

# 1 Samuel 8-10 • The King of Israel

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1 Samuel chapter 8, verse 1. *“When Samuel became old, he made his sons judges over Israel. <sup>2</sup> The name of his firstborn son was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; they were judges in Beersheba.” (ESV)* Stop there for just a moment, please.

As Samuel got up in age, he began to recognize a void existed in the area of spiritual leadership in Israel. No one was really coming up in the ranks if you will, to step into his position.

Israel had done quite well during the period of time that Samuel was considered a judge. And remember what a judge did. Essentially, they would judge Israel in the sense that they would hear their complaints, settle their grievances. But Samuel was so much more than that. He was a priest. He was a prophet. He was a spiritual leader and the people looked up to him.

Now he's getting old and there's nobody who is rushing in to fill the vacuum where Samuel had been ministering. And so he took his boys Joel and Abijah said, guys, come on, we're going to, I'm going to set you up as judges in the land. And you guys will... Apparently there was a large population around Beersheba so that's where he had his boys. You'll remember that Samuel himself used to write a circuit of hitting the major cities. And even though he lived in Ramah.

Well, the problem with raising up his boys is that number one, there was no precedent for it in the Word of God. All of the judges who came before Samuel had been raised up by God Himself. All of them. No man was ever raised up specifically by another man. In fact, I don't remember any other judge appointing a successor.

The other problem was, the boys weren't that great. Look what it goes on to say in verse 3. *“Yet his sons did not walk in his ways but turned aside after gain. They took bribes and perverted justice.”* Like Eli who came before him, Samuel struggled with his boys.

Now on a level of severity to me. I mean, it's still severe, but remember something. Remember the difference between Eli and Samuel. Eli's sons were

priests. Samuel's sons were judges. And, so there was a little bit more grace, I guess you could say, that came with that position. But still, the people knew that these guys weren't living the way they should. So we can assume that Samuel did too.

And they basically confront him about his idea. Verse 4. *"Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah (which is of course where he lived) <sup>5</sup> and said to him, "Behold, you are old..."* That's not nice. I don't think it's even politically correct to say. Just try it, see what somebody says, you walk up to them and just go, you're old. But they're making a point here.

They're basically saying, you're getting up there in age, that they say, *"and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint for us a king to judge us like all the nations."* Stop there, please. This is such a pivotal point in the narrative, in the history of Israel, and all the things that go along with it.

The elders of Israel correctly identified the problem. Samuel was getting up there in age. There was no one who was looking like they were a successor for him. So what are they supposed to do? Well, the best thing would have been to say to Samuel, the elders come to Samuel say, so Samuel, we call upon you to pray and ask God to anoint a new leader for Israel. A new person to judge. By the way, why did they call the person the judge? Well, it was a unique position because, they weren't king, obviously we haven't gotten to that point yet.

And the other thing is that you have to, understand Israel was under a theocracy at this time. What does that mean? It means God's in charge. Okay. A theocracy is a word that simply means a government based on God, where God is running the show, obviously using people, but they're looking to God. They're trusting in God. He's the one who directs the whole thing. Obviously our country is a democracy, okay. Of the people, by the people, for the people.

But what they're asking Samuel to give them is a monarchy. They're saying, we want a king. The worst thing though, and this must have absolutely deflated Samuel's heart, the worst thing about their request is what they say at the very end of it. Appoint us a king. Why? *"...to judge us like all the nations."*

Obviously this is going to be a huge mistake on their part. Although some of the kings are going to be okay, the vast majority of them are going to be bad. Bad. And, so they're coming to Samuel and they set this thing up and say, Samuel, you're old. And your sons aren't walking in your ways, but that's just a front. That's just an excuse.

The excuse, basically, that they are giving to Samuel to cover up the fact that they no longer want to walk by faith. They no longer want God to be in charge of their lives. They no longer want to be living under this theocracy or theocratic rule where God is in charge, working through priests and prophets and stuff like that.

They're basically saying, we don't want to do that anymore. We're tired of doing that. We want to be a nation like the world. We want to be just like the world. All the nations have kings. We want to have a king too. And they're going to bring out another reason in just a little bit. But I just want you to see this desire for a human leader. This tendency that we all have to run to other humans for our answers is absolutely huge in our lives. I mean.

One of the things that I have fought and I mean fought tooth and nail, is people looking at me like I'm something special. Or coming to me for advice before they've prayed. That's like just flat out wrong. To come to me or any other human being, before you look to the Lord is not smart. To come to me and ask me to pray for you, thinking that my prayer is going to do better than the person sitting next to you, is pretty dumb too.

