



“REASONS TO REJOICE”

*“Your Words were found, and I ate them,
and Your Word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart.” Jeremiah 15:16*

I and II SAMUEL Lesson 5

We ended our lesson last week with Israel demanding that they be given a king to rule over them. Samuel warned them about the kind of man he would be, as well as the consequences they would face. Much to the despair of Samuel, the Hebrews still wanted a king so they could be like the other nations. In this week’s lesson, Samuel, in obedience to the Lord, gives them what they want.

Before you begin, remember to pray and ask the Holy Spirit to give you wisdom and understanding into His Word. Be looking for the application as you read the text. And don’t forget ... have fun!

First Day

- 1. Let’s begin by reading I Samuel chapter 9. What is the main thought or point in the chapter? Who are the main characters? How would you title it?*

In our study so far, Samuel has been the main character. Now we will be moving into a new kingdom era. Saul will now become our main character and focus. Some commentators wonder if Samuel felt rejected by Israel’s desire for a king. After all, he was God’s spokesman to them. Wasn’t he good enough? I don’t know if this is true or not, but we certainly don’t see Samuel holding any grudges or feeling sorry for himself. He was a humble man of God, quietly moving aside for Saul to take center stage. Way to go, Samuel!

- 2. Describe the man Saul. (personality, looks, family, etc.)*

3. *Explain how Saul and Samuel met.*

4. *How long had Saul and the servant been looking? (vs 20)*

5. *Why had Saul almost returned home?*

6. *What did they plan to offer Samuel? Did he take it?*

Saul and the unnamed servant believed they should give the prophet some type of payment for his service. This was customary and expected. The presents of bread and meat were as common as the offering of money (1 Kings 14:3; 2 Kings 4:42, 5:15-16; Ezekiel 13:19; and Hosea 3:2). The prophet did not have to receive the gift.

Some think that Saul's father, Kish, had not brought his family up to be religious. Samuel was a popular prophet at the time, but Saul didn't know his name, or even recognize him when he saw him. They may not have been acquainted with the things of God.

They referred to Samuel as a "seer." Verse 9 tells us that God wanted a different name for His man, so he called him a prophet. (Often men who dealt with spiritism were called seers.) The Hebrew word "seer" is a participle of the verb "to see," but doesn't necessarily mean that God spoke to His prophets through dreams and visions. It can also mean to "perceive" or "understand." God seemed to reveal His will to Samuel verbally rather than visually (3:2-14; 8:6-9, 21-22; 9:15-17). The word "prophet" in Hebrew comes from the verb "to call."

Notice that the people were sacrificing on the "high place" in verse 12, in the city which is believed by many to be Ramah. When Israel entered the land, they found many existing places of worship from the pagans that had been there. The "high place" or "shrine" would be situated at the city's highest point. It appears that Samuel was performing sacrifices at these local shrines, or altars. This was probably due to the fact that Shiloh had been destroyed and Israel's central sanctuary was not in use because the ark was separated from the Tabernacle. Samuel was not performing or

participating in pagan practices, but after the Temple was built in Jerusalem, many of the Israelites continued to worship at the pagan sites, so the prophets eventually forbid it (1 Kings 3:2; 2 Kings 17:7-18, 21:2-9, 23:4-25).

7. *Read verse 14 again. What does this verse tell us about the sovereignty of God?*

8. *Think about God's sovereignty in your life. Think about how He brought you to a knowledge of Himself. Can you look back and see His hand, moving and shaping people and situations for His purpose? How did He do it?*

9. *Saul looked for those donkeys for three tiring days! He must have been frustrated at the time, but now we see how those days were part of God's timing. What does that tell us about God's timing? How does that speak to your heart in a situation you may be in?*

We'll end here for today. It's so exciting to watch God setting the stage for this event. What if Saul had come into the city two minutes later? Would he have missed meeting Samuel? God's timing is awesome, isn't it?

Memory Verse of the Week: *"Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out." Romans 11:33*

Second Day

Practice your verse. How does it relate to our story?

1. *Read I Samuel 9:1-10:16. Was Samuel surprised to meet Saul, or did he expect it?*
2. *What did God tell Samuel to do when he met Saul?*
3. *What was Samuel's message to Saul?*
4. *Why do you think Samuel told Saul where the donkeys were?*
5. *What did he mean by his statement in verse 20b?*
6. *What was Saul's reply?*

I wonder if Samuel told Saul that Israel's desire rested on him to arouse his curiosity. It certainly would've mine!

Saul wondered why he should receive such special recognition since he was from the tribe of Benjamin. Benjamin was Jacob and Rachel's youngest son. Rachel died at his birth, after naming him Benoni, which means "son of my sorrow." Jacob renamed him Benjamin. He was also Jacob's favorite son (Genesis 35:16-20, 42:4). Jacob's twelve sons make up the twelve tribes of Israel. The tribe of Benjamin was the smallest tribe, having almost been wiped out during a civil war recorded in Judges chapter 20. This was due to their sin of trying to protect the men of Gibeah. It seemed to make no sense to Saul that God would call someone from the weakest tribe to be a ruler. He responded a lot like Gideon did when God called him to be a mighty man of valor, in Judges 6:11-16.

