

CONCERNING THE WAY

September 16, 2008

LESSON 30: ISRAEL: 1 SAMUEL



Introduction

Continuing through 1 Samuel, we'll study chapters 5-8 in this lesson. In this lesson we'll see one of the most humorous incidents in the Bible, give you information on an obscure Jewish practice that sheds a very interesting light on something Jesus did, and we'll get to see God's commentary on politics.

- *Dusty Rhodes*

Chapter 5

I hope you're all relaxed because this is a passage in God's Word that is very funny. The Reformation thinkers, the Puritans and others always have insisted that the civil government operate under law, not under men and that the highest level of authority in any society is in the revealed will of God, not in the man who holds the political office. This has been true, you can test this for yourself by taking a map of the world and shading in one color where the Bible has gone with evangelical Protestantism and shading with another color where you have had republican governments and you find those two shadings match up over most of the globe, that where the Word of God has gone and in depth and intensity, such as England, northern Germany, Holland, etc. you have more of a republican or democratic trend in government. Where Europe has rejected the Word of God you have tendency toward dictatorship.

This is why the book of Samuel in the Bible, both the first and second parts, is very, very critical that you as a believer be prepared to understand politically. These books are designed to give you information that will enable you to make wise political decisions, that will give you information so that you can understand the proper function of government and the improper function of government.

Now we turn to 1 Samuel 5 and as I said, chapters 5 and 6 are meant to be read with a sense of humor. They were recorded portions of history that the Hebrews probably laughed at. It was to show how ridiculous God made their enemies and it was downright hilarious to the believers to watch. So that is the objective; to record the humiliation of the enemies of Jehovah. There are some very poignant sections, some very humorous sections and some very terrifying sections in these two chapters.

The principle is that what the Jews tried to do at the battle of Aphek by using the ark as a good luck charm God Himself will do now. God said the battle is Mine, and I will win it on My terms. So we have the ark going into captivity, the glory of the Lord is gone. After this point in the history of the nation Israel the glory of God never appears in the tabernacle. From this point forward the tabernacle and the ark are separated and finally the ark is taken back to Jerusalem, the temple appears and you have the glory in the temple, but the original form of worship of the nation has been crushed at this point. The nation is never restored to its original worship system.

1 Samuel 5:1-2 Now the Philistines had captured the ark of God and brought it from Ebenezer to Ashdod. (2) The Philistines took the ark of God and brought it into the temple of Dagon, where they positioned it beside Dagon.

Dagon was a god of grain; older commentators say he was the god that represented fish. It may be possible that the grain motif and the fish motif came together in the sense that fish was often used in the ancient world for fertilizer. Dagon is also a god of fertility, and is the national god of the Philistines. When

they win a battle they attribute it to the work of Dagon. They think that Dagon, their god, beat Jehovah, Israel's God.

Now they did a very similar thing if you turn back to Judges 16:23. When they finally captured Samson they did a very foolish thing. They punched his eyes out, and they made him a prisoner, but when they went beyond that point they invited the wrath of God down upon them. Now both these incidents in Judges 16 and 1 Samuel 5 show why Satan always loses in history; he never learns because Satan is always interested in promoting schemes that will detract from the glory of God. Every time Satan does this he invites God's judgment upon himself and his agents, and Satan never learns to keep by himself and stop messing with God's character. He's always got to extend himself beyond the domain and ask for judgment and he gets it. And here we have Satan operating through these people.

Judges 16:23-30 *The rulers of the Philistines gathered to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god and to celebrate. They said, "Our god has handed Samson, our enemy, over to us." (24) When the people saw him, they praised their god, saying, "Our god has handed our enemy over to us, the one who ruined our land and killed so many of us!" (25) When they really started celebrating, they said, "Call for Samson so he can entertain us!" So they summoned Samson from the prison and he entertained them. They made him stand between two pillars. (26) Samson said to the young man who held his hand, "Position me so I can touch the pillars that support the temple. Then I can lean on them." (27) Now the temple was filled with men and women, and all the rulers of the Philistines were there. There were three thousand men and women on the roof watching Samson entertain. (28) Samson called to the LORD, "O Master, LORD, remember me! Strengthen me just one more time, O God, so I can get swift revenge against the Philistines for my two eyes!" (29) Samson took hold of the two middle pillars that supported the temple and he leaned against them, with his right hand on one and his left hand on the other. (30) Samson said, "Let me die with the Philistines!" He pushed hard and the temple collapsed on the rulers and all the people in it. He killed many more people in his death than he had killed during his life.*

The reason God answered his prayer is because Samson is praying for the damnation upon the religion of the Philistines. It's a false religion and should receive the condemnation of God. And the fact that God answers the prayer of verse 28 is not a signal that God has respected Samson's prayer of vengeance. God, as it were, doesn't care about Samson's eyes, God cares about His own character, and He will not have that character misrepresented by some satanic religion. So God gives Samson the strength and he crushes the temple.

Now in 1 Samuel 5 and they try the same thing; this time instead of bringing Samson into the temple they bring the ark of Jehovah into the temple, but basically they do it for the same reason. They bring it into the house of Dagon and they set the ark by Dagon. Now the reason for this is to show that Jehovah, the God of Israel, should do homage to Dagon, the god of Philistia, and there is a confrontation in theology, a confrontation between the two national gods. And the Philistines have interpreted their victory, not as a loss that Jehovah deliberately allowed, but as the fact that Dagon, their god, really does exist and that he has caused this victory.

1 Samuel 5:3 *When the residents of Ashdod got up early the next day, Dagon was lying on the ground before the ark of the LORD. So they took Dagon and set him back in his place.*

To appreciate what's going on here you have to go back to understanding why Jehovah's presence is equated with the ark. It's as though God Himself is located at that point in time and space. Turn to Numbers 10:35; during the holy war certain commands were given to the Israelite army. When they go into battle Moses gives a peculiar commandment.

“Numbers 10:35 And when the ark traveled, Moses would say, "Rise up, O LORD! May your enemies be scattered, and may those who hate you flee before you!"

