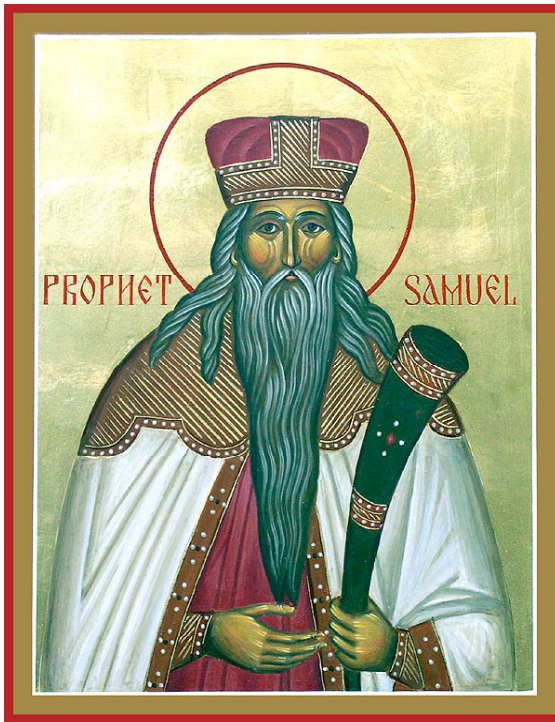


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SAMUEL THE GREAT PROPHET



Aim:

- to teach the group about the book of 1 Samuel
- to apply the principles introduced in 1 Samuel in our daily lives

Spiritual preparation for the servant:

We need to apply the principles introduced in 1 Samuel in our daily lives

1. Obedience “Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the Lord?” 1 Sam 15:22
2. Intimate communication with our Lord. “Speak, Lord, for you servant hears” 1 Samuel 3:9
3. Strong character in the midst of evil, compare Samuels growth to Eli’s son’s corruption.

Verse: “Speak, Lord, for you servant hears” 1 Samuel 3:9

References:

- 10T1, 10T2
- Interpretation of the first book of Samuel By Fr. Tadros y. Malaty
- The Fiery spirit by Fr. Tadros y. Malaty
- E-ref CD Christian orthodox library

Overview:

We will be looking at the rest of the book of 1 Samuel. As this is a large amount of information to go through in one lesson we will be splitting the class into small groups and each group focus’ on a different event/chapter in 1 Samuel to present to the class. A study guide has been added to the resources so that as servants we understand the book of 1 Samuel and have a deeper appreciation of Samuel the judge and prophet.

Activites:

Group 1

Based on Chapter 2:11 –3:1-21

1. Who was Eli ? What is his role ?
2. What was Eli's children doing that displeased the Lord?
3. Did Samuel join them?
4. What made him different from the sons of Eli? What was the result of his faithfulness
5. How hard is it to follow God when your friend's especially 'Chrisitan' friends do things contrary to the Love of our Lord?
6. Write a play to present to the class about the struggles we face when in a similar situation

Based on 1 Samuel Chapter 5-7

Things you will need for this activity;

Cardboard

Textas/ paint/crayon

1. Recount the events that occurred to the Palastines as a result of having the Ark Of Covenant in their possession
2. How did the Ark return to the Israelites
3. Draw a poster advertising a movie about the movement of the ark through the Palestinian countries

Based on Chapter 8-10

1. Why did the people of Israel want a king?
2. Why was Samuel so disappointed about their request
3. Why was Samuel reluctant to give them one?
4. How did Saul meet Samuel? What does it say about God's plans for us.
5. Write a news broadcast about the anointing of Saul as King

STUDY GUIDE: RECOMMENDED READING

“Samuel” means, “The Lord listened”

Overview of the book of 1 Samuel

A TRANSITIONAL STAGE: JUDGES TO KINGS

The life of Samuel, the prophet and the judge, represents a transitional stage, through which Israel crossed from the Judge system to that of Monarchy. Samuel was born to religious parents, as a fruit of prayers and faith of his mother; then was raised by ‘Eli’, the priest and judge, who has been characterized by a weak personality, especially before his own sons.