7. *How does 1 Corinthians 1:27-29 tie in with all this? Does God still choose the "foolish things to put to shame the wise"? How?*

8. *Samuel invited Saul to join him at the meal. He had already set apart a thigh, or a leg, and saved it for him. What does that tell you about Samuel?*

The leg was usually saved for the consecrated priests, according to Leviticus 7:32-33. The Layman's Bible Commentary describes this event like this: "The high place would have a hall adjoined to it, where the feast would be eaten. Saul and his servant arrived when a special sacrificial feast was being celebrated. It is an interesting point that Samuel was to preside over this, an indication that priestly and prophetic roles were closely intertwined in these early days. The feast was associated with the type of sacrifice in which the blood of the sacrificial victim was poured out at the foot of the altar as a gift to God, the flesh being broiled and partaken of by the worshippers. In this way God and His worshippers communed together through the life of the third party, the sacrificial beast."

9. *What kinds of things do you think Samuel was telling Saul while on the roof? (This was a customary place to sleep because of the hot weather.)*

10. *Samuel not only escorted Saul down the road, he kissed him (10:1). Why are these actions significant?*

When they were alone, Samuel "anointed" Saul with oil (10:1). The word "anoint" means to consecrate someone to special service or a divine task by pouring spiced olive oil on their head.

11. *Samuel believed the Word of the Lord. He had no doubt that whatever God told him would come to pass. Are you that confident in His Word? What has He been telling you lately? Will you doubt Him or trust Him?*

We're done for today. This sure is an interesting story. Dr. F. B. Meyer said, "All these things, if carefully observed, yield their testimony and assurance that God is in all events permitting, directing, controlling, and causing all things to work out His perfect plan." Amen, Dr. Meyer! And that's a "Reason to Rejoice."

Third Day

Review your memory verse. Does it speak to your heart?

1. *Read I Samuel 10:1-16. What is the main thought or point in this section? What would you title it?*

2. *Explain what Saul was instructed to do.*

3. *What signs is Samuel referring to in 10:7? Why was he given signs?*

4. *Did these things come to pass?*

The "hill of God" referred to in verse 5 and 10 is most likely Gibeathelohim, or Gibeah. The word "garrison" has confused many scholars. Many believe this referred to a shrine or pillar of some sort. Some believe this to be translated as governor, while others think that this place had one time been occupied by a garrison of Philistines, but were gone now.

Saul met a group of prophets coming down from the high place, just like Samuel had said. These prophets are more "ecstatic" in nature. This type of prophet usually banded together and manifested more extraordinary forms of behavior, called "frenzied fanaticism" by some. They appeared to

have a real zeal for God, and carried authentic divine messages from God to His people.

5. *What happened to Saul's heart?*
6. *Why do you think it was a shock for people to see Saul prophesy? What did they mean by the phrase in verse 12?*
7. *When Saul met up with his uncle, why do you think he kept Samuel's words a secret?*

The phrase "you will be turned into another man" occurs nowhere else. This is an interesting statement. Barnes explains the phrase this way: "This phrase describes the change in point of mental power and energy which would result from the influx of the Spirit of the Lord. In the case of Samson it was a supernatural bodily strength; in the case of Saul, a capacity for ruling and leading the people of which before he was destitute, and which the Spirit wrought in him." Dr. W. G. Blaikie said, "the Spirit of God awakened him to the greatness and responsibilities of his position."

Many argue that this is the point of Saul's conversion, while others challenge whether or not he was ever converted at all. We will save this discussion for a later lesson.

8. *Samuel called all of Israel together to hear the news.*
 - a. *Where did they meet?*
 - b. *How did they gather?*
 - c. *Why do you think Saul hid?*
 - d. *How did the people respond?*
9. *The fact that Saul was hiding in the baggage, or the equipment, shows what about his character?*

The process of “choosing” referred to in 10:17-24 was most likely done by casting lots. This was the way the Hebrews sought God’s divine choice in matters. The high priest wore an outer garment called an ephod (2:28), in which he carried the Urim and the Thummim. These were most likely small stones or tablets that were cast like dice to get a yes or no answer from the Lord (14:36-37, 41-42; 22:10; 23:1-4). One may have been white and the other black; one representing a yes answer, the other a no. If one came up white and the other black, no decision would be determined. Some think that each of the twelve tribes wrote their name on a stone and placed it in some type of container, which was shaken until all the stones fell out except one. That stone must have read, “Tribe of Benjamin.” Then the heads of the clans stepped forward and did the same thing. The heads of the households stepped forward and repeated the procedure until Saul was chosen. The Hebrews believed that God would sovereignly control how they fell (Proverbs 16:33).

