeed God was involved, it was time for Saul to be presented to the public. So Samuel calls for a holy convocation to be held at one of his favored places, Mitzpah.

Mitzpah had become a place where national decisions for Israel were discussed and announced, and where national actions (like a war) were commenced. Apparently there was an altar of sacrifice at Mitzpah; probably some kind of more or less permanent structure that housed at least some articles of holy furniture that at one time resided in the Tabernacle, and almost certainly the Ark of the Covenant resided there from time to time. It may have been the Ark's home-base at this time, but more likely the Ark was moved from holy site to holy site as needed. So it seems as though Israel had multiple holy sites, manned by multiple groups of priests, and we know of at least 2 different and rival High Priests in existence (at least leading up to Samuel) so they each likely presided over separate holy sites and priests loyal to them. And while this is my speculation, I imagine that because of the political fracture between the tribes of the north and the tribes of the south, the High Priests were also aligned one with the north and one with the south and thus there was also two favored holy sites, one in the north and one in the south.

It would seem as though at this time Mitzpah was the favored holy site in the north, (although there were other candidates such as Gilgal and Bethel) and possibly it was Hebron in the south. But it's important to note that all the action we see taking place in this story of Saul is in the geographical north of the Promised Land and this wasn't by accident. Judah and Simeon (the tribes of the southern region) had become somewhat isolated politically and socially from the northern tribes of Israel and they really weren't that hot to have a king that would rule over both the north and the south because they knew they'd get the short end of the stick. After all, Judah and Simeon were rather autonomous at the moment and preferred this arrangement to any other. However Judah was not so jaded as to think they weren't any longer part of Israel; and from a more practical viewpoint, they were no match for the far larger population of the north. Therefore we don't see Judah and Simeon specifically named as the ones who revolted against the idea of a king over all 12 tribes, but it's not hard to imagine that it was the southern tribes who mostly represented the dissenters against Sha'ul who are (late in this chapter) referred to as the ***bene-belial***, the worthless men. Again, keep in mind that Benjamin (even though one border was Judah and the other was Ephraim) at this time was more aligned with the north than the south.

Verse 18 begins with the usual "prophet formula"; that is it begins by saying, "here is what the Lord says". This is our cue to understand that what is coming is NOT human thought but literally it is the mind of God in the form of a message from God delivered by God's messenger (a prophet). Being God's earthly messenger would become the primary job of the office of Prophet, and Samuel is perhaps the first one that we can truly call a Prophet built in this mold.

Naturally since neither the Lord nor Samuel wanted Israel to have a human king, the oracle that Yehoveh would now deliver to Israel through Samuel was one of warning and a reminder that by establishing a monarchy like their neighbors they had just embarked on a path that would eventually become the bane of their existence. And the problem is, once the Genie is out of the bottle he usually can't be put back in it. Interestingly, the first words of the divine message that are spoken remind us of the 1st of the 10 Commandments: "I brought Israel up from Egypt and rescued you from the power of the Egyptians and all the kingdoms that oppressed you." Listen to Exodus 20 verse 2:

***CJB Exodus 20:2 "I am ADONAI your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the abode of slavery"***

The same though appears again in Hosea 11:

***CJB Hosea 11:1 "When Isra'el was a child, I loved him; and out of Egypt I called my son."***

And then in the New Testament:

***CJB Matthew 2:14 So he got up, took the child and his mother, and left during the night for Egypt, 15 where he stayed until Herod died. This happened in order to fulfill what ADONAI had said through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I called my son."***

I want to make a point here that probably wouldn't have become so obscured to the Church if traditional Christianity hadn't ignored Holy Scripture and altered the 10 Commandments to suit our religious philosophy based around gentile leadership. The Traditional 1st commandment in Christianity is "You shall have no other gods before Me". But that is simply incorrect; in fact that is the 2nd commandment as presented in Scripture. So because the original first commandment had been eliminated (as being too Jewish), and because it was clear that there had to be 10 (and not 9) commandments, the Roman Church then took the 2nd commandment, split it apart and made 2 commandments out of it so it would all add up to 10 once again. The first commandment is, "I am Yehoveh your God who brought you out of the Land of Egypt, out of the abode of slavery".

Now please follow me on this: this statement that it is God who brought Israel up from Egypt and freed them from slavery is the quintessential biblical statement about redemption. God is saying, here is the state and condition you are in as a result of what I have done for you. You have been redeemed, saved. It's already done. I did it. I delivered you from the enemy and from slavery to him. You owe no allegiance to anyone but Me.