But we have this tendency to think that this person's better than the other person or whatever the case might be. And really, even though we may be asking for prayer, we're depending upon an individual. I want him to say the prayer. I want her to say the prayer because it has to be a special prayer. And I understand the desire to make sure that, hey, if we're going to pray, I want this to work. I get that. But that's more predicated upon your faith than anything else.

And I understand the human tendency to turn to people. I understand that because I'm a human just like you are, and I know what it's like. It's nice to have somebody who's a living, breathing, warm blooded, human being that's there present at a time of need, or a time of comfort, or a time of counsel and advice. I understand that.

But what we have to understand Christians is that many times we do just what the people of Israel do. We throw off the theocracy of God's lordship in our lives in favor of running to a human being who's going to be there and supply whatever it is we need. Comfort encouragement.

Now don't get me wrong. God likes to work through people to bring comfort and encouragement into your life. God will work through people to bring you counsel. God will work through people to bring you assurance or a warning. God will do that. But the question is, are you looking to God? Is your attitude

one that says, God, you are my source, you are my source, or is your source somewhere else? And it's like God is one of many sources maybe. I have a lot of people in my life. I got God, I got... Is He the source of your life? So this is a huge temptation, obviously.

And that's one of the reasons why it tells us in verse 6 that this “...*displeased Samuel when they said, “Give us a king to judge us.”*” And Samuel just he had to go pray. Says, he “*prayed to the LORD.*” I mean, Samuel was so upset by this attitude of the people, he just had to take it to prayer. And that tells you something about Samuel too. He was a man of prayer.

And when he was concerned, when he was upset, he brought it to God. And he had a relationship with God, someone He could bring things to. There's a lot of people who pray to God, but they don't have a relationship with Him. Do you know that? And it's very unsatisfied. Because it's talking to yourself.

There's really no sense of assurance that comes from a time of prayer or any sense of satisfaction that grows out of it to the point where you get done praying and you go, wow, that's good, now it's in the hands of my Heavenly Father and I can leave it there because He loves me and He promised never to leave me nor forsake me. And I know that He's working all these things together for good. I know that. And you walk away from the place of prayer, lifted up and encouraged.

So many people pray without any relationship with God. And it's going and talking to a stranger. And I'm not saying that they're not born again. Do you guys understand it's possible to be born again and not have a relationship, a close relationship with God? You can be very distant. And boy, let me tell you, I've been there, done that.

You can know that you know that you know that you know, you're going to heaven because Jesus died for you on the cross, and you're just, you're confident. He died for my sins. In my life I've never, and I'm not bragging, I've just never struggled with the issue of my salvation.

When I got saved, I knew I was saved and I haven't looked back one time in all the years that I've walked with the Lord. That doesn't mean I've always walked with the Lord well. Do you know what I mean? I've gotten, there've been periods of my life where I've become very distant relationally with God. Oh yeah, I'm going to heaven, but it's like we're estranged. It's like with my wife.

I mean, we're married, but if I just stopped talking to her pretty soon, I'd be like just rooming with this person, and have a stranger in my home that really I don't have a relationship with, but we're still man and wife. We're still married, that didn't change, but the relationship is just not there. It's very possible for that to happen with a believer.

So here you are, as a believer, and let me tell you something you go through in your life where you go through one of those dry spells. You know how that's like. We can all relate to dry spells. And you're just not in the Word like you should be, and you're not fellowshiping like you should be, and you're not walking with the Lord, praying like you should be.

And then something really rotten happens in life, and I mean really rotten. And you're devastated, absolutely devastated. And it just, it absolutely blows you out of the water. Why? Because there was no relationship there to carry you through that personal close walk with Jesus. Which by the way, carries with it an assurance.

That's probably the best thing, the most wonderful thing about having a close and intimate walk with Jesus Christ is that it goes, it carries an assurance along with it. It's like Paul said in Ephesians, he said, in that whole section about putting on the full armor of God. He talks about it this way. He says, so that when the day of evil comes, you can stand up under it and not get blown away. (Ephesians 6:13)

The day of evil pops up every so often and it has all kinds of different heads that pop up. In different forms, different circumstances and so on and so forth. It's going to happen. You know that they're going to happen from time to time in life. So Paul says, put on the full armor of God so that you're prepared for when the day of evil comes. Make sure that you're close with God, you're connected with God, you're self-controlled and alert. Knowing that your enemy, the devil, and so on and so on. You see what I'm saying?

But if you're not, if you're just all distracted, looking around. Yeah. And the world has got your attention and you're focused on that. And then the day of evil comes, whoa bad news. And then you come and you start praying to God and it's not satisfying, and you don't come away with an assurance, because you haven't nurtured a relationship with God during that season of distraction. And it's just, it's so hard.