The Bible has a doctrine of two kinds of war; there is holy war in Scripture and there is the doctrine of the just war. The two are different. Holy war is an authorized war to exterminate populations and peoples who have gone into extreme sinfulness and idolatry toward God. It was authorized between the years of 1440 BC and 586 BC. Holy war has not been authorized outside of that time as a rule in history. During that time, God Himself, through living prophets would reveal areas of the human race that had to be surgically removed. Critics of the Bible always point to holy war and blood and slaughter and say oh isn't this horrible, God is a God of cruelty and so on. These very people should be thankful for these holy wars. If it were not for these holy wars we wouldn't be sitting here today. These holy wars in God's Word gave freedom to the ancient world. If these holy wars had not gone on, the world would have died in tyranny. Some of those ethnic groups that were exterminated would have grown stronger and eventually eliminated not just the Jews, but other races as well. God knows what He is doing.

By the way, most of the holy wars were in that interval between about 1440 and 1000 BC, between Joshua and the time of David. Every one of the peoples that were exterminated in those four centuries were people that messed with demonology, occultism and so on. Every one of them; they were involved in great occultic practices. And where you have major sections of a population engaging in this kind of thing, you have people in bondage to Satan in a very direct way and they must be exterminated physically. It's a very cruel operation, but it must be done, and any objections to holy war actually is an objection to God's holiness.

Now the doctrine of the just war is something altogether different. God has authorized judicial power and in Genesis 9 after the flood the idea of judicial power being given to man was given in the form of the sword, or capital punishment. Government is authorized by the right to take life; it is cruel, yes, but that is the foundation Biblically of all government. This means that no government can exist without a court system, without a police force, and without a military. Freedom has always been purchased in history by military victory, always. Never have people ever attained freedom in the world except as they have had a strong military, either their own or help from outside. Religious people that can be very sentimental at times and sloppy in their thinking may not like that, and that's too bad because they are usually the people that will wind up in slavery because they have no values worth fighting for.

Don't be dissuaded by the modern pacifist movement in our country. The modern pacifist is not like the old fashioned pacifist. The Amish are a group of people in this country that are the old fashioned pacifists, and they are a very honorable group; they believe the Word of God, their interpretation we would disagree with, but the Amish have always been patriotic, they have always supported their country. They have gone into battle as unarmed ambulance drivers in World War I and World War II. They have served in hospitals and so on, to help in time of conflict and national disaster. There is nothing wrong with that kind of a pacifist, but the modern pacifists who react against all military, who reacts against any form of war, basically is a person who has no values worth fighting for.

Well, the doctrine of the just war says that not all wars are just, but that there is such a thing as war that is legitimate on Biblical grounds and the Christian citizens can whole-heartedly support this kind of war. And moreover he can pray for people engaged in this kind of war. And this means praying that the soldiers be as efficient as possible. It means praying for the men in aircraft that they will drop their bombs as accurately as possible. We don't enjoy war; Robert E. Lee never enjoyed war, but Robert E. Lee was a great Christian, and a great military general.

Now the holy war that we are seeing here in the text is a concept that is not true of the just war. Just war is

not exterminating populations; just war is to simply win judgment upon evil and to keep bringing it upon evil until that evildoer ceases doing his evil. And then the just war is terminated. But we are not talking here in Samuel about a just war. We are discussing here holy war. Israel was authorized to exterminate the Philistines. But here in Numbers 10:35 Moses, when he authorizes the armies to go into battle in holy war he says, *"Rise up, O LORD! May your enemies be scattered, and may those who hate you flee before you!"*

Now this doesn't mean they're just going to take the ark into battle and sit back and wait until the ark is going to do something. It's not that all, and believers of that day had to actually learn how to throw a spear so that it would kill, they had to learn how to shoot an arrow so that it would not wound but kill. They had to be experts in the art of war. But this command is that God will back up the soldiers so that they will be accurate and will kill their opponents. But notice how the order is given because the first part of verse 34 describes something that physically happens while Moses speaks those words. And so while Moses said "Rise up, Lord," the Levites would lift the ark upward, and there would actually be a physical motion upward, actually they'd look like pall bearers would today, as they'd lift this great coffin upward and they'd begin to march and the army would march into battle. When that ark would lift up, that would be the signal that Jehovah Himself was rising. And then, when the ark rested, Moses would say as the priests set the ark down, "Return, O LORD." So Jehovah Himself would identify in location with the ark, I don't say identified with the ark, that would be idolatry and the Israelites never worshiped the ark itself. But visualize enthroned between the cherubs was Jehovah Himself, it was His throne, when those Levites lifted up the ark, Jehovah Himself was seated between the two. And it was as though they were lifting His throne up and moving Jehovah Himself into battle.

Now back to 1 Samuel 5:3. God has a marvelous sense of humor and the first thing that God does is that during the night He apparently gets some angels together during the night when everybody was sleeping and they did a little remodeling job on Dagon's temple. If the people slept lightly during the night they probably could have heard the angels laughing down in the temple of Dagon, they were having a ball down there rearranging the furniture.

They took Dagon and they put him face down on the temple, and this is very interesting because in ancient Near Eastern architecture we have many paintings where you have the victorious king standing and the defeated king bowing down, kissing the feet of the victorious king, and this is the way the angels manipulated this idol during the night. When everybody woke up there was their Dagon down kissing the feet of Jehovah. So obviously God and His angels must have thought that was pretty funny.

So the next day the people wake up and they set Dagon back in its place. God is going to use this in a few verses to increase the humor. The people wake up in the morning and they see what's happened and so they call a construction crew in to remodel it back the way it was before. In our own generation we have idolatrous thought that isn't recognized as idolatry. Behind evolution there are two gods, chance and development; these are two processes of nature that have been deified in the modern man's thoughts. Everything is attributed to one of these two gods. These are the gods that are used as the source of all else. And they must be propped up. The evolutionist who can't respond to the mathematical and scientific objections against his own theories refuses to respond, he ignores them. And like the people here, he has to take his own idol and set it up by the weight of his own human effort. He has to hold these idols up.

And this is the sarcasm of the whole thing; in other words, the point God is making here and will make the next night, is the fact that you people are worshiping an impotent God.

1 Samuel 5:4 *But when they got up early the following day, Dagon was again lying on the ground before the ark of the LORD. The head of Dagon and his two hands were sheared off and were lying at*

the threshold. Only Dagon's body was left intact.

