

1st Samuel Chapters 10-11 – John Karmelich

1. Here is my opening theological question of the day: How much does God love someone when they sin? (Isn't that a happy way to start the lesson? ☺)
 - a) Does God ever say, "OK, I've had it with that person...next!" ☺
 - b) Let's assume that person is a believer and trusts in Jesus for payment of their sins. When we mess up, how does God deal with that sin and at the same time, still show that he loves us?
 - c) Let me explain God's dilemma another way: Ever been in a situation where you see someone you love going down the wrong path and there is nothing you can do about it?
 - i) For example, you may see your grown children make a bad decision. You may see a close friend do some sinful act that you know is wrong and even though you tell them, they still choose the wrong act.
 - ii) In such cases, you still love that person, but you know what they are doing is wrong. How do you balance love for the sinner with hatred of the sin?
 - d) This is the situation God has to deal with in these chapters.
 - i) The Israelites wanted a king. God wanted the Israelites to depend upon Him and not a king. God allows them to have this king (Saul) essentially in order to give them what they want. In the last lesson I used the Chinese curse, "Be careful what you wish for" as a comparison to what God is doing in this section.
 - e) Despite that fact, what we don't read in this section is God abandoning His chosen people. In fact, we read of God, through Samuel anointing Saul as the leader. We read of the Spirit of God resting upon Saul. We will read of Saul leading the Israelites into victory over a local enemy.
 - i) The question is, if God is so against this king, why bless the guy? Why give him the Spirit of God? Why give him victories over enemies?
 - ii) A big part of the reason is to show how much God loves us despite the bad choices we make. God needs to have the "balance" of showing how much He loves us and at the same time point out the mistakes we make in life.
 - iii) Saul will eventually fail, but we won't get to that in this lesson. In these two chapters, we only read of Saul's victories. Saul fails in the end, because His heart is not right toward God and all the blessings in the world can't change that.
 - iv) Possibly one of the great big-picture ideas to see about King Saul is that you can give a man all sorts of blessings from God, but if his heart isn't right toward God, there is nothing God can do to fix that. God does not violate our free will to choose Him. God can say to us, "Here is this blessing and that blessing", but if we choose to not follow God, God says in effect, "OK, I can't force you to love me. If I force you, then that is not love."
 - v) The application to you and I is that God wants to show how much he still cares for us despite the bad choices we make. There is still punishment for those bad decisions, as we will see in future chapters. But God wants to show us that He still loves us despite the decisions we make and at the same time show us that obedience to Him is the best way to live our lives.
 - vi) With that confusing introduction all done, let's get on to the text. ☺ I'll come back to these questions when we wrap this up at the end of the lesson.

2. Verse 1: Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on Saul's head and kissed him, saying, "Has not the LORD anointed you leader over his inheritance?"
- a) In this section we are going to read of two anointings of Saul as King.
 - i) Here in Verse 1 is a private anointing by Samuel.
 - ii) In Chapter 11, we are going to read of a public anointing by Samuel.
 - iii) OK, why both? The private anointing is mainly for Saul's benefit. The public anointing is for the Nation of Israel's benefit. It is so they know Saul is king.
 - b) Remember that Saul is king only because the people wanted him, not God. This is God giving the people what they want as opposed to God's will. If that is the case, why is Samuel "going along" with this plan? Why is Samuel kissing Saul and anointing him?
 - i) The lesson here is that even though God is relenting and giving in to what the people want, God wants to show that He still loves the Israelites and wants the best for them.
 - ii) My point is that God, through Samuel is not saying, "OK you people, you wanted a king? Here's your guy. He's now your problem. I'm through with you". God is still saying in effect, "Even though this is not My will for you, I still love you and want the best for you. Therefore, even though I'm giving in on this request for a king, I'm still going to show my love for you."
 - iii) Further, Saul is now in charge of "God's chosen people". Whether or not God approves of Saul is another issue. It is as if God is saying, "You are in charge of the people I love. Therefore, I care about you Saul, because my reputation is now on your shoulders.
 - c) OK, what's the application for us today?
 - i) Whether or not we are doing God's will at any given moment doesn't affect God's love and affection for us. We may choose to do the wrong thing at any given moment, and there are consequences for those actions. But it doesn't stop God from wanting the best for our lives.
 - d) Getting back to the verse, Saul poured oil on Samuel's head. This was a Jewish ritual to anoint the king. It goes back to the time of Moses, when his brother Aaron was anointed as the first high priest by having oil poured upon him. (Exodus 29:21).
 - i) Oil is associated with the Spirit of God being "poured" out on someone. When Samuel anointed King David in Chapter 16, the verse even states that when oil was poured upon David, the Spirit of God came upon him. (1st Samuel 16:13).
 - ii) In Verse 6 of this chapter, Samuel tells Saul that the Spirit will come upon him.
 - iii) Tying this back to my earlier point, we are seeing God put his Spirit upon Saul, despite the fact that God didn't want Saul as king. Yet God still knew that Saul was to be in charge of his people, and thus he is anointed.
3. Verse 2: When you leave me today, you will meet two men near Rachel's tomb, at Zelzah on the border of Benjamin. They will say to you, "The donkeys you set out to look for have been found. And now your father has stopped thinking about them and is worried about you. He is asking, "What shall I do about my son?"³ "Then you will go on from there until you reach the great tree of Tabor. Three men going up to God at Bethel will meet you there. One will be carrying three young goats, another three loaves of bread, and another a skin of wine."⁴ They will greet you and offer you two loaves of bread, which you will accept from them.
- a) From Verse 2 through Verse 6 we are going to read of specific predictions made to King Saul by Samuel.
 - i) In Verse 2, the predictions are about Saul's father.
 - ii) Before the whole "king-thing" started ☺ Saul was looking for lost donkeys.