I'm interested in how the Lord responds here. Verse 7, it says, *“And the LORD said to Samuel, “Obey the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for*

*they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them.<sup>8</sup> According to all the deeds that they have done, from the day I brought them up out of Egypt even to this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are also doing to you.”*

In other words, what God is saying to Samuel is, buddy, this isn't nothing new. This has been going on since I called this nation as a nation. They have been disobedient. They have been rebellious. They have always walked away from Me. So listen, it's not you they're rejecting. It's Me, ultimately.

He says, *“<sup>9</sup> Now then, obey their voice; only you shall solemnly warn them and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them.”*

*“<sup>10</sup> So Samuel told all the words of the LORD to the people who were asking for a king from him.”* And here's where he's going to begin to prophesy. Not just, this is not experience. This is prophecy.

*“<sup>11</sup> He said, “These will be the ways of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and appoint them to his chariots and to be his horsemen and to run before his chariots. <sup>12</sup> And he will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and some to plow his ground and to reap his harvest, and to make his implements of war and the equipment of his chariots. <sup>13</sup> He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. <sup>14</sup> He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards and give them to his servants. <sup>15</sup> He will take the tenth of your grain and of your vineyards and give it to his officers and to his servants. <sup>16</sup> He will take your male servants and female servants and the best of your young men and your donkeys, and put them to his work. <sup>17</sup> He will take the tenth of your flocks, and you shall be his slaves. <sup>18</sup> And in that day you will cry out because of your king, whom you have chosen for yourselves, but the LORD will not answer you in that day.”*

Boy, how would you respond if somebody came along and gave you a word from the Lord like that? It's like, can I reconsider that for a minute, maybe? We're going to go have a meeting here and go over that stuff. But when you're headstrong and rebellious and you're just going to do your own thing, it's like, don't confuse me with the facts. My mind's made up. I don't care. We're doing this thing.

And it says in verse 19 that, *“...the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel. And they said, “No! But there shall be a king over us, ...”* And look at this, look at this.

Number 1. *“<sup>20</sup> that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles.”* Wow. Those are all really three really bad reasons to ask for a king, but God had been doing all these things for them. And He'd been doing them very well, by the way. He had been judging them. He had been going out to fight their battles. In fact, He told them, the battle belongs to the Lord.

But I think it's interesting there and you see one of the big reasons that they were looking for a human, and I think this applies to our lives, why we often look to humans. They were looking for security. The Philistines were a constant threat. There was always the Amorites and there was, who knows who's going to pop their head up and attack us. And life can get really rotten, really fast.

And essentially, they had no army to speak of. They had no generals or commanders. Whenever people threatened them, usually it was a judge who would just raise the flag and say, all right, everybody, come on, let's get together and go fight the enemy. And they'd go and fight in the strength of the Lord. But they didn't have an army. They didn't have a draft. They didn't have any of that. It was just like, hey, man, let's call out all the men, we're going up against these guys.

But you see, they got to looking at the world and they thought, all these countries have these fancy armies. And they've got their fancy weapons and they've got this, and they've got, and it's all very impressive. And it gave them a sense of security to the point where they said, we want to be like that. We want to have that in our lives.

And sometimes that's why we look to people, human beings, in our lives, because we think we're lacking security. And we become afraid. And we want somebody to fight our battles for us instead of putting it into the hands of the Lord, and trusting Him for the outcome. That's too scary. For one thing, I can't manipulate God. He's really tough to manipulate. But, a human being, different story. So we turn to people.

If I have to think of any good thing out of this whole conversation between Samuel and the people, the only good thing that I can take away from it is that at least they didn't decide to choose their own king. And that's a small thing, but at least it's something. They came to Samuel and said a point for us a king.

And obviously, they knew Samuel was a godly man. He wasn't going to choose someone, by himself. He was going to let the Lord do it. At least that was something good. And of course Saul will be chosen. And David will be chosen

by the Lord after that. After that point, it's a succession of sons unless there's a hostile takeover. Which happened later on.

Verse 21 ends out the chapter by saying, *“And when Samuel had heard all the words of the people, he repeated them in the ears of the LORD.”* And that's a, it's a human way of just saying to you that he, in prayer, brought it back. It's not like God didn't hear them and didn't know this stuff. But, they're just telling you.

*“<sup>22</sup> And the LORD said to Samuel, “Obey their voice and make them a king.” Samuel then said to the men of Israel, “Go every man to his city.””* So basically Samuel just dispersed. He said, go home. Go home. I'll talk to God and we'll pick a king.