Samuel was raised in the house of the Lord in ‘Shiloh’, where the tabernacle of meeting settled down for 300 years; then was destroyed by the Philistines in one of their attacks; probably during the battle of ‘Aphek’ (1 Samuel 4); after which the ark never returned there.

His role as a judge (1 Samuel 7: 6; 15 - 17), like that of ‘Eli’ the priest, had a special feature -- a spiritual role, praying and counsel giving, but not leading armies for wars. It was characterized by spiritual guidance as much as possible; as the people were still had a trend of deviation from the Lord, and of ignorance, that prevailed from the time of the judges; That is why God allowed for their humiliation at the hands of the Philistines.

When the people demanded a king like the other nations around them, Samuel counted that as a rejection against the reign of God, and against him. But, through a divine ordinance, Samuel anointed ‘Saul’ as their king; whom God eventually rejected when he rebelled against Him. David was secretly anointed as a king; to be persistently pursued by Saul to have him killed.

FOCUS	SAMUEL		SAUL		
REFERENCE	1:1 ————— 4:1		8:1 ————— 13:1 ————— 15:10 ————— 31:13		
DIVISION	FIRST TRANSITION OF LEADERSHIP: ELI—SAMUEL	JUDGESHIP OF SAMUEL	SECOND TRANSITION OF LEADERSHIP: SAMUEL—SAUL	REIGN OF SAUL	THIRD TRANSITION OF LEADERSHIP: SAUL—DAVID
TOPIC	DECLINE OF JUDGES		RISE OF KINGS		
	ELI	SAMUEL	SAUL	DAVID	
LOCATION	CANAAN				
TIME	c. 94 YEARS				

1 Samuel 2:

The birth of Samuel was the fruit of Hannah's prayers and faith. She kept him for three years until she weaned him, and then she offered him to the Lord, saying to Eli, "Therefore, I also have lent him to the Lord; as long as he lives he shall be lent to the Lord" [28]. She loaned him to the Lord, that is, he remains her son whom she cherished, but she could not go back on her promise to God. God granted him to her, and she gladly loaned him back to the Lord, of her own accord, for the rest of his life, not just for a few years.

6. She offered sacrifices:

- 3 bulls, of which one was slaughtered as a burnt sacrifice (Samuel's life = burnt offering to show his love for God);
- 1 ephah of flour, i.e. 10 lbs (=10 commandments); and
- "A skin of wine" (= Happiness results from sanctifying one's heart and life).

SAMUEL'S UPBRINGING (1 Sam. 2)

1. Hannah's psalm is full of thanksgiving, not only for having Samuel as a son, but also because in him she saw the great gift of God, the Messiah, the salvation of His people.

(Compare between Samuel 1:1-10 and Luke 1:46-55): Hannah praises through symbolism and the Virgin Mary through Truth Himself.

2. What a big difference between Samuel and the two sons of Eli! Eli was too lenient in their upbringing and they in turn took advantage of their position as priests. Instead of being good shepherds, they were like two wolves devouring the flock. They did not know the Lord, they corrupted the women, they violated the holy of holies by eating parts of the offerings, which did not belong to them. They had a right only to the breast and the right leg after burning the fat in sacrifice (Lev. 3:3-5)] and the rest should have been distributed among the family members who made the offering (Lev. 7:29-34). They took the rite and purity lightly, as well as rights of others, even those of the Lord.

3. Samuel began his service to the Lord as a young boy swathed in linen [18]. He wore it like a coat tied around the waste with a band, which was what the Levites wore, and not the priests. His mother gave him a new garment every year, as a renewal of family ties which were filled with love. This good family relation was probably the shield which protected him from the evil ways of the sons of Eli.