- iii) Samuel is telling Saul to stop worry about the donkeys as they have been found. When Saul returns to his family in a few verses, Saul will find out this is true.
 - b) In Verse 3, we there are predictions about some men who will greet Saul.
 - i) It is important to notice the details of the predictions are specific. For example, the predictions do not say, “go to a hill toward the east where some people are there”. The predictions mention specific places, specific numbers of people, specific items to be found with these people etc.
 - c) Now the important question: What is the purpose of all of these predictions?
 - i) The main thing is to validate to King Saul that he is the king.
 - ii) Let’s face it, Saul could have thought, “This crazy old dude just poured a bunch of oil on my head and made me king. Oh yeah, that’s going to happen.” ☺ By giving all sorts of specific and detailed predictions about Saul’s life over say, the next few days will help to validate Samuel as a true profit.
 - iii) Remember that Saul had no interest in being a king. Saul came to Samuel because his donkeys were lost (Chapter 9). Samuel turns around and says that you will be the first king of Israel. In order for Samuel to accept all of this, Saul gives him all sorts of specific predictions to validate Samuel’s word as God’s word.
 - iv) This would be a good time to talk about prophecy. Specifically, how should we respond when someone makes specific predictions about our lives?
 - a) There are people who have special gifts for prophecy. It is a spiritual gift listed in the New Testament (e.g., 1 Corinthians 12:10, et.al.). I don’t believe prophecy is limited to any type of believer, nor is it an “on/off switch” we can control. God can use anyone to deliver a message.
 - b) When God sends us a prophetic message, He wants us to test to see whether or not it is from God:
 - (1) “Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.” (1st John 4:1 NIV)
 - (2) There is a similar verse in Deuteronomy 13. The concept of “test the spirits” (i.e., test prophecy) is an Old Testament concept as well.
 - c) OK, so how do we “test” a spirit anyway? The answer is to see whether or not that prediction does happen. A second answer is to check their prediction against the Word of God. If what that “prophet” is teaching is a violation of God’s word, it doesn’t matter how impressive the prediction.
 - d) I’m also a little leery of someone who walks up to me and says they have a prediction for me. My first thought is, “What, has God lost my phone number? ☺ Why does God have to go through you to get to me?”
 - (1) Because of that, I usually listen politely and then, wait and see. I neither worry nor get excited until it happens.
 - e) In Saul’s case, God is saying through Samuel, “You are going to be the king. To prove it, let me tell you every detail of your life for the next three days”. ☺ That is essentially, what we are reading here.
- 4. Samuel continues the prediction. Verse 5: "After that you will go to Gibeah of God, where there is a Philistine outpost. As you approach the town, you will meet a procession of prophets coming down from the high place with lyres, tambourines, flutes and harps being played before them, and they will be prophesying. ⁶ The Spirit of the LORD will come upon you in power, and you will prophesy with them; and you will be changed into a different person. ⁷ Once these signs are fulfilled, do whatever your hand finds to do, for God is with you.