*“There was a man of Benjamin whose name was Kish, the son of Abiel, son of Zeror, son of Becorath, son of Aphiah, a Benjaminite, a man of wealth. <sup>2</sup> And he had a son whose name was Saul, a handsome young man. There was not a man among the people of Israel more handsome than he. From his shoulders upward he was taller than any of the people.*

*<sup>3</sup> Now the donkeys of Kish, Saul's father, were lost. So Kish said to Saul his son, “Take one of the young men with you, and arise, go and look for the donkeys.”* Stop there for a moment.

You might be thinking to yourself, who cares about some donkeys? Actually back in that culture, donkeys were absolutely huge from the standpoint of the their usefulness. They were used for transportation, they were used for hauling, they were used for farm labor, and they were so every day that even poor people owned a donkey. But it was a sign of wealth to own a lot of donkeys.

So if you owned a lot, you would be known as a person of some means. But it was a disaster to lose them because it's like losing your ability to farm, and take things, and go places. It's like losing your tractor and your car all at the same time.

It says, his father sends him out to find these missing donkeys. *“<sup>4</sup> And he passed through the hill country of Ephraim and passed through the land of Shalishah, but they did not find them. And they passed through the land of Shaalim, but they were not there. Then they passed through the land of Benjamin, but did not find them.*

*<sup>5</sup> When they came to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant who was with him, “Come, let us go back, lest my father cease to care about the donkeys and*



become anxious about us.” <sup>6</sup> But he said to him, “Behold, there is a man of God in this city, and he is a man who is held in honor; all that he says comes true. So now let us go there. Perhaps he can tell us the way we should go.” <sup>7</sup> Then Saul said to his servant, “But if we go, what can we bring the man? For the bread in our sacks is gone, and there is no present to bring to the man of God. What do we have?” <sup>8</sup> The servant answered Saul again, “Here, I have with me a quarter of a shekel of silver, and I will give it to the man of God to tell us our way.” <sup>9</sup> (Formerly in Israel, (it says) when a man went to inquire of God, he said, “Come, let us go to the seer,” for today’s “prophet” was formerly called a seer.) <sup>10</sup> And Saul said to his servant, “Well said; come, let us go.” So they went to the city where the man of God was.

<sup>11</sup> As they went up the hill to the city, they met young women coming out to draw water and said to them, “Is the seer here?” <sup>12</sup> They answered, “He is; behold, he is just ahead of you. Hurry. He has come just now to the city, because the people have a sacrifice today on the high place. <sup>13</sup> As soon as you enter the city you will find him, before he goes up to the high place to eat. For the people will not eat till he comes, since he must bless the sacrifice; afterward those who are invited will eat. Now go up, for you will meet him immediately.” <sup>14</sup> So they went up to the city. As they were entering the city, they saw Samuel coming out toward them on his way up to the high place.

<sup>15</sup> Now the day before Saul came, the LORD had revealed to Samuel: <sup>16</sup> “Tomorrow about this time I will send to you a man from the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him to be prince over my people Israel. He shall save my people from the hand of the Philistines. For I have seen my people, because their cry has come to me.” Two things I want to bring up.

This connection between Samuel and Saul started off because some donkeys got lost. That sounds like a pretty mundane sort of a circumstance, doesn't it? What brought you guys together? Donkeys. Lost some donkeys. But God is going to use this situation to bring these guys together, to bring about His will.

Because God had already chosen Saul. It tells us here the day before he told Samuel, okay, you're going to meet this young guy. His name is Saul. He's going to be the king. But donkey's got it started.

You see, the point of this is just for you and I to remember, when it comes to being led by the Lord, when it comes to being spirit aware, there's really no such thing as a mundane happening. A God moment can grow out of just about anything that you may be doing. Everything from going to the grocery store, to taking a trip and sitting on an airplane next to somebody who needs to hear about Jesus.

My wife loves to travel. I think I've told you this before. She loves traveling on airplanes because of the opportunities it gives her to witness. She just loves it. She just can't wait. She prays before she goes on a trip that God would bring about somebody sitting next to her that she can talk to the Lord about. I'm just trying to remember to bring my toothbrush and she's praying ahead, for the person she's going to sit with. And sometimes I feel like such a spiritual weenie around her, honestly I really do. But, she just loves that, that opportunity.

Just you think, wow, I'm just sitting on a plane next to this perfect stranger. We might sit here together for a couple of hours and if I'm lucky, they won't start talking. And we can just ignore each other or something like that. But that could be an opportunity that could change their life. Just because you took time to just say something very simple. So donkeys, yeah, God can even work through lost donkeys.

The other quick thing I want to make a point I want to make about this is this whole, this desire for a king is nothing more than the rejection of God. Okay.

But did you notice what the Lord said to Samuel at the end, in the end of verse 16? He said, this guy's coming, I've chosen him to be king. He's going to save my people from the Philistines because their cry has come before my ears. Here's God raising up someone who is going to deliver Israel from their enemies, because their cries had come to His ears. And yet, just their wanting a king is an act of disobedience and rebellion.