4. Eli admonished his sons with leniency, so God sent him a prophet to warn him, but his weak personality kept him from being sterner with his sons. God decided to discipline him; [shifting the priesthood from his descendants who died young; taking the ark away from them; and his descendants would seek death in vain.]

The prophet concluded his speech by foretelling of the coming of the Messiah, the faithful Priest, Who will do what pleases God [35-36].

THE CALLING OF SAMUEL (1 Sam. 3)

1. In the midst of the deep darkness outdoors, "...and before the lamp of God went out in the tabernacle of Lord..." [3], the Lord called Samuel to set him as a light among his people, to proclaim the will of God, and witness to the truth. He was called before dawn and before the lamp went out, at a time when darkness settled on Israel because the "word of the Lord was rare" (1 Sam. 3:1; Ps. 74:1,9; Amos 8:11).

2. Samuel alone heard the voice, not Eli, because his heart was ready for it. Samuel was only 12 years old.

3. Samuel lived with Eli, serving him, obeying him and asking his guidance. Obedience is the shortest yet the most difficult route. Through Eli, Samuel came to know God; yet God came to Samuel calling him by name [10]. God stands by us and we come to know Him through guidance.

4. Samuel learnt that obedience is the essence of the prophecy... "Speak, for Your servant hears" [10].

5. Samuel was afraid of hurting Eli's feelings so he "...told him everything and hid nothing from him..." and Eli readily accepted God's discipline to him.

6. God laid the foundation for good works [Samuel's oneness with God [19]; his being accepted by the people; and God's appearance to him in Shiloh].

THE FALLING OF DAGON (1 Sam. 5)

1. God allowed the Philistines to capture the Ark of the Covenant in order to discipline Israel. They were supposed to realize that because of their corruption, they had lost the presence of God in their midst. At the same time God showed His glory and power by causing Dagon to fall, [an idol whose head and hands were human and whose body was that of a fish], on the floor because they had placed the ark in his house. They did not realize that there should be no affiliation between God and idols. After insisting on keeping the ark, they came the following day and found their idol with its head and hands broken on the threshold, a sign that Dragon had lost the power of thought and action and that he would be trodden upon.

2. The pagans did not learn their lesson, so the Lord struck Ashdod and its territory with tumors, and plagued them with rats, so they lost their health and

nourishment. The ark is a blessing to believers and an aroma of death to blasphemers (2 Cor. 2:15- 16).

3. The ark was moved from Ashdod to Gath, one of the greatest cities of Palestine, and the plague was even more severe. Everybody was sick, old and young, and the whole city was disturbed.

4. The ark was then moved to Ekron, one of the five great cities of Palestine, and the plague was even greater. "...For there was a deadly destruction throughout all the city; the hand of God was very heavy there... and the cry of the city went up to heaven" [11-12].

RETURN OF THE ARK (1 Sam. 6)

1. For seven months, the ark stayed in the hands of the Philistines. This was to show that what happened to the idol and the people was not by chance and also to give Israel a chance to repent.

2. The Israelites might have wondered at the ease with which the ark was taken from them, but God used the priests and diviners to witness for Him. They decided to return the ark with a "trespass offering," in acknowledgement of their sin, and as a means of compensation for what happened to His people. All five cities participated so that it would be a communal confession.

3. The pagans realized two facts: God cannot be bribed with gold or silver, therefore they offered glory to God [5]; and also that it was useless to resist Him.

4. The ark was returned on a new cart. The cart was pulled by two **milk cows** on which there had come no yoke. (Some Jews and some Gentiles accepted to live a fruitful life without deviation from the right path, so that they did not carry the sour burden of sin together with the sweet easy burden of Christ). Going into the field of Joshua (= Jesus), represented the enjoyment of the Church with her Lord Jesus as the secret of her power. The stone upon which the sacrifice was offered in the field of Joshua, remained as a witness to God's work with His people [18].

