

#16 King Saul | May 27, 2018

Israel's Decent into Monarchy

- The days of the Judges are described in Judges 21:25, a statement almost always (and incorrectly) taken as negative.
- In 1 Samuel 8:1-6, the nation kindly but forcefully rejects the sons of Samuel as Priestly Judges. This "position" was a morphed position found out of necessity/convenience and not found in Scripture.
- 1 Samuel 1:7 describes the true nature of what was happening. The people were rejecting the theocracy, God's intended method of governing His people, Israel.
 - Note that Theocracy was not, at this time, something God intended for the world. See 1 Samuel 8:20 to compare the other nations. Israel was designed to be unique to uniquely show the blessing and strength of *the God of Israel* as compared to other gods.
- 1 Samuel 1:9 explains the oddity of Saul being chosen by God (1 Sam. 9:17) even though he was never a good King. King Saul was the punishment of God for the rejection of the theocracy.
 - Samuel fully explains the burden that the new King will be for Israel in 1 Samuel 1:10-17.
 - In 1 Samuel 1:18-19 the people choose the King (or at least the monarchy) but it is God who will select the man.
 - God will be gracious through Saul (1 Sam. 9:15-17) but Saul is ultimately a punishment.

Israel's First King

- The historical account of Saul is found in 1 Samuel 8-31. Much of his story is intertwined with the pre-reign life of David, making a Biblical outline of Saul difficult.
- The introduction of Saul comes in 1 Samuel 9:1-2, as a man who looked the part of a King.
- Samuel is led to Saul as Saul is carrying out the most *unKingly* duties and found to be a man of little insight, strength, or determination (1 Sam. 9:3-16).

- In 1 Samuel 10:1, Saul is anointed King in a private ceremony, prior to his coronation. With the anointing Samuel was now in charge of God's inheritance (Israel), and God would give Saul the spiritual empowerment to do the task, as needed (see 1 Sam. 10:6).
- God selects Saul as King by the drawing of lots in 1 Samuel 10:19-21, but Saul, far from a man of valor, was hiding and the people had to seek him out (vv. 22-24).
- Saul served as a mighty King when the Spirit of God was upon him, and as a weak King when the Spirit of God departed from him.

The Death of Saul

- Saul met with the Philistines in battle, defeating Israel, whose army had fled to Mt. Gilboa, leaving Saul wounded – 1 Samuel 31:1-3.
- Saul desired that his men kill him, but when they would not, Saul committed suicide so that the enemy would not have the pleasure of killing him. Saul and his three sons all died that day – 1 Samuel 31:4-6.
- The Philistines decapitated Saul, hung his body on the gates of nearby Beit Shean, and celebrated a great victory – 1 Samuel 31:7-10.
- The men of Jabesh-Gilead, who had been rescued by Saul in his first military campaign, came to Beit Shean by night to give Saul a proper burial – 1 Samuel 31:11-13.

Some Memorial Day Application

- Government can be a blessing and a curse, and is more often a curse.
- One of the few Biblical purposes of Government is to have a military to protect the borders and the people.
 - A pacifist nation is not seen in the pages of Scripture.
- Without the Spirit of God upon him, Saul simply did not have the military courage to fight the battles for the nation. Only God's Spirit spurred Saul to battle.
- Our military leaders through history have not had the same advantage of the Spirit of God empowering them in the manner of Saul. They have had to rely on pure grit and war materiel.
- Those who have served and lost their lives in battle deserve honor, regardless of their personal flaws and the flaws of the battle in which they died.