- a) The last set of signs are “improbable”. Just to make sure Saul understood that the first set of signs were not a coincidence, the last group is more improbable. Here is a town where the Philistines are based. They are an enemy of the Israelites. Out of this town a group of Jewish prophets will come out playing instruments and prophesying.
- b) Verse 5 states that a group of prophets will come upon Saul. To “prophesying” could mean any number of things:
 - i) It simply could mean they were praising God and expounding upon ideas found in God’s word.
 - ii) It could also mean they were giving future predictions. They could have been singing, playing musical instruments and saying things like “Praise God who has anointed Saul to win battles for the Nation of Israel”.
 - iii) When we think of prophets, we tend to think of “odd-ball kooks” standing on a platform making all sorts of weird predictions. Either that, or we think of “special holy people” who burst into a room suddenly, make some sort of revelation, and then disappear equally as mysteriously as they showed up in the first place. ☺
 - iv) Here, prophets came out of a foreign town. They were also playing musical instruments as they were prophesying. That doesn’t fit our visual image of a prophet very well.
 - v) My point is “don’t put God in a box” when it comes to prophecy.
- c) Verse 6 is the interesting part of the prediction. It says that once this group shows up, King (to be) Saul will then prophecy with this group and at that point the Spirit of God will be upon him.
 - i) That means when the oil was poured upon Saul back in Verse 1, Saul didn’t have the “Spirit of God” at that point. Saul will not have the Spirit of God rest upon Him until this “event” happens as predicted in Verses 6-7.
 - ii) It is probably important at this point to talk about the Spirit of God in an “Old Testament” versus “New Testament” sense.
 - a) David once prayed, “Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.” (Psalm 51:11 NKJV). We as Christians cannot pray that prayer. Let me explain:
 - b) Prior to Jesus, the Holy Spirit can “come and go” from a person. One can have the anointing of the Holy Spirit and at the same time, have it taken away from Him for disobedience. This is what will happen to Saul.
 - c) For a Christian, once the Holy Spirit is upon you, you’re pretty much stuck with him. ☺ Jesus said, “The Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you: (John 14:17 NIV).
 - d) There is no “conditions” upon the Holy Spirit being in believers. There is no indication anywhere in the New Testament that a believer can “lose” the Holy Spirit. There is the classical debate over whether or not one is a believer in the first place, but that’s a separate debate.
 - e) When Jesus said that, it is an unconditional promise. Jesus did not say, “You can have the Holy Spirit, unless of course, you sin really bad. ☺” The Holy Spirit dwells with us until Jesus comes back for us at our resurrection. That is what John 14:18 states.
 - f) Don’t get me wrong. The Holy Spirit can and did still work in people prior to Jesus. There is a “temporary-ness” that is different then versus now.

- d) Let's get back to Verse 6. Better state it again: "The Spirit of the LORD will come upon you in power... you will be changed into a different person. Once these signs are fulfilled, do whatever your hand finds to do, for God is with you."
- i) Let's stop and take this in for a second:
 - a) This is the king who God didn't want over the Nation of Israel.
 - b) This is the king who will try to murder David in future chapters.
 - c) This is the guy who God says to Saul, through Samuel, "God is with you".
 - d) God knows all of these things in advance. God knows all of these things are going to happen. Yet God still says he will put His Spirit upon Saul.
 - ii) This gets back to my introduction comments. God wants to show His love for His people despite the fact they are not in God's will by asking for Saul. God needs to show the "balance" of His love for us even when we are not doing His will. It doesn't excuse the sin, and many people will suffer because of Saul.
 - iii) Back to the specific event itself, Saul will be a "changed person" when he receives the Holy Spirit.
 - a) We will read of Saul leading troops into battle and winning. There is no indication that Saul has any previous military experience let alone any leadership experience.
 - b) It is amazing to think about my own life prior to being a born-again Christian and how much I have changed. I am sure you can say the same for yourself. Once the Spirit of God rests upon us, it is now up to God to change us and He does. We submit our will to His, and He changes us. It is not so much a physical change as it is changing us from the inside out.
5. Verse 8: "Go down ahead of me to Gilgal. I will surely come down to you to sacrifice burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, but you must wait seven days until I come to you and tell you what you are to do."
- a) In case you forgot, every verse we have had so far is Samuel speaking. These are all predictions and instructions from Samuel to Saul. It ends with the instructions for Saul to go to a place called Gilgal. There Samuel will meet Saul.
 - b) Remember while we are analyzing every sentence to death, ☺ Saul is just taking all this in. He is hearing a bunch of specific predictions that will happen to him. Finally after all of them come true, Saul is to wait seven days until Samuel shows up.
 - i) Personally, if someone told me specific details of my life for the next week and those details were very unlikely to happen by themselves, I too would wait seven days for Samuel to show up. ☺
 - ii) You have to remember that Israel never had a king. Its not like Saul had some big palace already built and all Saul had to do is walk in and state he's the king. Saul had to wait for further instructions. Besides there is still the issue of the public accepting Saul as the king. That is what the public anointing is all about.
 - iii) On a smaller scale, there are times in our lives where we too have to "wait for further instructions". God usually does not reveal to us our entire lives. For example, God does not say, "You will live here for the next 5 years where you will get married and have three children. You will then quit your job set up a ministry in Cleveland. After that, you will sin, quit and go play golf until you repent and I set you up in a new ministry somewhere else". ☺ My point is God only gives us "what we can handle". Once we are obedient to God's instructions of the moment, God will then give us the next set of instructions for our lives. Sometimes in life we don't know what is next and just keep moving, trusting that God is guiding us as we go.