5. The people did not receive the ark according to their traditions by sending for the priest and Levites to carry it... thus the men of Beth Shemesh were struck and the ark was taken up to Kirjath Jearim (city of forests) via the towns of Judah and Benjamin, estimated to be nine miles west of Jerusalem.

REPENTANCE IS THE MEANS TO VICTORY (1 Sam. 7)

1. The people of Kirjath Jearim realized that the presence of the ark in their midst represented a Divine presence, a blessing for those who loved Him. Therefore they went up to it with reverence and joy and brought it to the house of Abinadab

(father of hospitality or nobility). There is no enjoyment of the Divine presence without the gift of giving.

2. After nearly twenty years of continuous work with the people, Samuel called on all the people to have a collective repentance saying: "If you return to the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtoroth from among you, and prepare your hearts for the Lord, and serve Him only..." [3]. During this time, Samuel had married and had Joel (Jehovah is God) and Abijah (God is my Father)...there was a need for a firm distinction between the two ways, either God or the foreign gods.

3. Inner, heartfelt repentance showed in outward actions:

- a. Putting away foreign gods;
- b. Their gathering together at Mizpah to worship with one spirit;
- c. Samuel praying for them;
- d. Drawing water and pouring it out before the Lord (symbolizing pouring the heart to God);
- e. Collective fasting;
- f. Confessing their sins to God in Samuel's presence; and,
- g. Offering a whole burnt offering to the Lord.

4. Because they offered a true repentance, their enemies rose against them, but the repentant people of God, defeated them. Their oppression became victory in the exact spot where they had suffered defeat before.

5. Samuel moved from one place of worship to another like Bethel, Gilgal and Mizpah.

ISRAEL DEMANDS A KING (1 Sam. 8)

1. The people were taken in by the show of greatness that belonged to the kings of the nations surrounding them. They took advantage of Samuel's old age and used his sons' deviation from his ways, as leverage, and demanded a king to rule and judge over them as other nations. There was nothing wrong with their demand except that they were speeding up the sequence of events because God had already prepared David to be their king from whose offspring would come the Incarnate Word of God Incarnated; and their desire to imitate the other nations showed the love of superficial pomp and glory.

2. Samuel took that request as an affront to his judicial office and God considered it an affront to Him, since He was King over His people (7). Samuel was not furious with them, but asked God's advice. God comforted him and told him to fulfill their request. God sanctifies human freedom and answers group prayer. At the same time, He shows them the reality of the situation, giving them very clear warnings.

3. Samuel warned the people and revealed to them the disadvantages of fulfilling their demand for a king. The disadvantages being:

- a. Appointing their sons to serve him and his purposes;
- b. Using their daughters to entertain him and his family;
- c. Using them as perfumers, cooks and bakers;
- d. Taking the best of their fields;
- e. Using their manpower to cultivate his own lands; and,
- f. "... you will cry out in that day because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, and the Lord will not hear you in that day" [18].

When the people still insisted on a king, Samuel adjourned the meeting, and they were all satisfied that he would grant them their wish.

SAUL [=REQUEST] MEETS SAMUEL (1 Sam. 9)

1. When the people insisted on having their way, Saul, son of Kish, the Benjamite, was appointed king. He was taller than any of the people [2]. Kish's donkeys were lost and his son, Saul, and one of the servants went out looking for them. They searched the mountains of Ephraim and went through the lands of Shalisha, Shaalim, Benjamites, Zuph, but in vain. Three days had gone by without finding them, Saul decided to go back, fearing that his father would be worried, but the servant, who seemed to have more faith than his master, advised him to meet the seer and ask him about the matter. Saul was not a religious man. He did not know of the existence of the prophet, but his servant did.

Saul's good qualities: He was anxious to find the donkeys; he worried about his father's feelings; consult with his servant, and he wanted to award the seer as a man of God.