Evidently God called the angels in and they did another remodeling job, except they brought some tools in this time and went to work on the statue. So they did a little amputation during the night, and this was obviously designed for a purpose because the head and the arms were symbols of power. The head was the place of the crown and the crown was always the place of power. And so by cutting the head and the arms off, the angels were saying how do you like Dagon now, this is how he really is. In other words, he has no power.

1 Samuel 5:5-6 (For this reason, to this very day, neither Dagon's priests nor anyone else who enters Dagon's temple step on Dagon's threshold in Ashdod.) (6) The LORD attacked the residents of Ashdod severely, bringing devastation on them. He struck the people of both Ashdod and the surrounding area with sores.

Up to this point, God has portrayed His humor against the gods. Now he's going to have some fun with the population. All of this has been brought about because the population tries to discredit Jehovah. This is part of holy war. And So God in verse 6 destroyed them; now we don't know what method God used but some great disease broke out in the Philistine pentapolis and destroyed many people. Now "sores" is the word for hemorrhoids, so most of you get the point that God gave them a pain in the you know where. And this was obviously to be read for generations later with a great sense of humor. Of all the possible diseases that would be the most humiliating, which one would you pick out? And so you can imagine thousands of people with this problem, and this went on for months. I'll leave it to your imagination.

1 Samuel 5:7-12 When the people of Ashdod saw what was happening, they said, "The ark of the God of Israel should not remain with us, for he has attacked both us and our god Dagon!" (8) So they assembled all the leaders of the Philistines and asked, "What should we do with the ark of the God of Israel?" They replied, "The ark of the God of Israel should be moved to Gath." So they moved the ark of the God of Israel. (9) But after it had been moved the LORD attacked that city as well, causing a great deal of panic. He struck all the people of that city with sores. (10) So they sent the ark of God to Ekron. But when the ark of God arrived at Ekron, the residents of Ekron cried out saying, "They have brought the ark of the God of Israel here to kill our people!" (11) So they assembled all the leaders of the Philistines and said, "Get the ark of the God of Israel out of here! Let it go back to its own place so that it won't kill us and our people!" The terror of death was throughout the entire city; God was attacking them very severely there. (12) The people who did not die were struck with sores; the city's cry for help went all the way up to heaven.

Even though God has demonstrated His superior power to both their god and to them, nevertheless, they still go about worshiping their god. This is why there was holy war authorized. Nothing would break these people's religious allegiance. They had to be eliminated and this is why holy war was done. Verse 11 is an admission of defeat. Whenever a nation in the ancient East would give up a god or give up the tribute from a conquered enemy, this was admitting defeat. This is unheard of in the ancient East, that was a miracle, no nation would willingly do that.

Chapter 6

In chapter 6 we have God showing that He is able. The lone ark of God, with not one bodyguard, seems to take care of itself pretty well. Both chapter 5 and chapter 6 together are to show you that God is capable. It might be possible, had your Bibles not had these two chapters, if you had lived in that day to draw the conclusion after centuries of political oppression and defeat, that your God was weak, that God could not handle the situation. So God must provide empirical historical evidences that Israel can trust Him. So the chapters, humorous though they are, are written for a very serious purpose, to provide historical evidence that God does not need the help of anyone to take care of Himself, rather the Jews need His help.

1 Samuel 6:1-2 *When the ark of the LORD had been in the land of the Philistines for seven months, (2) the Philistines called the priests and the omen readers, saying, "What should we do with the ark of the LORD? Advise us as to how we should send it back to its place."*

There is one final note here of humiliation, apparently God puts some sort of pressure on the demons that speak through these diviners. So when the Philistines ask the diviners what they should do, they say you have to do two things; you not only take the ark back there but you have to make golden statues, one of which is a golden statue of hemorrhoids and the other of mice, and not only that, but I want you to put it on the cart and you're going to track the thing all the through Philistia, all the way up into Israel. And that obviously is the final humorous note because now they send a tribute to the opposing side.

1 Samuel 6:3-8 *They replied, "If you are going to send the ark of the God of Israel back, don't send it away empty. Be sure to return it with a guilt offering. Then you will be healed, and you will understand why his hand is not removed from you." (4) They inquired, "What is the guilt offering that we should send to him?" They replied, "The Philistine leaders number five. So send five gold sores and five gold mice, for it is the same plague that has afflicted both you and your leaders. (5) You should make images of the sores and images of the mice that are destroying the land. You should honor the God of Israel. Perhaps he will release his grip on you, your gods, and your land. (6) Why harden your hearts like the Egyptians and Pharaoh did? When God treated them harshly, didn't the Egyptians send the Israelites on their way? (7) So now go and make a new cart. Get two cows that have calves and that have never had a yoke placed on them. Harness the cows to the cart and take their calves from them back to their stalls. (8) Then take the ark of the LORD and place it on the cart, and put in a chest beside it the gold objects you are sending to him as a guilt offering. You should then send it on its way.*

The cattle involved had never been subjected to a yoke, and so normally they might tear off in five different directions. But if they go together as a team and pull this cart down the road, what does that show? It shows obviously there is some supernatural unusual power working here. They also removed their young, so that the mother instinct would take over, under normal circumstances the cattle would want to go back to nurse their young.

1 Samuel 6:9-12 *But keep an eye on it. If it should go up by the way of its own border to Beth Shemesh, then he has brought this great calamity on us. But if that is not the case, then we will know that it was not his hand that struck us; rather, it just happened to us by accident." (10) So the men did as instructed. They took two cows that had calves and harnessed them to a cart; they also removed their calves to their stalls. (11) They put the ark of the LORD on the cart, along with the chest, the gold mice, and the images of the sores. (12) Then the cows went directly on the road to Beth Shemesh. They went along, mooing as they went; they turned neither to the right nor to the left. The leaders of the Philistines were walking along behind them all the way to the border of Beth Shemesh.*

Beth-Shemesh is up the coast from the Philistine pentapolis, and the road takes them right up and across the boundary line into Israel, but still occupied by Philistia. It is not free territory when they get to Beth-Shemesh. It is occupied and controlled but it still isn't part of Philistia. So they come to the boundary.

1 Samuel 6:13-14 *Now the residents of Beth Shemesh were harvesting wheat in the valley. When they looked up and saw the ark, they were pleased at the sight. (14) The cart was coming to the field of Joshua, who was from Beth Shemesh. It paused there near a big stone. Then they cut up the wood*

of the cart and offered the cows as a burnt offering to the LORD.

