**Aspects Of Samuel**

Hello All

Today we are going to look further into 1 Samuel.

We have heard from Helen and Rose quite a bit about Samuel, but today we are going to look a bit more into Samuel, Saul & David.

Firstly Samuel.

1. Obedience, On hearing God calling, answered His call.

Although still just a child, told Eli everything God had told him that Eli’s sons would not succeed him.

Although he was not happy with the people’s request for a king he was obedient to God.

2. A prophet, as he grew up and even when he was elderly he prophesied to the whole of Israel

3. A Judge. He followed Eli as a Judge of Israel, ruling Israel for many years.

4. A soldier, General and strategist.

5. A Kingmaker. Samuel had expected his sons to succeed him, but unfortunately they were corrupt, accepting bribes and perverting justice.

He made it clear to the people of Israel what a burden having a king would mean to them.

Samuel through circumstances of some lost donkeys, please read 1 Samuel 9 was led to Saul, a young very tall and good looking young man, and from what I can gather, brains were not his strong point. Samuel anointed him with oil at the Lord’s command, sent him on his way to meet with several people who gave him food and drink. He was then sent to the borders of the Philistines where he met with some prophets who were playing musical instruments and prophesying. The spirit of God came upon him and he was changed into a different person after making sacrifices and waiting for seven days following Samuels instructions.

Those around Saul saw the tremendous change in him as he prophesied with the prophets.

Samuel at this time was not a happy man. He summoned the people of Israel to meet him at Mizpah. This is where some confusion can happen.

Did Samuel summon over half a million people to his presence or just representatives and leaders of all the tribes? I believe it was the latter, as shown in 1 Samuel 10 vs 20.

In no uncertain words he reprimanded and reminded them of what God had done , in leading them out of Egypt to the promised land, through their disasters and calamities, the appointing of judges to lead them, and the bringing of peace to the land. He made it clear how they had rejected their Holy God.

Saul was chosen as King and Samuel gave the people a scroll of rules and regulations of kingship, and sent the people home.

Saul was not fully accepted as king until he defeated the Ammonites at Jabesh, after raising and army of over 300,000 men, who slaughtered the Ammonites.

Saul was confirmed as king in the presence of the Lord and people at Gilgal.

Samuel made an impassioned speech to all the people, of their rejection of the Lord and him, and warning them of the consequences of not serving the Lord, doing evil, or both they, and their king would perish.

There followed a time of war with all the surrounding nations, especially the Philistines

Samuel received instructions from the Lord to meet with Saul and rebuke him, and to reject him as king. It might be difficult for us to understand this, but when we read into it, Saul and his army had defeated their enemies, whom they had been told to go and completely destroy, as they were wicked.

1 Samuel 15 vs 23 Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He has rejected you as king.

We now come to the time of David, overlapping with Saul.

Samuel was still around at this time, and following God’s instructions, was led to David and anointed him as king.

At the same time the spirit of the Lord had left Saul and he was tormented, he instructed his servants to find a good musician. David was found and served Saul as an armour bearer, and when an evil spirit came upon Saul, David would play his lyre and Saul would be comforted, and the evil spirit would leave him.

War with the Philistines broke out again, I am sure that we all know the story. But what do we think of the outcome. Who actually defeated Goliath? David himself has the answer in our first reading, 1 Samuel 17 vs 46-47 The battle is the Lord’s. God defeated the Philistines not David.

Saul grew more and more afraid and jealous of David, as he became successful, with only a small army in defeating Israel’s enemies,

Saul became possessed with evil spirits, tried to kill David, even though he did not know that David had been anointed as king of Israel.

Saul pursued David, but David always managed to elude him. David had the opportunity to kill Saul on two occasions but didn’t, why we don’t know, it would have saved a lot of trouble in Israel as Saul became dangerously mentally unstable.

Samuel Died, and was mourned by the people of Israel. Saul was lost without any proper council and through a medium spoke to Samuel who told him the kingship was being torn out of his hands.

In his final battle with the Philistines Saul was defeated, his sons killed, so in defeat he took his own life.

David in the meantime fought, defeated and destroyed the Amalekites.

The story now moves forward to the time of David’s kingship, related in 2 Samuel.

Peter is now going to read the second bible reading.

Our first reading shows us that without going into battle with the Lord we are liable to be defeated.

I believe we are waging a tremendous battle now against man’s failures.

A virus is plaguing the earth, and life as we know it has changed drastically. As it stands at the moment relief is a long way off.

What do we do? Moan on how terrible things are. Don’t accept the instructions on how to keep safe. Don’t keep social distancing, don’t wear masks where we should. And expect every thing to get better on it’s own, without us all being sensible.

But God has given us the answer.

As God defeated the Philistines, so we can defeat this terrible Virus.

Shutting ourselves away as instructed is only part of the solution.

Are we suffering now because of our sin? Have we turned away from God. How earnestly are we praying : not just for an answer to our problems, but for forgiveness. Look what terrible things happened to the people of Israel due to their disobedience. We are now all people of God. The whole population of the Earth are God’s people, through our Saviour Jesus Christ. When the people of Israel repented, God was faithful and just forgiving them of their sins, in the end sending His Son to die for us on the cross, and opening the whole world to God’s love.

The Apostle Paul says we should put on the whole armour of God, against the powers of this dark world, and against the spiritual forces of evil.

What armour have we today.

Meeting together in prayer. We have the technology to join together, not just on a Sunday morning for a few minutes, for a service, but regularly.

To meet together for Sunday services, to do as the Apostles did. To pray, worship, partake of the Lord’s Supper, to sing. To study God’s word.

Is it so hard to put short times regularly, to meet together, not just to listen to services at times to suit ourselves. Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice for us, he didn’t make excuses. He went forward to die a horrible death that we might be saved. Surely we can make little sacrifices for Him, give Him our time.

Let our time be His time, let us be prepared to listen, to have quiet times together, and to share God’s word.

Prayer changes things.

Obedience changes things.

Witnessing changes things.

Sharing God’s love changes things.

Let us try to make a difference in this Godless world.

We can make a difference.

Let us pray.

Firstly let us in a time of quiet give thanks for everything God has given us.

Next ask for forgiveness for the sins we have committed.

Next ask for the cleansing of this wonderful Earth that God has given us to live on, of this horrible virus.

Our third hymn today is : In heavenly Armour.