2. This chapter gives us a clear picture of how God controls history. Any event is a result of a Divine plan:

- a. the loss of the donkeys: [losing ignorance leads to royalty];
- b. meeting the young women who were going out to draw water and who told them about the sacrifice of the people: [men of the old and the new Testaments who, through prophecies and evangelical witnessing, refer to Christ who preceded us to offer the sacrifice of the Cross for our sake];
- c. seeing Samuel who came to meet them and to "go up into the high place" [12]: [Christ lifts us to Golgotha, i.e. the high place, so that we may enjoy the sacrifice and receive His Body which was given for our salvation];
- d. Samuel reveals to Saul the fact that he would be anointed king and tells him not to worry about the donkeys for they had already been found: [We should not worry about worldly things in order to enjoy the kingdom of heaven];
- e. "Samuel took Saul and his servant and brought them into the hall, and had them sit in the place of honor among those who were invited

f. an intimate conversation between Samuel and Saul at dawn on the top of the house: [an intimate relationship with our Christ when we rise with Him into heaven].

SAUL ANOINTED KING (1 Sam. 10)

1. Saul was anointed king, and everything was made available to him so that he would live in the fear of God, a strong leader who would fulfill the Divine will, but is not obligated to do so. Despite the fact that Samuel was totally opposed to the idea of a king, once he anointed Saul, he accepted him with humility, thus teaching us to respect authority. It was also made clear to him that what Saul received was a Divine gift, "the Lord has anointed you" [1], and not a personal tribute.

2. Samuel foretold Saul what would happen to him:

a. his visit to Rachel's tomb when he would meet two men who would tell him that the donkeys had already been found; that he should be proud of his tribe despite its being the smallest of the tribes due to the massacre that was mentioned in Judges 20:46.

Benjamin [= the son of the right hand] who was a source of pain to his mother became his father's pride, that is why it was important for Saul to enjoy sitting on the right hand of God even if that brought pain to others. However, Saul was more concerned with how to please people rather than God. His meeting with the two men only emphasized that it was no coincidence.

b. his meeting the three men at the "... terebinth tree of Tabor another carrying three loaves of bread and another carrying a skin of wine; and they will greet you and give you 2 loaves of bread" [3-4] [God will provide for him and those who are with him.] They would not offer him the goats, because he was not a priest; nor the wine so that he would not seek after luxuries.

c. his going to the "...hill of God where the Philistine garrison is" [5]. He was to meet a group of prophets and then the Spirit of the Lord would be on him and he would be able to prophesy with them, that is, he would joyfully share with them in praising and worshiping, without allowing the royal duties to distract him from group or individual worship and seeking advice from the prophets. The Spirit of God turned him into another man [6]. There was also a need for inner change, a new heart [9].

3. Saul meets his uncle: Saul decided to keep the matter of the sovereignty from his uncle, thinking that it was a secret until he was instated.

4. Announcing his sovereignty at Mizpah: He had hidden himself among the luggage in fear of being refused by some as a king. In fact he was refused by some rebels who could not see him as their savior.

FIGHTING THE AMMONITES (1 Sam. 11)

1. One month after Saul was anointed and before he was given the kingship, Nahash (=serpent, symbolizing the old serpent, the devil; the Ammonites worshiped a serpent), the king of the Ammonites came and encamped against Jabesh-Gilead, east of the Jordan. He wanted to enslave them and when they accepted, he decided that he would put out their right eyes to bring reproach on all Israel. They asked him to give them seven days grace in which they would search for someone to help them against him. He agreed to give them the time believing in his heart that they were helpless and would not be able to find themselves a saviour. Putting out the right eye symbolizes the fact that the enemy would remove the spiritual vision towards heavenly matters.