6. Verse 9: As Saul turned to leave Samuel, God changed Saul's heart, and all these signs were fulfilled that day.¹⁰ When they arrived at Gibeah, a procession of prophets met him; the Spirit of God came upon him in power, and he joined in their prophesying.¹¹ When all those who had formerly known him saw him prophesying with the prophets, they asked each other, "What is this that has happened to the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?"¹² A man who lived there answered, "And who is their father?" So it became a saying: "Is Saul also among the prophets?"¹³ After Saul stopped prophesying, he went to the high place.
- a) Let me summarize: All of the predictions made to Saul by Samuel happened. When a group of prophets met Saul, he himself started prophesying as well. The crowd watching this was astonished. A cliché was born that day of "Is Saul among the prophets?"
 - b) How Saul was prophesying is not stated. Maybe he stood there with the group and started making statements like "Thus says the Lord...this will happen".
 - c) The point is Saul's behavior changed so much that the crowd around him noticed the change in Saul's behavior. It is as if someone in the crowd asked, "Who is this guy (Saul) and why is he prophesying with the rest of the group. We (the crowd) know that the rest of this group walks around prophesying (how do you get that job? ☺) but we've never seen this Saul-guy before. Who is he?"
 - d) The cliché was born that day that goes: "Is Saul among the prophets?"
 - i) That cliché is like when we say: "Anything is possible". When something improbable happens in our lifetime, someone in the crowd might say, "anything is possible". That is the same idea behind, "Is Saul among the prophets?"
 - ii) You have to remember that nobody other than Samuel knew that Saul was going to be a king. All the crowd knew is that this "Son of Kish", a prominent person with lots of donkeys, who we assume had no special religious background, all of a sudden has a master's seminary degree with an emphasis in prophecy. ☺
 - iii) This reminds me of something that happened to me years ago when I first became born-again and started teaching the bible. My father came to one of my classes. After the class, my father asked me publicly, "John, I don't understand. You have an undergraduate and masters degree in business. When did you learn all of this bible stuff?" The point was it shocked my father to see me change so much. The good news is my changed life helped me to be a witness to my father. I got to see him draw closer to Christ in the latter years of his life.
 - iv) This leads back to Saul. Verse 9 says, "God changed Saul's heart". All of a sudden, the same Saul who only really cared about donkeys in the past chapter is now standing up with a group of prophets also making public declarations about God. It shows how God changes people. Saul had no intention or interest in doing this on his own. Saul just heard a bunch of predictions about his life, watched them all come true in a short (say 1-2 time span) and the next thing Saul knows, he's standing among a group of prophets, joining them.
 - v) That is how God works in our lives. We commit our lives to serve him. We don't know the details. We don't know what God has planned for us. We offer God our availability and then God provides the ability. God gives each of us different gifts and talents as He sees best for us.
 - a) "We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully." (Romans 12:6-8 NIV).

- e) Last thing and we will move on. Verse 9 states, "God changed Saul's heart".
 - i) Remember Saul is not what God wanted for the people of Israel.
 - ii) You would have thought God would say, "OK folks, you want Saul? Here you go, you're on your own now!" ☺
 - iii) Instead, we read, "God changed Saul's heart". The point is even though we are going to read of Saul messing up in future chapters, even though Saul is not the guy that God wanted to be the king of Israel, God still shows his love and compassion for the nation of Israel by "changing Saul's heart".
 - iv) This verse also indicates that just because God changes someone's heart to have an interest in God, doesn't mean it is "God's will" for that person to be the leader.
 - a) Let me give you a practical example: When I vote for say, a President of the United States or someone to be on my city council, I am looking for someone who's values and ideas I agree with. I am not necessarily looking for the candidate who is the most religious. There are a lot of devout Christians who I politically disagree with. I may respect their views on Christianity, but I think they're dead wrong on a lot of issues. I vote for the candidate who best expresses my ideas, not who is the strongest Christian.
 - b) Don't get me wrong. Because my views on Christianity are strong, I show a lot of respect for candidates who have committed their lives as such. My point is that issue is not the "end all of end all's". Here's Saul changing his ways toward God, yet I know it is not God's will for Saul to be the leader. God is just giving the people "what they want". I also understand that all leaders are chosen by God. (See Romans 13:1). That also means that God often picks leaders for us based on what "we want" versus what God wants. Unfortunately God still picks "Saul's" for us as it often reflects was the people want as opposed to what God wants.
 - v) Meanwhile, back in Israel. ☺
7. Verse 14: Now Saul's uncle asked him and his servant, "Where have you been?" "Looking for the donkeys," he said. "But when we saw they were not to be found, we went to Samuel." ¹⁵ Saul's uncle said, "Tell me what Samuel said to you." ¹⁶ Saul replied, "He assured us that the donkeys had been found." But he did not tell his uncle what Samuel had said about the kingship.
- a) This next little episode is about Saul going home. He encounters an uncle. He tells the uncle that he (Saul) was looking for his father's lost donkeys. Saul mentions his encounter with Samuel. All Saul reveals to his uncle is that this prophet Samuel told him that the donkeys were found and its time for Saul to go back home.
 - i) There is no response given by his uncle. There is no "oh, ok, welcome home."
 - b) The point of this three-verse dialogue is to tell us that Saul didn't tell anyone that Samuel had anointed him king. The big question is why?
 - i) Maybe Saul was afraid to tell his family, "Oh, and by the way, while I was gone, Samuel made me king of Israel." ☺ I also notice Saul didn't mention the part how he "got religious" and started prophesying on the way home. ☺
 - a) Maybe Saul was afraid no one would believe him. I'm sure Saul was still in shock over the course of events over the past few days.
 - b) Maybe Saul wanted to wait to see what happened.
 - ii) I maybe way off base here, but the one thing I do know is that when people commit their lives to serving Jesus, their boldness grows in phases.
 - a) When we first commit our lives to Jesus, we are often afraid to tell our family and friends as we don't know what they will think of us. The fear of not being popular with others is difficult to overcome.