This matter is so very critical to understand because this gets so mixed up and affects and distorts so many doctrines. God did not take an unredeemed people to Mt. Sinai and give them His Torah, His Law, which then saved them. Rather, FIRST God and God alone redeemed His people through great and terrible acts upon the enemy and only afterward (when they were in a spiritual condition to accept and properly act upon them) He gave His redeemed His laws. God's first statement to His redeemed people was to announce that they WERE redeemed and it was He who had done it.

Folks as I've said many times: the bible is not for anyone but Believers in the God of Israel. The only obedience to God's commands from Holy Scripture that a non-Believer is to follow is to become a Believer in the God of Israel and His Messiah. Without being a Believer God's laws and regulations have no effect upon us or our relationship with Him. The path to harmony with God is NOT: follow His laws and then eventually (as a result) trust in Him. Rather it is trust in Him and THEN (as a result) follow His laws. The modern Christian idea that the expected response of becoming a Believer is that a person then STOPS following God's laws is ludicrous on its face. That such a thing has become perhaps the chief doctrine of our Jewish Messiah's church is beyond the pale.

Why would God commence Saul's inauguration ceremony with such a statement? Because He is reminding Israel that they are redeemed and that He is the one who did it. But verse 19 says, "Today you have rejected your God". Oh boy. By their demand for an earthly king, Israel has rejected their diving king and Redeemer. "God, who Himself saves you from all your disasters and distress", you have decided to replace with a man. Notice the word "saves" in the midst of that sentence (*yasha* in Hebrew). The reason this is important is because "saving" or "delivering" is one of the primary duties of a king, even an earthly king. So Israel is abandoning the One who has *yasha*, saved, them from all their disasters up to this point in favor of another (Saul) who they think will do even more for them from this point forward.

We have a conundrum on our hands when trying to talk about this concept of God the king versus Saul the king. And our conundrum centers on the definition of terms and the mental picture it draws. What God is as a king is entirely different than what man is as a king. Whereas God wants no image of Himself because the visible and the physical is of the least value, for a human king it's all about image and what people see is MOST important to them. Therefore the general sense that we humans have of kingship can be summed up in the word "regal". Regal is the catchall attribute of all human kings. Webster's Dictionary says regal means, stately, splendid, royal. Having the finest most expensive clothes; living in the biggest most magnificent house; eating the best foods and being catered to for your every whim. For humans it is all about the visual and the grand personal benefits that come with the office. Regal is a word that really only pertains to the humanly established monarchies and kings. But this is not at all what God is as a king, nor will be as a king, and so is NOT what we ought to envision about Him.

Thus in order that Samuel could introduce Israel's king to the population at large he had all the tribal leaders come to Mitzpah (probably the Ark of God was brought there) and participate in a drawing of lots, and the chosen tribe was Benjamin. Then the clans forming the tribe of Benjamin drew lots and the chosen clan was Matri. Then the families who formed the clan of Matri drew lots and the chosen family was Kish. And then from the family of Kish Saul was chosen. And when Saul was introduced as king to the Israeli leadership, the primary kingly attribute that was offered as proof of Saul being the appropriate choice was that he stood a head and shoulders taller than anyone else! So Samuel says, "Do you see (VISUALLY SEE) that there is no one like him among all the people"? Well, his physical stature was regal, so that sealed the deal for the leaders of Israel. He looked like what they thought a king ought to look like (which was modeled after what their gentile neighbors thought of a king) so they got very excited and hailed Saul: "Long live the king". This is the first time that Saul is finally

referred to as king.

Let me throw something out as food for thought and then we'll go back and look at a couple of details about this ceremony. The Church has painted our Savior Yeshua in a regal image: crown of gold, tall and handsome, penetrating eyes, flowing robes of purple, magnificent banners going ahead of and behind Him, splendid in every way. The Church has presented this visual of a returning Jesus to the world and it's often this same image of Him that is created in song and in praise. But how does that compare with what we are told about the characteristics of God and about Messiah (who IS God)? He was unlovely, a commoner. He was no one that you would pick out of a crowd. In fact after he was mercilessly whipped he was almost unrecognizable as a human. We're told in Revelation that He will wear a robe dipped in blood. He told us that the greatest thing we could do for Him (as His disciples) was to help someone poor and downtrodden, and to care for the most vulnerable. He will lead the charge of the warrior saints at Armageddon, putting Himself at the front, in harms way; He will not be riding on a well-attended and defended royal chariot that is surrounded by bodyguards to be sure nothing happens to him. God didn't want a fabulous Temple for an earthly dwelling place; but a human king was determined to build Him one because that's how humans think about kings. The Lord doesn't want silver and gold; God is anything but regal.