2. "The messengers came to Gibeah of Saul," and were told of Nahash's threats. The people wept when they heard, and Saul, returning from the field where he tended his herd, heard the news and sympathized with them [there was a blood relationship between the Benjamites and the people of Jabesh-Gilead (Judges 21:2-4)]. He took a yoke of oxen and cut them in pieces and sent it with messengers to all Israel to prod them to war against the enemy. 300,000 men from Israel and 30,000 from Judah at Bazeck came together to fight the enemy from 3 different directions at the break of dawn; and the enemy was annihilated, because they were both sleepy and surprised.

The people asked Samuel to put to death those who originally made fun of anointing Saul king, but Saul did not want any sadness of vendetta to cloud their day of victory... then his nomination was unanimous in Gilgal. "There they made sacrifices of peace offerings before the Lord, and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly" [15].

SAMUEL'S FARWELL ADDRESS AT SAUL'S CORONATION (1 Sam. 12)

1. Samuel the Prophet made a candid farewell speech, in which he asked the people to be his witnesses before God and His anointed one, Saul, that he had been always totally honest with them and never had taken advantage of them. [He was not defending himself against any fraud or dishonesty charges but his objective was to teach the new king important values.]

2. When the people witnessed for his honesty, he started to point out to them all the good things that God did for them: His taking care of them over the years, and how, in every generation, He had sent them a Judge (= savior). He questioned them about their request for an earthly king when God was and always will be their King. God granted their wish, therefore they should not be fearful, but should always walk in God's way: "Then Samuel said to the people, "Do not fear. You have done all this wickedness; yet do not turn aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your hearts. And do not turn aside; for then you would go after empty things which cannot profit or deliver, for they

are nothing. For the Lord will not forsake His people, for His great name's sake, because it has pleased the Lord to make you His people" [20-22].

God, in His goodness, will transform even our misdeeds to the glory of His Holy Name and to our spiritual growth if we repent and return to Him... He is a jealous God.

The principle duty of a spiritual leader is prayer accompanied by teaching: "Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you; but I will teach you the good and the right way" [23].

SAUL USURPS CLERICAL DUTIES (1 Sam. 13)

1. "Jonathan attacked the garrison of the Philistines that was in Geba...then Saul blew the trumpet..." [3], to war, and they gathered together at Gilgal. The Philistines were insulted by Jonathan's action and they gathered 30,000 chariots and 6000 horse men, "and people as sand which is on the seashore in multitude" [5]. They set up camp at Michmash, to the east of Bethaven, in order to block the way to Gilgal perhaps to prevent Saul from coming to Jonathan's rescue.

2. Saul and the people, who were hiding in the caves and thickets, were terrified when they saw what was happening, and some crossed the river Jordan towards the east and Saul was left with 600 only [15].

3. When Saul saw that his people were scattered and that Samuel did not show up, he assumed clerical duties and offered a burnt sacrifice. In stupidity he dared to break divine commandment and used the immediate circumstances as an excuse. It appears that there was a priest in Gilgal, but Saul took advantage of Samuel's tardiness to usurp the clerical duty, for which he yearned and could not wait any longer for his due time.

4. Even when Samuel questioned him, he did not confess his mistake, but again made excuses for his actions; and because he did not condemn himself, God judged him and did not grant him to reign his kingdom over Israel.

5. God allowed the enemy to cause all the devastation and humiliation to His people to discipline them; but He did not allow them to go to Gilgal where they could have killed Saul, his son Jonathan, and whatever number of people remaining with them, because that would have meant a complete take-over.

JONATHAN'S VICTORY (1 Sam. 14)

1. Jonathan could not accept his people's humiliation, and because he believed that, "...nothing restrains the Lord from saving by many or by few" [6], Jonathan and his armor-bearer alone, crossed the deep, narrow valley, climbed the steep mountain on the hands and knees, and showed themselves to the Philistines.

They made fun of them, but as soon as they stood there they killed 12 men and God put terror in the enemies' hearts and they fled and scattered before the two men, thinking that the rest of the people would follow them out of their hiding places.