- b) I find as one grows as a believer and trusts God more and more, that fear goes away. It is common for a new believer to be afraid to share their faith with others. As one grows and trusts God more and more, that fear fades.
 - iii) One of the things we do read coming up in Verse 22 is that when Samuel publicly picks Saul to be the king, Saul was hiding from the crowd. That shows his fear. That fact validates to me that Saul was dealing with fear. He was afraid to tell his family about the “king-thing” ☺ and his new relationship with God.
- 8. Verse 17: Samuel summoned the people of Israel to the LORD at Mizpah¹⁸ and said to them, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: `I brought Israel up out of Egypt, and I delivered you from the power of Egypt and all the kingdoms that oppressed you.'¹⁹ But you have now rejected your God, who saves you out of all your calamities and distresses. And you have said, `No, set a king over us.' So now present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes and clans."
 - a) Here comes the big scene where the prophet Samuel is about to publicly tell all of Israel that God has picked Saul to be the king.
 - b) What is missing from this opening section is any mention of Saul himself.
 - i) Notice the dialogue does not say, “I am Samuel the prophet, and there is a guy named Saul, Son of Kish who is to be the first king. Long live the king!”
 - ii) In fact, these three sentences begin with a big insult. Samuel opens by saying in effect, “God is the one who brought the nation of Israel out of Egypt. You have all seen the movie the Ten Commandments and you know it is true. ☺ Now here you are in the Promised Land, and you have rejected the God who wants to personally protect you by asking for king to protect you.”
 - iii) The funny thing is that if I was Saul sitting in this crowd, you have to be thinking, “What, you call that an introduction?” ☺ There is no discussion about how great of a man Saul is. Instead, Samuel is up on a platform scolding the Israelites for picking Saul in the first place. In a matter of moments, Samuel is going to pick out Saul himself. No wonder Saul was hiding. I would be too with that intro. ☺
 - c) This dialogue is almost as if Samuel is trying to give the people “one more chance” before Samuel publicly anoints Saul as their king. He publicly states to the crowd how they have rejected God. Samuel is reiterating how the crowd has chosen a king against God’s will.
 - i) The application is that even when people know it is not God’s will to do something, sometimes that crowd will still make the wrong choice.
 - ii) It is as if the crowd is thinking, “Oh well, we know God loves us and wants the best for us. He’ll understand. He knows we’re not perfect and we’re going to mess up. After all, we are the chosen people. What’s God going to do, wipe us out?”
 - iii) On a similar note, there are people today who think they are going to heaven because their good deeds outweigh their bad deeds and they think, “Oh well, God still loves me and he understands the way I am”.
 - a) The mistake the Israelites are making is the same mistake people make today. To follow God is about a commitment to obedience. People fail to see the consequences of that commitment and their lives are hurt accordingly and often people lose their eternal salvation because of a failure to make such a commitment.
 - d) Back to the moment at hand. All of Israel (or at least, all who cared) gathered at this one place called Mizpah.
 - i) This place has a lot of history even up to this place. It’s a great temptation to deviate here. This is the spot in Genesis Chapter 37 where Jacob and his uncle Laban separated for good. Jacob named this spot Mizpah. It means a place of witness. Therefore, it is a “pun” in that all of Israel is “witnessing” this event.