See the historic detail? This is not some myth, this was written to be tested, the ark came to rest in somebody's back yard. It's an invitation to the original readers of the book, if you don't believe it, go to the guy's back yard and look. This is an eyewitness of what actually happened. God led these cows, in the Hebrew it speaks in verse 12 of the lowing as they went, the idea is that the cattle were being shepherded along the road by unseen forces, that they didn't naturally want to go.

What did the Hebrews do in all of chapter 5 and 6 by way of deliverance? Not one thing. You see why it's so wrong to say God helps those that help themselves. This came from Ben Franklin and not from God's Word. This obviously disproves it; God is helping those who can't help themselves. And this has been written, designed and engineered to deliberately show that point. Nothing is done by them, they didn't even bring the ark there, it's brought to them by two animals. They don't do anything to provide the sacrifice, God provides it. There's only one thing required of the believer, the desire to worship God. That's the only thing the believers do in all these chapters.

That's the mirror image of the gospel, isn't it? If it were not for the cross of Jesus Christ we would have a tremendous problem; we would be behind the sin barrier and no amount of therapy, no amount of religiosity, no amount of anything else would ever remove the legal guilt. However, God has provided in Christ's atonement on the cross all of our sins laid upon Him. Do we do anything for that? No, God provided for us. God provided the Savior, God provided the sacrifice. What is necessary to appropriate the salvation? What the believers are doing here, active volition, receiving what God has provided by a decision, by an actual choice. God has provided everything for deliverance. God is teaching them one lesson, that deliverance comes from Me, and Me alone.

1 Samuel 6:15-19 The Levites took down the ark of the LORD and the chest that was with it, which contained the gold objects. They placed them near the big stone. At that time the people of Beth Shemesh offered burnt offerings and made sacrifices to the LORD. (16) The five leaders of the Philistines watched what was happening and then returned to Ekron on the same day. (17) These are the gold sores that the Philistines brought as a guilt offering to the LORD — one for each of the following cities: Ashdod, Gaza, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron. (18) The gold mice corresponded in number to all the Philistine cities of the five leaders, from the fortified cities to hamlet villages, to greater Abel, where they positioned the ark of the LORD until this very day in the field of Joshua who was from Beth Shemesh. (19) But the LORD struck down some of the people of Beth Shemesh because they had looked into the ark of the LORD; he struck down 50,070 of the men. The people grieved because the LORD had struck the people with a hard blow.

There's a problem in Hebrew with the number here. The two words are together, seventy and fifty thousand, and most authorities agree that the fifty thousand is a textual mistake, so He probably struck down seventy men, even though almost all manuscripts have both words. Now why are these men "struck?" They looked into the ark. What was wrong with this? Now it doesn't say they peeked inside the ark, that probably is not what is meant, they were staring at the thing, looking at it, kind of feeling it, oh, isn't that nice. These people cannot just carelessly look upon the being of God.

Now this is what was going on in the ark; God, in all of His holiness cannot be viewed by a fallen creature. Ultimately in eternity yes, but in our present state, no. And every time God appears, to the prophets in Isaiah 6, in Ezekiel 1, in Revelation, there's always a tremendous physiological shock; the only way I can use as an analogy is that man is tampering with ultra-high voltage when God appears on the scene, and the shock is just too much for the physical body this side of the fall. God is saying I'm warning you, because you are all sinful creatures, no matter how much I may love you as individuals, you're not fit for My presence

now. Remember God's identification with the ark, and this is why he struck the men of Beth-shemesh, they treated it as just an object, and they didn't treat it with the holiness that the person of God demands.

1 Samuel 6:20-21 *The residents of Beth Shemesh asked, "Who is able to stand before the LORD, this holy God? To whom will the ark go up from here?" (21) So they sent messengers to the residents of Kiriath Jearim, saying, "The Philistines have returned the ark of the LORD. Come down here and take it back home with you."*

This conclusion ties together the two chapters. This is what God had wanted the people to say for 400 years and never could get the point across. Now they know that no one can stand before God. How was that point brought about? By subjective mysticism, people crawling in their closet for a religious experience? No, it was brought about by God objectively showing Himself in history.

What does that tell us about Christianity today? That if we are to produce a testimony for God, the clergy and the churches must be loyal to the historic record of God's objective revelation. Where you have people casting doubts upon that historic record of God's objective revelation this knowledge cannot be produced, and if this knowledge of God is not produced you have no spiritual depth.

Chapter 7

Now having shown that He is capable of handling the situation Himself, God will start the process of deliverance. We are about to see how God is going to grant the nation of Israel a token deliverance. It's going to be in part what it will be in larger part later on. This token deliverance in this chapter is patterned after the model given to us in the book of Judges.

But the most important thing about this chapter is that it shows you the principles of confession and restoration in the Christian life because we have here in these verses an account of how the nation confessed their sin nationally and how the nation was restored. The very same principles that Israel uses to be restored to God's grace or God's favor, are the same principles that you must use as a believer over and over.

God the Father, for example, foreknows us, He predestinates us, He calls us, He justifies us, He glorifies us and He disciplines. He does those whether we like it or not, whether we are with it or not, whether we are dragging our feet or not, whether we are scintillating personalities or not, whether we're educated or not, it doesn't make any difference, all these things that God the Father does He does for every believer. And it does not depend on what kind of local Christian group you happen to be affiliated with, as long as you have personally accepted Christ as your Savior, then God the Father does these things for you.

Now God the Son also does things for us. First of all He furnishes absolute righteousness; He furnishes us a death or an exit from this world into the next; He furnishes us with resurrection or an entrance into the next world; He furnishes us with many other things, including daily making intercession for us to apply the work of His cross on our behalf; He is seated at the Father's right hand and Jesus Christ has reign over principalities and powers, over the rulers of the darkness of this world.

Then God the Holy Spirit has regenerated us. He indwells us, baptizes us, seals us, gives us at least one spiritual gift and also makes intercession for us. These things are positional truth; they never change. But what does change in your Christian life is what we call the bottom circle; the sphere of fellowship that we have at any given time with God. If you are in fellowship that means that at that moment in that area of your life you are doing to the best of your knowledge the will of God, and this means that you have blessing and it means that you can be relaxed and have peace. When you're out of fellowship then you don't have these things and discipline will happen to you if you stay out for too long. Then as you grow in that area

your fellowship with the Lord increases as you become a stronger believer. You have confidence in the truth over a larger and larger area of life.