2. When Saul and his men noticed the scattering of their enemy, they took a roll call and discovered that Jonathan and his armor-bearer were the cause of the victory. Saul requested of Ahijah to ask God about this victory, but because of all the confusion and the noise they could not communicate, and impatient as he was, Saul rushed after the enemy with his men to complete the victory. He placed the people under oath, saying, "Cursed is the man who eats any food until evening, before I have taken vengeance on my enemies" [24]. Saul again erred in jumping the gun, because he considered the victory to be the fruit of human effort, rather than faith. He also ignored the need for sustenance for his men, and counted the others as his enemies rather than God's or the people's; and thus he expected a personal victory, and his impatience could have caused his son's death. Jonathan had dipped his rod in a honeycomb and tasted it, and instantly, his eyes lit up and his energy was renewed after hunger and exhaustion. One of the men told him of his father's oath but he considered it rash and unfair for his father to prevent the people from eating.

3. Another fruit of Saul's rash decision was that his people became very weak, and out of exhaustion they raided the spoils of war and they took for themselves, "...sheep, oxen, and calves, and slaughtered them on the ground; and the people ate them with the blood" [32]. When Saul heard that, he ordered a large stone be brought to him immediately and an altar be built upon which the animals were slaughtered so that all their blood would run before the people ate of them. The people did according to his orders.

4. Saul built an altar for the Lord and he approached God, probably through a priest, asking Him if they should pursue the enemy. When God did not respond, Saul realized that a sin must have been committed, so he swore that whoever it was who committed that sin would die, even if it were Jonathan himself [39]. They cast a lot and it fell on Jonathan who, in turn, admitted his mistake with no fear of death, but the people insisted on his acquittal and they saved his life.

5. Saul enjoyed many victories over the enemies and his army grew continuously [48].

SAUL REJECTED AS A KING (1 Sam. 15)

1. Saul's army grew with the passage of years from 600 men to 200,000 men from Israel, and 10,000 from Judah. He achieved many victories over Moab, Ammon, Zobah, and against the Philistines. In the meantime his actions seem to

deviate from the right path and God's commandments. And Samuel tried to caution him on several occasions but in vain, so now he came to him with Divine warnings for a last chance. Samuel told Saul, "The Lord sent me to anoint you king over His people, over Israel. Now therefore, hear the voice of the words of the Lord" [1] "...Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them" [3]. All that because that was a war in the name of the Lord, as was prophesied 400 years earlier" (Exod. 17:8-16). The Amalekites were like bandits, full of savagery, sinful, always raiding the surrounding nations, and they had no friends.

2. Saul advised the Kenites to "depart from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them" [6]. They were peace loving people from Midian (Exod. 18; Deut. 10:29-32; Jud. 1:16) and they lived among the Amalekites, south of Judah. Saul then attacked the Amalekites from Havilah all the way to Shur. He came back victorious over the enemy but defeated by his ego; because he spared Agag, their king, and kept all their best cattle.

3. The prophet Samuel was annoyed that Saul did not take advantage of this occasion; "...and he cried out to the Lord all night" [11]. before he admonished Saul [love mixed with sternness.] When he continued grieving for Saul, the Lord said to him, "How long will you mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel ?" [1].

4. When Samuel rebuked Saul, he did not admit he was wrong, instead he shifted the blame to the people who spared the best of the cattle, and that they had done that not out of greed but to sacrifice them to the Lord [15, 21]; and at the same time, he took the credit for any act of obedience [20-21].

5. Samuel assured Saul that God delighted in obedience and listening to His voice much more than in any burnt offering [22-23]. God required obedience and mercy.

6. Saul did not admit he had sinned until he realized that Samuel would not accompany him. He said: "I have sinned, yet honor me now, please, before the elders of my people and before Israel, and return with me..." [30]. So they did go together, and there Samuel killed Agag, who had been the cause for many to be childless mothers for no sin of their own.