- ii) Samuel told the Israelites to organize themselves by their tribes and then by families (i.e., clans). This leads to the next paragraph:
9. Verse 20: When Samuel brought all the tribes of Israel near, the tribe of Benjamin was chosen.²¹ Then he brought forward the tribe of Benjamin, clan by clan, and Matri's clan was chosen. Finally Saul son of Kish was chosen. But when they looked for him, he was not to be found.²² So they inquired further of the LORD, "Has the man come here yet?" And the LORD said, "Yes, he has hidden himself among the baggage."²³ They ran and brought him out, and as he stood among the people he was a head taller than any of the others.²⁴ Samuel said to all the people, "Do you see the man the LORD has chosen? There is no one like him among all the people." Then the people shouted, "Long live the king!"
- a) Here is the actually anointing of Samuel as the king. Samuel method was "casting lots". How this was actually done is speculation. The modern equivalent would be a roulette wheel with the names of the 12 tribes listed on the wheel. Wherever the wheel stopped, would be the winner. The actual method involved the casting of some sort of dice.
 - b) The actual casting of lots started with a representative of each tribe of Israel. The winning lot fell on the tribe of Benjamin. The next step was to have a representative of each family within that tribe. The winning lot fell upon the "Kish family (Saul's father). The last step was to see which member of the Kish family would be king. The lot then fell on Saul.
 - c) The final step was to go find Saul himself. Saul was hiding in the baggage. They brought Saul out. The crowd saw how he was a head taller than all others. That impressed the crowd. Finally, the crowd shouted, "Long live the king". They got the man they wanted.
 - d) The Israelites believe that God is behind the results of this "random lot casting". It is the idea of what seems random to us, is of God. This idea is supported in the bible:
 - i) "The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD. (Proverbs 16:33 NIV)
 - ii) Does that mean that we should "cast lots" to make big decisions?
 - a) First of all, the only time I read of this method used in the New Testament is when Matthias was picked as the 12th apostle to replace Judas (Acts 1:26). There is debate among Christians to this day whether or not that was God's will for Matthias to be part of the "12".
 - b) I believe casting lots to make a decision is a last resort and even then I'm not sure I'd do it. The primary methods are seeking God's will through prayer and using bible-based knowledge as a foundation for picking leaders. In Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus, there are lists of qualifications to look for in picking leaders. Paul didn't say anything about "casting lots when you can't decide". Instead, Paul says in effect, "Follow these guidelines in picking your leaders."
 - c) Getting back to Saul and Samuel, remember that the Israelites were ignoring God's will to begin with by asking for a king. In that sense, Saul is "from God" (via this casting lot method) because God is giving the people what they want by giving them Saul.
 - iii) Since the Israelites believed that casting lots is God's way of picking a king, Samuel used this method. Samuel could have just stood up and said, "God picks Saul and that's that." By casting lots, Samuel was showing the leaders of Israel that God was picking Saul. It is a testament to Samuel's faith in God to do this casting-lot method as Samuel knew the lots would fall upon Saul. In that sense, Samuel could have picked any method he wanted as he knew the results were a done-deal even before the methodology begins.

- a) This is a great little lesson on faith. Sometimes Christians focus too much on the methodology as opposed to the results. For example, the bible teaches that preaching God's Word always brings positive results (See Isaiah 55:11). If we are trusting in that promise, then we shouldn't obsess too much about what method we choose to preach that word. If we are trusting in a bible-based promise, then we need to focus on having faith in the results as opposed to obsessing about proper methodology.
10. Verse 25: Samuel explained to the people the regulations of the kingship. He wrote them down on a scroll and deposited it before the LORD. Then Samuel dismissed the people, each to his own home.
- a) Samuel concludes this anointing ceremony by reading the "regulations of the king". He was probably reading from Deuteronomy 17:14-20. The main idea of that section is that a king should be an Israelite, and that the king should not multiply for himself horses, wives, gold or silver.
- i) The idea of not multiplying horses is that horses are associated with war. God wanted the king to be dependant upon Him for victories, and not the size of their supplies for war.
- ii) The idea behind not multiplying wives is that multiple wives would turn the king's heart away from the people. This is a fault that King Solomon had.
- iii) The last idea is to not multiply gold and silver. It is similar to the idea of not being obsessed with horses. One's dependency is to be upon God alone.
11. Verse 26: Saul also went to his home in Gibeah, accompanied by valiant men whose hearts God had touched.²⁷ But some troublemakers said, "How can this fellow save us?" They despised him and brought him no gifts. But Saul kept silent.
- a) The last two verses of this chapter mention Saul going home and some "troublemakers" who didn't want to accept Saul as their king.
- b) Remember there was no castle for Saul to go to. The only place Saul could go even after being king was back home again.
- c) The part about the "troublemakers" is a reminder that even if a king is divinely appointed, there will be those who won't accept it. Suppose that a bright light from heaven shone down on Saul or an angel in the sky had a big banner saying "Saul is your new king, deal with it." ☹ I suspect that even then there would still be those who would have their doubts about Saul. It is human nature.
- d) The point about the "troublemakers" is that Saul kept silent. Saul's first business as king was not to have these men killed. The original Hebrew is even stronger, as if to say, Saul had a "deaf ear" to their complaints. It is a positive statement about Saul. It is as if Saul is saying, "Look God decided that I'm to be the king, and there is nothing these men can do about it. I don't have to kill them. If God made me king, what can they do?"
- i) That bit of faith is great advice to us. If we are trusting in God, then we don't have to worry about doubters and "scoffers". The point is to focus on what God called you to do and ignore those who are rebelling against God's will for your life. You don't have to confront them (obviously there are exceptions to this rule if it involves violence or danger,) but just focus on what God wants you to do.
12. Chapter 11, Verse 1: Nahash the Ammonite went up and besieged Jabesh Gilead. And all the men of Jabesh said to him, "Make a treaty with us, and we will be subject to you."² But Nahash the Ammonite replied, "I will make a treaty with you only on the condition that I gouge out the right eye of every one of you and so bring disgrace on all Israel."³ The elders of Jabesh said to him, "Give us seven days so we can send messengers throughout Israel; if no one comes to rescue us, we will surrender to you."