Now, the nation Israel operates on a similar system except they have their position by virtue of the Abrahamic Covenant. That's their top circle. That never changes, that's always the same; that can never be reversed; that is a national election. But then we have a temporal situation develop and that is the Mosaic Covenant, and particularly passages like Deuteronomy 28 and Leviticus 26. So Israel had an analogous type relationship with the Lord that the believer has and so the Old Testament can be used to study spiritual principles. We can study how the nation Israel was in fellowship, how she was out of fellowship, how did she get back in fellowship, what were the methods she used, what were some of the problems she had, etc. So now we get to how the nation gets back in fellowship.

1 Samuel 7:1-2 *Then the people of Kiriath Jearim came and took the ark of the LORD; they brought it to the house of Abinadab located on the hill. They consecrated Eleazar his son to guard the ark of the LORD. (2) It was quite a long time — some twenty years in all — that the ark stayed at Kiriath Jearim. All the people of Israel longed for the LORD.*

The longing for the Lord is a sign of national awakening; it is something that never occurred in the book of Judges. This is the first verse you will read where you see something is happening spiritually. The reason the nation longed for God was, among many other reasons, obviously due to God the Holy Spirit illuminating them, but they now knew that God was able. So the Holy Spirit used the incident, humorous though it was, to get that message through to Israel. It's not God's fault, God hasn't abandoned them. They have seen the work of God in front of their eyes. And since they have seen this then they are convicted, they see the reason why they are in bondage is because of their own foolishness.

1 Samuel 7:3 *Samuel said to all the people of Israel, "If you are really turning to the LORD with all your hearts, remove from among you the foreign gods and the images of Ashtoreth. Give your hearts to the LORD and serve only him. Then he will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines."*

Samuel's first message goes back to the principle of Deuteronomy 28 and Leviticus 26. These two chapters promise the nation two things: first of all, if the nation makes Jehovah the King, then that nation will be blessed. They will have military victory, they will have economic prosperity, they will occupy the land, and they will have a great testimony in the world. Samuel is saying, if you will get your heart attitude straight God will take care of the rest.

This includes the mental attitude, which is the attitude of loyalty or submission. This is the one key spiritual attitude in the Christian life. Jesus said if you love me you will do what I told you to do and that is in the Word of God. So you measure your mental attitude by measuring it against the Word of God. The key to the reversing your attitude from rebellion to submission is submitting to Jehovah as the right King.

There's a principle for believers who have been out of fellowship a long time. It is true that we can be restored to fellowship instantly but this passage warns us that it is a process of coming back. In other words, you can start to go back immediately, you can be filled with the Spirit, but that doesn't mean that things are back the way they should be, just that quick. It means that you're going to have to crawl out from under this pile of rubbish you've built up. And so Samuel gives Israel one thing they can start with, and that is to physically remove these idols, just get them out of the way.

1 Samuel 7:4-5 *So the Israelites removed the Baals and images of Ashtoreth. They served only the LORD. (5) Then Samuel said, "Gather all Israel to Mizpah, and I will pray to the LORD on your behalf."*

Now they must also reform the tribal confederacy; they have to bring the tribes back into a political organization. The tribal organization has been dead for many centuries at this time and he is bringing them back together. And that is how Christian fellowship is produced in our lives. Let's watch how Samuel united the nation. Samuel could have done a lot of human viewpoint like politicians are trying to do, build brotherhood, build a big national spirit and so on, with all sorts of gimmicks. But you don't do it that way.

Samuel says look, the center of our nation is the Lord. Did he bring the tribes back together by preaching brotherhood? No, each one of them individually got straightened out with the Lord and when they got straightened out with the Lord they got straightened out with one another. And so Samuel says now that you've solved the religious issue you are prepared to solve the political issue.

The United States was adopted on a Christian consensus, and although Jesus Christ was not in the heart of every American when this country began you had this Christian consensus and it was around this that you built your political unity. When you begin to attack and erode the Christian consensus, what is your political unity going to be? It can't be there any more, it's got to be some place else, and this is why we don't have the solidarity we once had in our own nation, simply because we don't have the solid Christian thought behind it.

1 Samuel 7:6 *After they had assembled at Mizpah, they drew water and poured it out before the LORD. They fasted on that day, and they confessed there, "We have sinned against the LORD." So Samuel led the people of Israel at Mizpah.*

Now Samuel calls the nation to a ceremony. This is the notice to tell you that the tribal confederacy is once again functioning, that Samuel has taken over all the nation. Samuel is the first man since Moses to get those tribes back together again. Now let's look at some of the details. They gathered together and they drew water, and they poured it out before the Lord. Now what is this business about? We have to go through God's Word a little bit to pick up the imagery so we understand what the water pouring is. First of all, what is water? Water, since the Garden of Eden, is always a symbol of that which gives life, life-giving substance. Why is it that they pour the water out when they confess? We have a hint in Lamentations 2:19, here we have the symbolism of the water-pouring and confession tied together.

Lamentations 2:19 *Get up! Cry out in the night when the night watches start! Pour out your heart like water before the face of the Lord! Lift up your hands to him for your children's lives; they are fainting at every street corner.*

This, by the way, was a time when the nation was once again in trouble, in fact there was a national disaster that Jeremiah was living through. The city of Jerusalem is under tremendous discipline at this time; shortly the Jewish mothers are going to eat their own babies it is going to become so disastrous. This is prophesied in Leviticus 26 and it happened three times in history, that and in 586 BC, 721 BC and 70 AD, all fulfilling this prophecy that of all the families of the earth, the Jewish people who treasure their own children, will have to kill them. So the water was poured out and Jeremiah connects the two, he says "pour out your heart" for the life of your children.

And the idea of pouring water out at the point of confession means that you are taking, as it were, your last breath and you are saying to the Lord, with my last breath I give it back to you, trusting that He will give you the whole thing back again. The pouring out of water is a picture of desperation at the point of confession, where you gather together all that which is life-giving in your own being and you simply say all this goes the drain if God does not connect me up again. So the pouring out means that I take that which God has given,

I pour it out and I openly acknowledge that I do not have the resources on which to live the Christian life. It is a marvelous testimony of the creaturehood of a believer where the believer recognizes that he does not have an unlimited supply and he takes what he has, and he expresses it, I am limited.