The chapter ends with the following phrase : "...and the Lord regretted that He had made Saul king over Israel." He used a down-to-earth phrase that we can relate to.

DAVID ANOINTED KING (1 Sam. 16)

1. God helped Samuel and took him out of his grief by sending him to Jesse the

Bethlehemite to raise a king from among his sons. Samuel was afraid of Saul, and what he would do if he found out, because he knew his evil spirit. But God arranged for Samuel to take a cow to offer it as a sacrifice for the Lord, and to invite Jesse and his sons to attend. The sacrifice was offered publicly, but David was anointed secretly in the presence of his brothers. Thus, in the same way, Jesus died on the cross, sacrificing Himself publicly, but ruled secretly through His resurrection and ascension, which believers enjoyed. Let us sacrifice ourselves in Christ publicly, and receive His glory us secretly!

2. David was anointed in Bethlehem (= House of bread). There the elders were worried when they saw Samuel, thinking in their hearts that he was there to punish them for a sin they had committed. The Son of David was born in that same city, being the Bread descending from heaven Who filled Herod's heart with fear, while the heavens, the shepherds and the Wise men celebrated.

SAMUEL'S DEATH (I SAM. 25)

1. Samuel, the prophet, died after a full life in the service of the Lord. He started at the age of 12 and died at 90. The Israelites lamented him as much as they did to Moses (Deut. 34:8).

CONCLUSION

APPLICATION OF SAMUEL'S STORY TO OUR LIVES: SOME LESSONS

- -The Lord speaks clearly to all who strive for a close relationship with Him, and this is not dependent at all on their age. We MUST call upon His name. Samuel the prophet, *"was among those who called upon His name"* (Ps. 99:6). We ought then to call on the Lord's name, so that, *"whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved."* (Rom. 10:13).
- Be careful with WASTED GIFTS: Many attain spiritual gifts and because of their lack of honesty in preserving them, or their pride in possessing these gifts, they lose their alliance with the Lord. This occurs when they care for vainglory, without administering to their inner spiritual growth nor carrying to gain a new experience with God. They are occupied with what is external, and leave their inner being degenerated and corrupt!

Samuel anointed Saul as king of Israel. The Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied (1Sam.10). Moreover, he turned to be a new man... The prophet Samuel put his hand upon Saul and kissed him... But again he mourned over him and the Lord rejected him. He was preoccupied with literal formalities, and apparent service, without listening to the Lord's voice and inwardly meeting with Him.

- We must be repentant when we confess: Let us also remember here the prophet Samuel when he grieved for Saul. When the Lord rejected Saul: "*And it grieved Samuel, and he cried out to the Lord all night*". (1 Sam. 15:11) "*Samuel mourned for Saul, and the Lord regretted that He had made Saul king over Israel*".(1 Sam. 15:35).

We recall here, too, the striving of the Father Confessors for their children. The apostle Paul says about this: "*Obey those who rule over you and be submissive for they watch out for your souls. As those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief...*" (Heb. 13:17). King Saul was not repentant, even when he said: "I have sinned". His only object was to get Samuel to go back with him. He did not act out of regret at what he had done, but for the sake of keeping his honour, so that he could lift up his face before the people!! This is why he said: "*yet honor me now, please, before the elders of my people and before Israel.*" (1 Sam. 15:30).

- Authority over life and death is in the hand of God alone
And it was said of Him in the First Book of Samuel the Prophet: "*The Lord kills and makes alive; He brings down to the grave and brings up*" (1 Sam.2:6).

- Departed Saints Intercede to The LORD
Jer 15:1 (NKJV) Then the LORD said to me, "Even if Moses and Samuel stood before Me, My mind would not be favorable toward this people. Cast them out of My sight, and let them go forth.

This tells us that Moses & Samuel were alive and in prayers before the Lord, even after years of departure from this earth. Let us take advantage of our saints intercessions.