Do you see God's mercy? Do you see how different God is than you and I? I mean, somebody does something against you and I, and we're like, alright, you're cut off. I mean, it just takes one thing, right? Oh no, no. No three strikes. It's one strike and it's not that, you're out, you're dead, sort of a thing. Hey, listen, you crossed me, buddy. Boom! Sort of a thing.

Do you see God's heart of long suffering? That even when these people were clamoring for a king, why? Because the nations have one. Oh yeah, all those nations you mean that you've conquered? At least once or twice? Yeah, that helped them a lot. Doesn't matter. God still loves these people. And He still does things to help them. He still raises up godly leaders and delivers them and so forth.

*“<sup>17</sup> When Samuel saw Saul, the LORD told him, “Here is the man of whom I spoke to you! He it is who shall restrain my people.” (and) <sup>18</sup> Then Saul approached Samuel in the gate and said, “Tell me where is the house of the seer?” <sup>19</sup> Samuel answered Saul, “I am the seer. Go up before me to the high*

*place, for today you shall eat with me, and in the morning I will let you go and will tell you all that is on your mind. <sup>20</sup> As for your donkeys that were lost three days ago, do not set your mind on them, for they have been found. And for whom is all that is desirable in Israel? Is it not for you and for all your father's house?'"* That's a very fancy way of saying that the whole nation of Israel is looking to you.

This has got to be weird for Saul to have gone looking for lost donkeys and then run into Samuel. And Samuel says you are the desire of nations. Like, did you know that I was out looking for lost donkeys? I'm a donkey searcher. I'm not sure what this desire of the nations thing is all about, but I think you got the wrong cowboy.

You know what that tells you a little bit about Saul that is in his early days. There was a humility in his heart that was very attractive. We'll see it even further. Unfortunately, it went away and a pride grew up in him connected to his position as king, which actually is what caused his rule to end. But anyway.

*"<sup>21</sup> Saul answered, "Am I not a Benjaminite, from the least of the tribes of Israel? And is not my clan the humblest of all the clans of the tribe of Benjamin? Why then have you spoken to me in this way?""*

Again, this is an attractive attitude to see in Saul. Benjamin was a small little tribe and he was like. You know what? We are a very humble tribe. My clan within the tribe of Benjamin is very humble, and I'm a nobody. I'm out looking for donkeys and you're coming and talking to me this way.

And *"<sup>22</sup> Then Samuel took Saul and his young man and brought them into the hall and gave them a place at the head of those who had been invited, (and that course was a place of honor) who were about thirty persons. <sup>23</sup> And Samuel said to the cook, "Bring the portion I gave you, of which I said to you, 'Put it aside.'"* <sup>24</sup> So the cook took up the leg and what was on it (your Bible may say shoulder) and set them before Saul. And Samuel said, "See, what was kept is set before you."

And there was a symbolic significance of the part of the animal that was given to Saul. It was like the choice part of the meat. Again, it was a visible communication of the specialness of Saul's calling.

And he says, "Eat, because it was kept for you until the hour appointed, that you might eat with the guests."

*"So Saul ate with Samuel that day. <sup>25</sup> And when they came down from the high place into the city, a bed was spread for Saul on the roof, and he lay down to*

sleep. <sup>26</sup> Then at the break of dawn Samuel called to Saul on the roof, “Up, that I may send you on your way.” So Saul arose, and both he and Samuel went out into the street.

<sup>27</sup> As they were going down to the outskirts of the city, Samuel said to Saul, “Tell the servant to pass on before us, and when he has passed on, stop here yourself for a while, that I may make known to you the word of God.”” And presumably that is more about the calling and function of his kingship.

Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on his head...” And that is a picture symbolically of the Holy Spirit. And that speaks of the anointing of God's Holy Spirit. When oil is poured upon the head of an individual, at least in a sacred sense, they would actually pour oil on people's heads just as an expression of you're my guest.

When people would come over to their homes, they were hot and tired and they considered oil to be a soothing. Like you and I would consider a glass of ice water. Somebody comes in there hot, we'd say, hey, can I get you a glass of ice water? Oh, that'd be great. In the Middle East, its pour oil over their head and then wash their feet. And that's the way you would honor a guest to refresh them from their journey.

And you'll remember that, remember when Jesus came into one of the Pharisees homes, and He didn't do either of those things. And it was just a common courtesy. I mean, it was a real, it was a real violation of decorum not to do it.