Now look at John 7 when Jesus Christ walked into the middle of one of these water-pouring ceremonies. By the time of Christ, this water pouring that apparently began in Samuel's day had become a national holiday and in the temple the people would, on one of these nights, pour out all this water and there'd be a big long parade down to the pool of Siloam and they would load up these gigantic pottery canisters of water, carry it up chanting all the way, chanting Psalms, and they'd walk into the temple and they would pour them out, confessing their sins, nationally speaking, and acknowledging that they did not have within themselves that which would give life. They could only pour out what they had and that was it.

In the middle of this feast, with hundreds of thousands of people in the temple courtyard, showing you how dynamic Jesus Christ appeared in that generation, right in the middle of this very serious, somber, solemn religious ceremony when everybody and the high priests there with great dignity, Christ stands up and speaks.

John 7:37-38 On the last day of the feast, the greatest day, Jesus stood up and shouted out, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me, and (38) let the one who believes in me drink. Just as the scripture says, 'From within him will flow rivers of living water.' "

In other words, in the middle of the ceremony when people were pouring water out, Christ says I have come to give water and those of you who are thirsty here, those of you who are confessing your sins, you come to Me and I'll give you life.

Now do you see what a picture this presents of Christ? Jesus Christ could not have been anyone else than who He claimed to be. If Jesus Christ was not God incarnate, He was crazy. You don't get up in the middle of a temple in a feast and say if any of you are thirsty, you come to me. So I hope when you read this in your Bible you don't just read it over quickly and not understand the whole culture and history behind it. It was a titanic statement that Christ made. It was a thing that they must have talked about in the streets of Jerusalem for weeks. That crazy carpenter from Nazareth, who does he think he is, coming in here and butting into one of our religious ceremonies, how rude!

Jesus was saying, you have nothing to give to Me, but I've got everything to give to you. When you come to Me you don't come giving Me a thing; when you come to Me you come receiving, not giving, I don't want anything you have; you should want everything I have, completely the reverse. You can pour water out from now to eternity and you'll never run dry. This is how Christ tied this water confession thing together. Confession is the idea of acknowledging your need for grace, for life.

Back in Samuel we see that this practice apparently began here because this is the first Scriptural mention of it. Now you would have thought that it would all stop at verse 6, it should end here, we can all close our Bibles and go home because this is a very nice story, how Israel came to an awareness of their sin, they confessed their sin and they're restored. But the story doesn't end there, it goes on to cite another dramatic incident that happened that day that they poured the water out.

1 Samuel 7:7-9 When the Philistines heard that the Israelites had gathered at Mizpah, the leaders of the Philistines went up against Israel. When the Israelites heard about this, they were afraid of the Philistines. (8) The Israelites said to Samuel, "Keep crying out to the LORD our God so that he may save us from the hand of the Philistines!" (9) So Samuel took a nursing lamb and offered it as a

whole burnt offering to the LORD. Samuel cried out to the LORD on Israel's behalf, and the LORD answered him.

I will try to picture for you the time element in this; it's hard because the Hebrew flip-flops back and forth. A Hebrew author, when he's narrating time he'll tell you about something and then he'll go tell you about something else. So let's see if we can work through this and get the timing right. And when you see the timing you'll see the power of this incident.

Now here's what happened time wise. The people come to Mizpah and for some time, probably weeks, the tribal confederacy starts to operate. That is, the elders of the various tribes are meeting there, the Philistine spy intelligence system notices that there's a gathering of the population. The Philistines, who control the territory, have disarmed the Jews. They had absolutely nothing to fight with. It'd be just like, when Russia controlled Eastern Europe and all of a sudden they begin to notice all the Hungarians are gathering together and we've got to keep on top of this thing.

Well, the intelligence system of the Philistines spots this activity, and so verse 7 is actually talking about some time. And then finally the Philistines order a force to break this thing up. And so they move up to Mizpah and surround the place. You can just imagine the Philistine generals gloating because now not only have they got the whole tribal confederacy but they apparently appear at just the time they're having this confession ceremony. And who should be there besides the elders of all the tribes but Samuel himself. So you can just well imagine the Philistine commanders saying aha, we're not going to just zap the tribal confederacy, we can get this trouble-maker Samuel out of the way, he's the one that's organizing the country again. So they're going to attack. That's the setting. The Philistines have for weeks been planning this attack and they come onto the attack at just the time that Samuel is in the middle of offering the sacrifice. You've got to catch the timing or you'll lose the impact of what's going to happen here.

Samuel is in the middle of the prayer, the word "don't stop" means he's doing it already, don't stop, just keep on. The nation has rebounded in the sense that they realize, since they have no weapons and they're surrounded, they've only got three options, fight, surrender, or some supernatural thing will happen.

1 Samuel 7:10 *As Samuel was offering burnt offerings, the Philistines approached to do battle with Israel. But on that day the LORD thundered loudly against the Philistines. He caused them to panic, and they were defeated by Israel.*

What is the thunder? This is not a typical thunderstorm. People knew a thunderstorm when they saw one, the Philistines wouldn't have been worried about a thunder storm. This particular word for "thunder" occurs at select times in Scripture. It occurred explicitly only two times before in history. The first one was Noah's flood; in Psalm 104 when it speaks of the flood says after the flood waters rose, suddenly God thundered against them. So there was something that we would say is a geophysical phenomenon that apparently was global in its extent, a tremendous noise. The second time it occurs is in the Exodus, spoken of in Psalm 77:19 and Psalm 81:8.

So this is not some every day event. It is something we do not understand, but some kind of tremendous miracle occurred that day with a tremendous roaring. In other passages in Scripture this word "thunder" is used synonymously with a verb "the earth shakes." It may be that the word "thunder" is actually a tremendous earthquake that's going on, and of course, if you've ever been in an earthquake you know that you have a terrific roar in the earth, it just kind of shakes beneath you and it gives a roar out from the earth. The beautiful thing is that this happened just precisely at the right time, and notice again God delivers the Jews all by Himself. The Jewish people could not defend themselves, and God has delivered.