Here's the point: we tend to think about Yeshua in regal terms just as the Israelites thought of what their king ought to be in regal terms because by definition regal is a purely human attribute. God is not about regal, because regal is a fleshly and not a godly characteristic. Yeshua has been given power and authority precisely because He fulfilled the ideal of all godly justice and attributes among which regal is nowhere to be found. Jesus is the anti-regal. He is every pure and righteous characteristic that God says is divinely kingly and the last thing that involves is "image". In fact (although I don't want to get ahead of ourselves), when the Lord picked David to replace Saul, David was (image-wise) the opposite of Saul and he had no regal appearance: he was too young, too small, and too ordinary to be a king in the eyes of most Israelites. David just didn't fit the image of a king.....at least not that of a typical human king. Enough said.

I told you that when Saul was publically chosen it was done by lots. However I readily acknowledge that nowhere is the word "lot" (*goral* in Hebrew) present in these passages. However every element of choosing by lot is present as well as the typical scriptural lot choosing language and formula. There were really only two divine methods of choosing "before the Lord" used by Israel at this time: the Urim and Thummim, and lots. The Urim and Thummim only gave yes and no answers and had to be administered by the High Priest (since he actually carried them inside his ritual vest). Since Samuel administered this the only other means is by lot and just as lots were used by Moses to select territory for the tribes no doubt it was lots used here to select Saul.

Now it must be understood that while lots is seen as a game of chance by most societies (and certainly in modern times), in the bible lots done "before the Lord" was actually a means of the Lord indicating His divine choice. Thus we see a very rational, orderly procedure using the process of elimination for the divine choice to be revealed. First, the choice is among 12 tribes. Then when the one tribe is selected the next choice is among the dozen or so major clan

divisions of the chosen tribe (Benjamin). Then when the clan (Matri) is chosen the next drawing of lots is among the major family heads, and then finally the individual is singled out. So since we all knew going in that the Lord had already selected Saul, it wasn't that the Lottery had been "fixed" because the procedure of the lots wasn't to determine a winner but rather to REVEAL the divine choice to the participants.

There was another benefit to this procedure: Saul would have yet another proof that he was supposed to be Israel's king. And as we have already seen that Saul was a man full of doubts, this was needed for his sake.

In verse 25 we get a kind of cryptic statement that Sh'mu'el told the people what kinds of rulings (what kind of justice) should be made in the kingdom and then wrote it on a scroll. Here's what happened: the establishment of a human king had been anticipated some 300 years earlier and how that king should operate was already determined.

Open your bibles to Deuteronomy 17.

### **READ DEUTERONOMY 17:14 – end**

These rules listed in Deuteronomy 17 were about how any Israelite monarchy should operate since by means of God anointing Saul and separating Him from the rest of Israel, Yehoveh made the kingdom of Saul and all future kingdoms of Israel a divine institution and not merely a human government. Thus unlike the kingdoms of the nations, Israel would put limits on their king rather than their king putting limits on his subjects. Whereas earthly monarchies were all about the rights of the king and the duties of the kingdom, Deuteronomy set up the rights of the kingdom and the DUTIES of the king.

Last week and in the previous couple of lessons we discussed that in 1st Samuel chapter 8 a new legal agreement would be set up between Israel's earthly king and that it would necessarily be administered differently than the legal agreement between God and Israel. And this is because God is the perfect divine king but a human king is inherently sinful and faulty. Well, that new legal agreement was based on Deuteronomy 17 and that is what Samuel wrote on the scroll and set before Adonai. Actually the scroll was very possibly even deposited beside or even in the Ark of the Covenant as once again the phrase "before the Lord" is employed to explain where it would be stored.

Once the ceremony was completed Samuel sent everyone home, and Saul returned to his hometown of Giv'ah accompanied by men who in Hebrew are called ***gibborim***. These ***gibborim*** were Saul's personal bodyguards; men who pledged allegiance to the king. In fact the passage explains that it was an act of God that these men were willing to accept this duty. Usually in our bibles these men are called "mighty men" or "men of valor". It's less a matter of them being great warriors than it is that they were unfailingly faithful to their king. This sound good, but it simply brings about what Samuel said would happen in chapter 8; that Israel's king would conscript the best of Israel's young men and remove them from their families for personal service to him.



In verse 27 we are told that some scoundrels (***bene-belial***) refused to accept Saul as their king. Understand why they were seen as worthless men; it was that they refused to accept God's will in this matter. And as I mentioned earlier there is little doubt that many of these ***bene-belial*** were members of the southern tribes who were not keen on a man loyal to the northern tribes ruling over them. And they also didn't do what was expected that you do with a new king: you bring him a gift when he is inaugurated.

What this all means is that Saul had a problem and Samuel knew it. There was sufficient opposition to his kingship that he couldn't immediately begin to rule and reign merely because a ceremony had occurred; an opportunity to prove himself would be needed so that the dissenters would be quieted.

That opportunity would be soon in coming. In fact that is what chapter 11 is all about.