And that's when a woman showed up on the scene and broke open a flask of ointment, and anointed Jesus's feet and so forth. And you'll remember, He, Jesus worked that into His conversation with the Pharisee. You didn't do any of these things when I came into your home and yet she's, you didn't wash My feet, but she's been washing them with her tears, and wiping them with her hair. You didn't anoint My head with oil. She's anointing My feet with this precious ointment that was very expensive and so forth and so on. So you get a little bit of the background of some of that.

And he says to him, “*Has not the LORD anointed you to be prince over his people Israel? And you shall reign over the people of the LORD and you will save them from the hand of their surrounding enemies. And this shall be the sign to you that the LORD has anointed you to be prince over his heritage.*”

And then he gives him a series of signs. “<sup>2</sup> When you depart from me today, you will meet two men by Rachel's tomb in the territory of Benjamin at Zelzah, and they will say to you, ‘The donkeys that you went to seek are found, and now

*your father has ceased to care about the donkeys and is anxious about you, saying, "What shall I do about my son?"' <sup>3</sup> Then you shall go on from there farther and come to the oak of Tabor. Three men going up to God at Bethel will meet you there, one carrying three young goats, another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a skin of wine. <sup>4</sup> And they will greet you and give you two loaves of bread, which you shall accept from their hand. <sup>5</sup> After that you shall come to Gibeath-elohim, where there is a garrison of the Philistines. And there, as soon as you come to the city, you will meet a group of prophets coming down from the high place with harp, tambourine, flute, and lyre before them, prophesying. <sup>6</sup> Then the Spirit of the LORD will rush (look at this) upon you, and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man." Stop there.*

We come back to that same issue we dealt with in the Book of Acts about the Spirit coming upon, right? Not in. Do you know in the Old Testament, the Spirit never came in? The Spirit never indwelt someone until after the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It was only then that the Spirit came in to give new birth. Up to this point, the Spirit did not indwell people.

You might say, well, why not? Because the vessel had not yet been cleansed by the blood of the Lamb. It doesn't mean there wasn't forgiveness. There was temporary forgiveness, but there was no punishment. The Bible tells us in no uncertain terms that the sins of the Old Testament, or the sins committed before the cross, went unpunished.

You didn't think God was punishing animals, did you? Because that's not what was going on. Those animals that were given in sacrifice, God was not punishing the animal. A lot of Christians think so. The animal was an innocent bystander in the whole equation. Their blood was shed as a sign to the worshiper that a sacrifice must take place and that it must be a blood sacrifice. Okay?

It was that constant reminder of substitution. Substitution. In the Old Testament, when someone came to the altar, to be forgiven of their sin, they didn't die, but an animal did to show substitution. It's a picture. And the blood was then sprinkled on the altar to show that the blood must be slain and applied to the issue of sin, that there might be forgiveness of sins.

But make no mistake about it. The sins committed before the cross were left unpunished, okay? So the Spirit did not come in to dwell. But once Jesus paid the price and the punishment of all sin was paid for, the vessel was now cleansed in such a way that the Spirit could come in to indwell, right? Okay? In the Old Testament, the Spirit merely came upon.

Now, that's something that can happen to us, too. The Spirit can come upon us, right? But remember, that's always for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It is for power, right? To walk in the power of the Spirit. That's what Jesus said in Acts chapter 1. And “*you will receive power when the Holy Spirit... (comes on, or) upon you.*” (Acts 1:8) They were already saved.

Here Saul, he's being told all these signs that will confirm this calling. And he said the very end, when this happens, when you hear this music, and these prophets, and they will speak over you and so forth, God's Spirit will come upon you and you will be changed.

Now, you might be thinking to yourself, changed, huh? Saul went on to do some pretty creepy stuff, so how do you explain that if God changed him? Well, God did change him, but it doesn't mean that we can't resist the work of the Holy Spirit.

God does a work of changing our hearts too, but it doesn't mean we can't fight it. It's why we're told not to resist, not to grieve the Holy Spirit with whom we've been sealed unto the day of redemption. (Ephesians 4:30) We can do that. We can grieve God's Spirit.

And even though Saul wasn't indwelt by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit was upon him. But in the succeeding years, because of his pride, and his arrogance, and his jealousy and his fear of man, he was a man who had nothing to be afraid of. And he was ransacked by the fear of man; particularly the fear of David, eventually. That it just, I mean, he literally went insane and we'll see that.

But here was a man upon whom the Spirit rested in power. But eventually Saul got so far away from the Lord that God removed His spirit. Do you remember when David committed adultery with Bathsheba? He cried out in his famous prayer of repentance, which is recorded for us in the Psalms. And as he's crying out and asking God to forgive him, he said, take not your Holy Spirit from me. (Psalm 51:11) That was a very real possibility in the Old Testament. For someone to grieve the Spirit so much that the Spirit would be removed from upon. Okay.