Let's tie this with the Christian life. The Jews were out of fellowship, then they went on positive volition, began to deal with areas of carnality, and idolatry in their life. They put those things away, they began to get back into normal Christian activities, such as taking in the Word of God and so on. After those two steps, then they dealt with a satanic enemy and they were delivered, God gave them the deliverance, but notice the order. First the response, the clearing up of what they could clear up, and then finally the deliverance from the satanic oppression through the Philistines.

1 Samuel 7:11-12 *Then the men of Israel left Mizpah and chased the Philistines, striking them down all the way to an area below Beth Car. (12) Samuel took a stone and placed it between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, saying, "Up to here the LORD has helped us."*

Have you noticed the passion of the Old Testament saint for historic evidences for the faith? Do you notice that when a miracle occurs what does the Jew in the Old Testament do, always? He sets up a monument. So he can say look, my faith doesn't hang on some concept, my faith hangs on what happened at this point at this place at one time in history, right there it happened.

Now we as Christians should do the same thing. Jesus Christ, we must say, lived at a certain point in time and said the things the Bible says He did, and if He didn't let's be honest and chuck the whole thing. But it is foolish and unbiblical to say well I just like the morals of Jesus, He said love thy neighbor and that's such a sweet thought, so I'll keep that sweet thought of Jesus and dump the rest down the drain. Well you can't separate the man from His words, it's impossible.

But notice the words "up to here," God has helped us up to that point, but this was only a token delivery, they are going to have a greater deliverance when the king comes and they will lead their own armies into battle. These spectacular deliverances are given for learning only, they are given to show that God is the One who is doing the delivering and although He may use intermediate agencies, such as your own strength or your own ingenuity, behind it all God is working.

1 Samuel 7:13-17 *So the Philistines were defeated; they did not invade Israel again. The hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel. (14) The cities that the Philistines had captured from Israel were returned to Israel, from Ekron to Gath. Israel also delivered their territory from the control of the Philistines. There was also peace between Israel and the Amorites. (15) So Samuel led Israel all the days of his life. (16) Year after year he used to travel the circuit of Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpah; he used to judge Israel in all of these places. (17) Then he would return to Ramah, because his home was there. He also judged Israel there and built an altar to the LORD there.*

Samuel is the last judge and the first prophet, and now we are ready for the next time when we'll deal with one of the greatest political speeches in the history of man, given in 1 Samuel 8; this is cited as one of the great classics of all time. It rates with many of the great addresses given down through history on the topic of government.

Chapter 8

At this point in the book of Samuel we begin a new section. The first seven chapters were all introduction. In chapters 8-15, God establishes the office of king and its first incumbent, Saul, fails.

In this chapter we get involved in the details of kingship. This entire development of the office of king is a

typology of the office of Christ. Christ is not Jesus' last name. Jesus full last name was Jesus Ben-Joseph, and the word "Christ" is not a personal name but a title of an office. The titles "Christ", "Messiah", "Anointed One", and "King" are all different words describing the same office. And if we say Jesus is the Christ we have to know what the Christ is supposed to do.

So beginning in 1 Samuel 8 we deal with the office of the Christ, the king. These chapters are necessary to appreciate the person of Jesus Christ. Apart from understanding the Old Testament you cannot understand what the claim means when it says in the New Testament Jesus is the Christ. Inevitably you wind up with a sentimental non-Biblical image of Jesus, maybe the archetype hippie, maybe the great radical social reformer or some other human viewpoint image and portrait of Christ but it won't be the true Biblical portrait of Him. Only as you understand the descriptions given in the pages of the Old Testament can you truly understand Him who is our Savior.

Now to understand the background for 1 Samuel 8 we have to understand the concept of kingdom first.

The great movements of history are all kingdom movements. In our own generation, in our own century we have seen at least two attempts that are very cruelly kingdom attempts. One is the Third Reich of Adolph Hitler. In this case there was obviously a kingdom attempt, and the German liberal Christian theologians held no bones about it, they openly identified Adolph Hitler with the Messiah and openly said that this Third Reich was the later day kingdom of God on earth. And you cannot understand the fanaticism of the Nazi's unless you capture the religious, and I say again, "religious" commitment they had to the Third Reich. Again you cannot understand communism unless you understand that it too is a religious commitment to the concept of social salvation by the dictatorship or the proletariat.

In Genesis 11 you have God's eternal answer to the problem of men trying to unify themselves under world government ignoring the person of Christ. It's interesting that you can walk into the UN building and you cannot mention the name Jesus Christ in a religious sense in the building or the guards will throw you out but you walk through the door and what stares you in the face, a statue of Zeus. So obviously though we can't talk of Christ we can talk of Zeus in the United Nations building. This is another illustration of the continuing religious flavor to these kinds of movements. Now the rise of the kingdom is something that has afflicted man since Nimrod and the Gentiles always have reverted to kingdoms.

1 Samuel 8:1-5 In his old age Samuel appointed his sons as judges over Israel. (2) The name of his firstborn son was Joel, and the name of his second son was Abijah. They were judges in Beer Sheba. (3) But his sons did not follow his ways. Instead, they made money dishonestly, accepted bribes, and perverted justice. (4) So all the elders of Israel gathered together and approached Samuel at Ramah. (5) They said to him, "Look, you are old, and your sons don't follow your ways. So now appoint over us a king to lead us, just like all the other nations have."

Samuel seems reticent to bring about any changes; he wants to stick with the old ways. So, as they've had for 400 years, he appoints judges to help him rule over Israel.

1 Samuel 8 is a center of political philosophy in God's Word. Samuel gives one of the classic political speeches of all time. In fact I would suggest if you're ever in a course in government or social studies that you see if you can finagle your way with the teacher into doing a paper or a report on 1 Samuel 8 and the political philosophy stated therein because this speech is a capsule summary of God's view of politics and represents an early stage in the Bible of basic Biblical political theory.

It begins with this apparently innocuous request, to "make us a king to judge us like all the other nations." But if you skim down to 8:20 you see what is implied in verse 5. "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.” What did the Lord just get through doing in chapter 5, 6, and 7? Wasn't it fighting their battles? The Lord had fought these battles and these people rejected faith in God. It is a denial of relaxing and trusting the Lord to carry on and fight the battle.