- a) In Chapter 11, we have a change of topics.
- b) We go from the public anointing of Saul to a story of a specific town in Israel that is being threatened by another outside group, "The Ammonites". This is another tribe that lived near Israel. They wanted to conquer this town.
- c) To summarize these verses, we start with Nahash, who historians list as a king. Kings were often the "head general's" as well. Anyway, he wanted to conquer this Jewish town of Jabesh. The leaders of Jabesh offer to surrender in order to have peace. Nahash says, "Ok, if everybody in town agrees to have their right eye gouged out, we'll agree to your surrender." The leaders of Jabesh say in effect, "We'll send messengers all throughout Israel. If no one agrees to rescue us, we'll agree to your terms".
 - i) First of all, why would the general agree to let the people of this town go outside and get help? Why would he agree to this 7-day delay?
 - ii) Speculation is the Ammonites understood that the Israelites didn't have a king and were not very organized. The Ammonites figured no one would help them. The other thing to remember is that soldiers believe war is always the last resort. If there is a peaceful solution could work, they would agree to it. The Ammonites were about to do a siege. That means to surround the city and starve it out. If they could save the months of work, it was worth it. Therefore, they agreed to wait the seven days.
 - iii) The next question is, "Why gouge out the right eye?" The answer is most soldiers were right handed. They covered their left eye with their shields and focused with their right eye. It would make people weak for battle.
- d) Now the big question. Why is this text here and what does it have to do with my life?
 - i) The purpose of this section is to show Saul's leadership as king. Saul will lead a rescue effort and save this town. God "allowed" this group of Amorites to attack Israel at this time as to give Saul an opportunity to lead the people to victory. We'll read all of this in the upcoming verses.
 - ii) An application to you and I is we don't always know what God has planned for us. All of a sudden, we're "under attack" and don't know why. We fail to see it is part of some bigger plan that God is working on in our lives. Yes we still have to deal with the danger of "The Ammonites are attacking", but we can also take comfort in knowing God is in charge, and ultimately everything that happens to us is for His glory.

13. Verse 4: When the messengers came to Gibeah of Saul and reported these terms to the people, they all wept aloud. ⁵ Just then Saul was returning from the fields, behind his oxen, and he asked, "What is wrong with the people? Why are they weeping?" Then they repeated to him what the men of Jabesh had said. ⁶ When Saul heard their words, the Spirit of God came upon him in power, and he burned with anger. ⁷ He took a pair of oxen, cut them into pieces, and sent the pieces by messengers throughout Israel, proclaiming, "This is what will be done to the oxen of anyone who does not follow Saul and Samuel." Then the terror of the LORD fell on the people, and they turned out as one man. ⁸ When Saul mustered them at Bezek, the men of Israel numbered three hundred thousand and the men of Judah thirty thousand.

- a) Let me summarize this paragraph: When the messengers from this town reported what was happening, all of Israel starting weeping. That is, they "gave up" and were not willing to fight. When Saul heard, "the Spirit of God came upon Saul" and he was angry. To motivate the Israelites to fight, Saul cut up some oxen. He sent pieces throughout Israel with the message, "I'll cut you up like these oxen if you don't fight the Ammonites". The next thing we read is that Israel had an army of 330,000 men.