We're not talking about the spirit being taken, from within. You're born again, you're born again sort of a thing, you know what I mean? But you can't sing your way out of that relationship. But the power of the Spirit coming upon a believer was a different sort of a dispensation of God's Spirit.

Verse 7, “*Now when these signs meet you, (oh, I like this verse) do what your hand finds to do, for God is with you.*” I want you to notice that verse and if you're one of those people who struggles determining the will of God, and you know who you are, I don't necessarily, so I'm not looking around waiting for you to blush or anything.

If you're one of those people who struggles with knowing the will of God and not moving until you know the will of God, I want to encourage you to underline this verse.

This is an important verse and I want you to look at it with me again because Samuel says to Saul, “*Now when these signs meet you, (and particularly when the Spirit comes upon you and empowers you to do his will, he says) do what your hand finds to do,...*” That's another way of saying. Just do what needs to be done. Just do it! Well, do what? Whatever! Why? “*...God is with you.*” “*...God is with you.*”

I have met Christians who are tied up in knots over trying to determine the will of God. And the only thing worse for those people than trying to determine the will of God in a particular situation is trying to determine the will of God where there are multiple options. They hate that. They only want one. Only, God can only give me one option, and then I either choose that or not.

And I've had people come to me who are just distressed and they'll say, I was praying for a job in this town or something, and I got four offers now, what am I going to do? My response is pick one. It's like, hey, did you pray about this? Yes. Do you believe God's leading you to live in this place and work there? Yes. So He gave you options. What's wrong with that? No, that is not how it works. I got to know that I got to know that I got to know that this is as if, I mean, good grief.

I mean, have you prayed about which door you're going to leave tonight when you leave this room? Because there's a few options. God, which one would You have me do? There's those two doors that go in the entryway. I could go through into the coffee room. It's just, it becomes this situation where we're so tied in knots and we're so paralyzed, we do nothing.

Listen, God is with you, so pray. Trust that God is leading you. Judge things according to the Word of God, and then go for it. I have seen many times in the past that God, it will please God very much to give His children multiple answers to prayer, multiple options.

And it's like, have you ever done that with your kids? You come home with a bunch of stuff, you go, here, pick one. Which one? Just pick one. I learned when my kids were little, don't come home with something with two things that are different. Make sure you come up with something that's exactly the same because they, the one person or whoever the first kid is to pick one, the other one goes, I wanted that. So you just get them the same thing, same color balloon, or whatever.

But just pick it and go and trust that, the Lord is leading and God, You are the Lord of my life. And what college am I going to attend? I've got, three offers, to attend these colleges. Sometimes God gives multiple options. Sometimes God opens multiple doors. It's not like The Price is Right where you got to choose between door number one, or door number two, or whatever. It's like four doors and they're all open! He sometimes just lavishes things on His children.

Samuel says to Saul, hey, when the Lord comes upon you, just do, just do whatever your hands find to do because you'll be doing it for the Lord. <sup>8</sup> *“Then go down before me to Gilgal. And behold, I am coming down to you to offer burnt offerings and to sacrifice peace offerings. Seven days you shall wait, until I come to you and show you what you shall do.”*

<sup>9</sup> *When he turned his back to leave Samuel, God gave him another heart. And all these signs came to pass that day.* <sup>10</sup> *When they came to Gibeah, behold, a group of prophets met him, and the Spirit of God rushed upon him, and he prophesied among them. (he'd never done that before)* <sup>11</sup> *And when all who knew him previously saw how he prophesied with the prophets, the people said to one another, “What has come over the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?”* <sup>12</sup> *And a man of the place answered, “And who is their father?” Therefore it became a proverb, “Is Saul also among the prophets?”*

It was a thing that people would say when they just didn't know the answer to something. It just became this line that people would say.

<sup>13</sup> *When he had finished prophesying, he came to the high place.*

<sup>14</sup> *Saul's uncle said to him and to his servant, “Where did you go?” And he said, “To seek the donkeys. And when we saw they were not to be found, we went to Samuel.”* <sup>15</sup> *And Saul's uncle said, “Please tell me what Samuel said to you.”* <sup>16</sup> *And Saul said to his uncle, (well) “He told us plainly that the donkeys had been found.” But about the matter of the kingdom, of which Samuel had spoken, he did not tell him anything.”*



You can see that Saul is still not comfortable with this whole thing. He doesn't even want to tell anybody at this point.