1 Samuel 8:6-9 *But this request displeased Samuel, for they said, "Give us a king to lead us." So Samuel prayed to the LORD. (7) The LORD said to Samuel, "Do everything the people request of you. For it is not you that they have rejected, but it is me that they have rejected as their king. (8) Just as they have done from the day that I brought them up from Egypt until this very day, they have rejected me and have served other gods. This is what they are also doing to you. (9) So now do as they say. But seriously warn them and make them aware of the policies of the king who will rule over them."*

Samuel recognizes there's something wrong here. Verse 7 is one of the key verses in the Old Testament that shows you that God is the King of the nation. Now that again shows the tremendous sin nature of the nation, in rejecting the rule of the King but it also shows something more important. And this is something that should stick with you when you go through the Old Testament, and solve a lot of your problems in understanding prophecy. For the Jew, **history must end with a personal reign of God on earth over the nation Israel.**

The Messianic hope in the Bible does not terminate in a human king; the Messianic hope in the Bible must be in God Himself reigning. This is one of the early evidences that whoever occupies the office of the Christ must be God. Christ, out of the fullness of the Old Testament tradition, must be God; He may be man but He must be God.

Now beginning in verse 10 is one of the classic political speeches of all time. This is an expose of what happens when men vote away political freedom for the sake of material security. It always has happened this way, it always will happen this way. You are about to read something that has tremendous political wisdom, if only people would understand; this is the price that is always paid by men who crave security more than they crave freedom.

1 Samuel 8:10 *So Samuel spoke all the words of the LORD to the people who were asking him for a king.*

This also shows why this was a great speech, Samuel didn't write it. God was his speech-writer so this represents thoughts on the mind of God. This represents God's view of politics. What you read in here is not the result of some tenth century Hebrew prophet thinking about the ills of his generation. These are the thoughts, the words that come from the mind of God.

1 Samuel 8:11-18 *He said, "Here are the policies of the king who will rule over you: He will conscript your sons and put them in his chariot forces and in his cavalry; they will run in front of his chariot. (12) He will appoint for himself leaders of thousands and leaders of fifties, as well as those who plow his ground, reap his harvest, and make his weapons of war and his chariot equipment. (13) He will take your daughters to be ointment makers, cooks, and bakers. (14) He will take your best fields and vineyards and give them to his own servants. (15) He will demand a tenth of your seed and of the produce of your vineyards and give it to his administrators and his servants. (16) He will take your male and female servants, as well as your best cattle and your donkeys, and assign them for his own use. (17) He will demand a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will be his servants. (18) In that day you will cry out because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, but the LORD won't answer you in that day."*

All right, we have here the classic presentation of centralized power. When a government centralizes itself with vast authority these things must always follow. No men can change it, these are the rules that inevitably follow; always have, always will.

Verse 11 speaks of a draft; up to this point they had a volunteer army, because they wanted soldiers that had courage and who were convinced of the justness of the cause. Now there's nothing wrong with a military, but when the king considers the military his private instrument for his own private wars, for his own private causes, then he is unresponsive to the national issues.

Then in verse 12 you have added to the military a tremendous industrial complex where the government itself engages in industry instead of using private industry to do the job.

Notice in verse 13, they had a female draft. In verse 14 you have the confiscation of private property, he will take YOUR fields, YOUR vineyards, YOUR olive yards. Contrary to a left-wing ideology, private property in the Bible is the basis of freedom. God gave the Israelites economic freedom and because of that, they had political freedom. You're not truly free unless you own private property. Some of these things are needful, like a post office building, for example, but there will always be a tendency for government to centralize power further and to result in confiscation of property. Communism, obviously, is the most extreme form.

Then in verse 15, we have massive taxation. Now obviously if the government only took ten percent of everything this would be fantastic in our era, but in that day ten percent was pretty heavy, and why they mention seed and vineyards, is that they want to note that the taxation is total, in other words it's taxation, even on the means of production. This is not taxation on, say a sales tax, this is not going to be taxation on even your income, this is taxation on the very means a man uses to work. It would be the same today if you were a plumber or an electrician and the only way you have of earning your bread is by the tools that you have, for the government to come along and take one out of every ten tools that you've got.

Verse 16, is it all given for the benefit of the people? No, it's given for the benefit of the bureaucrats. You have the development of a titanic bureaucracy; he will take your menservants, and your maidservants, and your choicest young men," and put them to whose work, the people's work? No, his work. Notice the singular pronoun throughout all this.

As I read verse 18 I wonder how strongly this applies to the prayers that are made today. I wonder if this same principle applies to the Gentile nations, if the reason why prayers are not answered for the oppressed in many quarters of the earth isn't because those people have chosen that form of government. I wonder if that might apply to the United States as the American citizens passively sit down and let their freedoms be taken away from them one by one, until they wake up some day and they're all gone, and then we'll have great prayer meetings, oh God, break up this oppression, destroy the government, and I wonder if He says from heaven, I will not hear you because you have chosen it, it was your choice and it's irreversible.

1 Samuel 8:19-22 But the people refused to heed Samuel's warning. Instead they said, "No! There will be a king over us! (20) We will be like all the other nations. Our king will judge us and lead us and fight our battles." (21) So Samuel listened to everything the people said and then reported it to the LORD. (22) The LORD said to Samuel, "Do as they say and install a king over them." Then Samuel said to the men of Israel, "Each of you go back to his own city."

And that ended, at that point, the once great freedom of the nation. Now they will exist and many times have blessing, but never again will they have the tremendous political freedom they had; they just voted it away.

Now I want to show you how God takes the kingdom concept and turns it around for blessing, as He always does in grace, turning cursing into blessing. Let's look at a famous passage in Isaiah 9:6-7. Just as God dealt with the fig leaves that Adam and Eve placed upon them, by providing a sacrifice and the skin of that sacrifice applied to their nakedness, so now God is going to take His own Son who will die on the cross, and this Son will become The King of Kings. And this is why in verse 6 it looks forward to the time, for though they have the kingdom structure, the man who sits in the office of king will not be like we just saw in 1 Samuel 8. He will be perfection.

Isaiah 9:6-7 For a child has been born to us, a son has been given to us. He shoulders responsibility and is called: Extraordinary Strategist, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (7) His dominion will be vast and he will bring immeasurable prosperity. He will rule on David's throne and over David's kingdom, establishing it and strengthening it by promoting justice and fairness, from this time forward and forevermore. The LORD's intense devotion to his people will accomplish this.