- b) One of the things to consider is that we have no indication that Saul ever had any leadership skills or military skills. What we do read in the text is after the Spirit of God rest upon Saul, then he has this motivational plan to organize Israel into an army.
 - c) The application is to never underestimate how God can use us once we are trusting in Him. God took a guy looking for donkeys and turned him into a leader in a short time!
 - d) It is interesting that Saul's proclamation was, "This is what will be done to the oxen of anyone who does not follow Saul and Samuel".
 - i) Even though Saul was king, he still understood that people looked to Samuel as the leader. There is no indication that Samuel was ever part of this plan. Saul invoked his name, I'm presuming without his permission.
 - ii) The amazing thing isn't so much Saul's actions as the people's action.
 - iii) The "miracle" of this section is the fact the Israelites organized into a national army, essentially within a few days. It shows the power of God at work when we are willing to step out in faith and trust Him.
 - e) Verse 8 specifies that 300,000 soldiers came from all of Israel, with the exception of the tribe of Judah. Verse 8 says that an additional 30,000 came from Judah. The question is why was this tribe specified?
 - i) The speculation is that they were the largest tribe, and therefore this tribe was singled out. The other speculation is that God promised back in Genesis that a redeemer would come from the tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:19). This points to the coming Messiah. Therefore, there is an "anticipation" over Judah and thus, the soldiers from Judah were singled out.
14. Verse 9: They told the messengers who had come, "Say to the men of Jabesh Gilead, 'By the time the sun is hot tomorrow, you will be delivered.'" When the messengers went and reported this to the men of Jabesh, they were elated. ¹⁰ They said to the Ammonites, "Tomorrow we will surrender to you, and you can do to us whatever seems good to you." ¹¹ The next day Saul separated his men into three divisions; during the last watch of the night they broke into the camp of the Ammonites and slaughtered them until the heat of the day. Those who survived were scattered, so that no two of them were left together.
- a) Now we get to the actual battle strategy. To summarize, Saul told some messengers that he was coming to the rescue. The residents of Jabesh then lied to the Ammonites and told them they were going to surrender. Saul's army approached the town, and he separated the soldiers into three companies. In the night they attacked the Ammonites and there was a great slaughter. The Israelites had a major victory.
 - b) This made me think: Is it ok to lie to an enemy in order to defeat them? I don't think I can answer this one "biblically". I think this is a case where the "greater moral good" comes into play. Further, God made a promise to Abraham back in Genesis 15 that when the Israelites get the land after the Egyptian captivity, that the Amorites were to be destroyed (See Genesis 15:16). The Amorites were among the people living in Israel prior to the Jewish people showing up. God promised that they would conquer the land. Further, Genesis 15:16 implies that the Amorites were sinful people and God was using the Israelites to judge them for their sins.
 - c) What is important here is to notice how God used Saul to defeat the enemies of Israel. What is important is how God used this event to establish Saul as the leader of Israel.

15. Verse 12: The people then said to Samuel, "Who was it that asked, 'Shall Saul reign over us?' Bring these men to us and we will put them to death." ¹³ But Saul said, "No one shall be put to death today, for this day the LORD has rescued Israel."
- a) Now we get back to the people who didn't want Saul as king. The Israelites turned to Samuel (not Saul) to ask if the "rebels" should be killed. It is then Saul who answers that they should be spared.
 - i) This shows that people are still looking to Samuel for "Godly questions/answers".
 - ii) It also shows that Samuel turned the answers over to Saul. Samuel's "silence" in this verse" is Samuel saying in effect, "Look, Saul is your king. Look to him for answers now, not me".
 - iii) The reason the Israelites wanted the rebels killed is they saw these guys as a threat. There is always the danger of someone wanting to kill a king.
 - b) Saul shows good leadership skills by saying, "Look folks God gave us a great victory today. It's party time. ☺ Let's not kill any of our own."
16. Verse 14: Then Samuel said to the people, "Come, let us go to Gilgal and there reaffirm the kingship." ¹⁵ So all the people went to Gilgal and confirmed Saul as king in the presence of the LORD. There they sacrificed fellowship offerings before the LORD, and Saul and all the Israelites held a great celebration.
- a) OK, here is the "happily ever after" verses. ☺ Everybody went back to the place where Saul was first anointed as the king. They had a big party and thanked God for the victory.
17. OK, time to step back and take this all in:
- a) We have watched Saul progress from a donkey hunter to a king who lead Israel to victory. Not a bad change over a short time frame. ☺
 - b) The personal application is we never know what God has planned for us once we make ourselves available to him. Even if God doesn't make you a king, what he does do is make our lives significant and gives us a great purpose. Compare Saul's purpose in life of chasing donkeys to the purpose in life of leading other believers into victory. We too, can have that type of privilege by leading others to God and ministering to them
 - c) The other big picture to see from this lesson is just how much God loves us despite the fact that we are not doing "God's will" for the moment. Samuel stated over and over again how Saul is not God's will for the people. Yet, despite that, God blessed Saul and used him to lead the Israelites to a great victory. Yes there are consequences for disobeying God, but it does not negate God's love for us. That maybe the most important lesson to get out of this study.
18. Let's pray: Heavenly Father, thank you for loving us despite our faults, despite our disobedience and the fact that we don't always seek Your will. Guide us to stay close to you and to discern what is Your will for us. Give us the strength and boldness to be obedient to what You have called us to do. Help us to remember that like Saul, you can and do raise us up to be "kings" to reign with You and glorify You, now and forever, Amen.