Imagine the surprise the Israelites must have felt when the lot fell to the tribe of Benjamin, the smallest and weakest tribe, then to the family of Matri, then specifically Saul. They seemed to like what they saw! (Most of them, at least.)

10. *Should we take this example and make our decisions by rolling dice? Why or why not?*

We will be discussing this topic more tomorrow. For now, let’s rejoice that God is in control, shall we?

Fourth Day

Review your memory verse.

Let’s begin by reviewing chapters 9-10, tracing God’s sovereignty in the events that took place:

- 1. The donkeys ran away.***
- 2. It was Saul that was sent to find them, not one of his brothers.***

3. *It took three days to find Samuel. They might have missed him if they were a day early or a day late.*
4. *Saul unexpectedly met some young women who were just going about their business.*
5. *When they entered the city, they “happened” upon Samuel.*
6. *Samuel set their minds at ease before they even asked about the donkeys.*
7. *Samuel invited them to dinner, having Saul’s portion already set aside.*
8. *Samuel gave Saul some specific signs that came to pass.*
9. *The Spirit of God came upon Saul like Samuel had predicted.*
10. *The lot fell on Saul as God’s choice for the first King of Israel.*

In yesterday’s lesson, we discussed whether we should use lots (or draw straws!) to make our decisions today. We must remember that the Holy Spirit played a different role in the Old Testament than in the New. In ancient times, the Holy Spirit “came upon” and “departed” from people (I Samuel 16:14, 16:23, Psalm 51:10). When the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost, this was no longer true.

1. *Read the following verses that show us the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of believers today. Write the main point of each Scripture.*
 - a. *John 3:3-8*
 - b. *John 14:16-26*
 - c. *John 16:13*
 - d. *Romans 8:11*
 - e. *1 Corinthians 2:10-13*
 - f. *Acts 1:1-8*
2. *So, then, why don’t we have to depend on the “luck of the dice” to make our decisions, or hear from God?*

3. *Write a prayer to the Lord, thanking Him for sending the Holy Spirit to dwell within you and remain with you always.*

In 10:19, Samuel again reminded the people that by asking for a king, they were rejecting God. We may wonder why God picked Saul for this job, knowing what he would eventually do (which we'll read about later).

J. Vernon McGee said, "Saul was actually not God's choice. That is, He gave Israel the sort of man He knew they wanted." The Israelites had wrong motives for asking (8:15), wrong criteria (9:12), and Saul was even from the wrong tribe (9:1, Genesis 49:10). But God had a plan.

4. *Do you think we always understand God's ways? Are we supposed to? Read Romans 11:33-36 and Isaiah 40:13-14.*

5. *Is there a situation that God has allowed in your life that you don't understand? How are you responding? What should you do?*

The prophet Habakkuk was in a similar situation. He did not understand the wisdom God was using in His dealings with Israel. He wrestled with these issues, pouring his heart out to God. After he understood more of the person and power of God, the more he trusted Him, even if he didn't understand.

6. *Read Habakkuk 3:17-19. How did Habakkuk respond?*

7. *There are always so many reasons to rejoice. If we are discouraged, we, like Habakkuk, can simply rejoice in our salvation. For fun, list ten reasons that you can rejoice today!*

That's it ... short lesson today. Spend some time in prayer, expressing your thankfulness to the Lord for giving you joy, peace, and love beyond measure!

Fifth Day

Write your verse from memory.

1. *Read over I Samuel chapter 10 again.*

In verse 25, Samuel explains the “behavior of royalty” or the “manner of the kingdom.” They wrote it down and placed it near the ark of the Lord. This seemed to be some type of official document, which outlined not only the authority given to the king, but the limits of that authority as well. Many believe that it was probably based on Moses’ instructions regarding the king in Deuteronomy 17:14-20. This was probably easily accessible so they could refer to it when necessary.

2. *Where do we look for our “rules” to live by? Why is it important to live by God’s rules? What happens when you live by the rules of the world?*

3. *We’ve been talking a lot about God’s sovereignty. How do you think God’s sovereignty is reconciled with man’s responsibility? In other words, if God makes the plans, what is our part? Read Romans 9 for help.*

4. *Do you think God was preparing Saul to be the King of Israel? How?*
5. *Saul felt like he was insignificant. How could he possibly be God's choice? Is God calling you to step out in an area, and you feel too weak or inadequate? Moses felt the same way. Read these verses and write Moses' response to God's call, and then God's response to Moses:*

a. Exodus 3:11-12

Moses:

God:

b. Exodus 3:13-14

Moses:

God:

c. Exodus 4:1-9

Moses:

God:

d. Exodus 4:10-17

Moses:

God:

I pray that you will be uplifted as you read God's encouragement to Moses. If God is calling you to something, He will be with you. It's His promise! Don't run and hide behind the equipment! Stand still and watch God work! (Exodus 14:13) See you next week!