*“<sup>17</sup> Now Samuel called the people together to the LORD at Mizpah. <sup>18</sup> And he said to the people of Israel, ‘Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and I delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand of all the kingdoms that were oppressing you.’ <sup>19</sup> But today you have rejected your God, who saves you from all your calamities and your distresses, and you have said to him, ‘Set a king over us.’ Now therefore present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes and by your thousands.”*

*<sup>20</sup> Then Samuel brought all the tribes of Israel near, and the tribe of Benjamin was taken by lot. <sup>21</sup> He brought the tribe of Benjamin near by its clans, and the clan of the Matrites was taken by lot; and Saul the son of Kish was taken by lot. But when they sought him, he could not be found. <sup>22</sup> So they inquired again of the LORD, “Is there a man still to come?” (in other words, is he not here yet?) and the LORD said, “Behold, he has hidden himself among the baggage.”*” Isn't this interesting? I mean, he's hiding.

*“<sup>23</sup> Then they ran and took him from there. And when he stood among the people, he was taller than any of the people from his shoulders upward. <sup>24</sup> And Samuel said to all the people, “Do you see him whom the LORD has chosen? There is none like him among all the people.” And all the people shouted, “Long live the king!””*

By the way, that's something you never have to say to God. Long live God. Yeah, you have to say it to a human king. So you can see that they took a step down here, right? When your king is not going to be around for a long time.

*“Long live the king!” <sup>25</sup> Then Samuel told the people the rights and duties of the kingship, and he wrote them in a book and laid it up before the LORD. Then Samuel sent all the people away, each one to his home. <sup>26</sup> Saul also went to his home at Gibeah, and with him went men of valor whose hearts God had touched.”*

So he attracted some men who were going to support him and be loyal to him. Look at the way the chapter ends. Very interesting way. It says *“<sup>27</sup> But some worthless fellows said, “How can this man save us?” And they despised him and brought him no present. But he held his peace.”*

Isn't that interesting? So some men are loyal in this, to Saul. They like, yeah, we asked for a king, and here's the king. But others just criticized. And the nature of their criticism is revealed in this passage, because if you notice, Saul hasn't done

a thing yet. I mean, he hasn't done anything. All he's done is hide when they called his name. I mean, that's the extent of his rule so far.

It's like, Saul, where is he? And yet they're criticizing, and that reveals that they have a critical spirit. Have you ever met such a person? They just complain about everything. Constantly criticizing everything. Doesn't matter whether they know anything about it or not. Doesn't matter if it deserves criticism. They're going to criticize and they just do it.

And of course it's always going to be directed toward people who are out in front, who are leaders. Saul, here's Saul, I mean, in one day he goes from, donkey finder, to king over Israel, and suddenly people hate his guts, just because he's king. That's all. It's the only reason. I don't like you anymore. It's too bad some people are so petty, isn't it?

But in the end, I always thought that criticism always says, when you hear somebody criticizing somebody else, I've always felt that, whatever they're saying, that criticism that they're sharing with you says more about the person talking, than it does the person about whom they're talking. You know what I mean?

And you've heard people say, well, you have to just take into consideration the source. It's true. May not be kind, but it's true. Some people just have a critical spirit and I've never seen myself as somebody with a critical spirit. But as a teacher, I tend to be sharp. And that's just part of the teaching gift. Because as a teacher, you have to see things very black and white. And it's just like shunk sort of a thing. It's like, that's true, that's false. And that's life for me, teaching the Bible and so forth.

And that's God's gift. And it's a good gift to have if it's used properly. But do you know that any one of us can take our gift, and I can take my gift of being sharp, and being like right down the line on truth, and if I let the flesh merge with that and, oh, I've done that many times, I can be critical. I have to be very careful not to be critical, not to be a complainer when you see things you don't like or whatever.

So it's really interesting, your greatest gift, your greatest asset before the Lord is potentially your greatest problem, whatever your gift might be. Even if somebody has the gift of compassion, I love that gift.

Can't say I have it exactly, but the people who have that gift of compassion, what an amazing gift that is. They come across somebody who's hurting

because of their own sin, I mean, they've hurt themselves because of their bad decisions, and they just come right up to them, and they give them a hug and they just smooths all over them, and just love on them, and it's really a beautiful thing to see.

And as a teacher, I'm sitting back, waiting and going, you got yourself into this when got to be careful about that. But that gift of compassion just comes and throws their arms and just smothers them with kisses.

But you know what? But that person with the gift of compassion can very easily overlook sin if they're not walking in the Spirit. When they're walking in the Spirit, it's a wonderful gift, but with their walking in the flesh and their spiritual gift of compassion merges with their fleshly desire to be liked or whatever, they can actually soft pedal sin with people. And that's just one example, well, between a teacher and a compassion.

And you've got all the others. You've got the encourager. What a great gift to encourage people. Barnabas was an encourager. Remember in the Book of Acts? But again, merge that with the flesh, you got a people pleaser goes around telling people, things to puff them up.

So they have friends at the end of the day. So anything that your gift can be used in the flesh, if you let it.