



# CAPITOL COMMISSION

## Divine Change and Victory (I Samuel 10—11)

13 JULY 2010

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*Capitol Commission state directors are missionaries who teach weekly verse-by-verse Bible studies for legislators, lobbyists, and staff members. These Bible studies are hand-distributed to each legislative office, emailed, and made available throughout the Capitol community. The love and grace of God compels us to proclaim the truth of the Gospel with a heartfelt compassion for the Capitol community, to faithfully teach and apply the Word of God, and it is our desire to build meaningful relationships that bear fruit for an eternity to come.*

With the Bible as our foundation and authority, the mission of Capitol Commission is obedience to the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20) within the Capitol communities of the world. We are not a lobbying group attempting to garner votes or reform society. Our mandate is to see the hearts and lives of elected officials transformed with the Word of God. Capitol Commission is a ministry of the church seeking to proclaim the gospel message, and to help believers mature through the verse-by-verse teaching of Scripture. In the Bible, we see God's great love for the world, especially for those who have been placed in authority. This is the foundation for our ministry to you.

The church is instructed to submit and to honor government leaders (Rom 13:1-7), and as a matter of first importance, to pray for their salvation (1 Tim 2:1-4). Our desire is witness God transform the hearts and lives of elected officials, lobbyists, and staff members. We apply this mandate to four major areas of making disciples: (1) *evangelize* those who have not experienced saving faith in Jesus Christ; (2) *establish* those who desire to grow in their faith and knowledge of Scripture; (3) *equip* those called to spiritual leadership; and, (4) *encourage* churches to participate with us in ministry.

### Introduction

Saul's servant traveled ahead of him, so that Samuel "may proclaim the word of God" to Saul (1 Sam 9:27). Prior to anointing Saul as king, Samuel will remind him that the Lord has appointed him as "ruler over His inheritance" (10:1). There are no authorities except those established by God (John 19:11). "Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God and those which exist are established by God" (Rom 13:1). Samuel's words are a reminder that God alone providentially installs leaders in the political realm. God's desire in that appointment is evident in His provisions. He "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim 2:4).

## GOD CHANGES THE HEART

(10:1-16) The private anointing of Saul (1 Sam 9:27-10:1) was followed by a public recognition among all the people, who shouted, "God save the king" (10:24). The familiar Hebrew term "messiah" (*mashiach*) is derived from the same verb

(*mashach*) for "anointed" in verse 1. Therefore, the king of Israel will now be regarded as the Lord's anointed (or messiah) (24:6, 10; 26:9, 11, 16, 23; 2 Sam 19:21).

God provided three signs that confirmed Samuel's words to Saul (1 Sam 10:2-6), which occurred exactly as Samuel predicted (10:9). "And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him" (Heb 12:6). Nevertheless, it is customary for God to confirm His will "by many convincing proofs" (Acts 1:3; cf. Luke 1:1-4).

Prior to the confirmation of Saul as king, God "changed his heart" (1 Sam 10:9). As "another man," Saul would soon encounter a test to prove the change. The uncharacteristic behavior of Saul (10:9-13) was astonishing to his friends: "Now, who is their [the prophet's] father?" The rhetorical question indicates that God is the "father" who inspires the prophets. Therefore, they marveled at the unexpected occurrence that God accomplished in Saul's life. *The Pulpit Commentary* provides "several grades of transformation brought before us by ordinary life and by Scripture."<sup>1</sup>

### YOU WILL "BE CHANGED INTO ANOTHER MAN" (V. 6)

#### "GOD CHANGED HIS HEART" (V. 9)

(1) *a new person and our experiences*: within some of us, there are natural abilities that are dormant, which may give an appearance of ineffectiveness and vacuity due to their disuse; however, when unnatural limitations are eradicated, and favorable circumstances encourage natural development, there results a remarkable and wholesome change

(2) *a new person and our responsibilities*: "every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above" (Jas 1:17); our creativity and reason is the gift of God (cf. Exod 31:2-6); divine endowments are given for effective and spiritual leadership, which make the former person hardly recognizable (cf. Acts 2:1-4, 14, 38-41, 43, 47)

(3) *a new person and renewal by the Holy Spirit*: such an experience is more than a development of natural abilities; this renewal transforms the affections and wills that determine the entire character of life; the renewal manifests in the outward form of life by the act of repentance and faith in Christ, utmost love for God, and delight in His desires

(4) *a new person and redemption in Christ*: "if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come" (2 Cor 5:17); the former life of sin becomes a new creation, with hope of ultimate transformation from "our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory" (Phil 3:21), a "spiritual" body prepared for the new activities and joys of eternity (1 Cor 15:40-49; Rev 21—22)

### CAPITOL COMMISSION BIBLE STUDIES ~ GEORGIA

LEGISLATORS AND LOBBYISTS: TUESDAYS @ 7:30AM, 514 CLOB (DURING THE LEGISLATIVE SESSION)

STAFF: TUESDAYS @ NOON, 514 CLOB (AFTER THE LEGISLATIVE SESSION - CURRENTLY IN TEMPORARY FURLOUGH)

To deny or ignore the divine power of God is to dishonor Him (1 Sam 10:8; 13:8-10). Moreover, we must be ever cautious not to arrogate our abilities and responsibilities by ignoring the precepts of righteousness, as revealed in Scripture. We must be ever discerning of those abilities and aptitudes that may be lost through careless disregard. Socrates remarked famously, “the unexamined life is not worth living” (*Apology* 38a). We are always wise to examine our lives continually to know confidently whether our faith is truly the outcome of renewal by the Holy Spirit. The eternal destiny of God’s people should profoundly alter life in the present, even though perhaps believers may be only fractionally experiencing “the powers of the age to come” (Heb 6:5).

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**GOD’S STANDARD IS THAT HIS PEOPLE ARE TO BE HOLY BECAUSE HE IS HOLY (LEV 19:37; 20:7, 8; 22:31, 32). . . . OFTENTIMES, THERE WAS NOT AN OUTRIGHT REJECTION OF GOD, BUT THERE WAS A CORRUPTED WORSHIP.**

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(10:17-27) When Samuel “called the people together to the LORD at Mizpah,” he reminded them that they had rejected God who “brought Israel up from Egypt” and delivered them “from the power of all the kingdoms that were oppressing” them (1 Sam 10:17-18). It is possible the Urim and Thummim may have been used to select the king (Exod 28:30), but the actual process is not revealed. It is noteworthy that Israel has been told several times that their demand for a king is a rejection of God, but still they desire the Lord to do the choosing (10:22). God’s standard is that His people are to be holy because He is holy (Lev 19:37; 20:7, 8; 22:31, 32), and all actions and thoughts in life is worship (1 Cor 10:31). Nevertheless, Israel continually struggled with living holy and godly lives in an ungodly world. Oftentimes, there was not an outright rejection of God, but there was a corrupted worship. Sometimes they did reject God outright but the majority of the time there was a corrupted worship as evident in these verses.

Saul was selected publicly as king among all the clans and tribes of Israel. When the people searched for Saul, he could not be found because he was “hiding himself by the baggage” (1 Sam 10:22). Perhaps he was conscious of his inability as king. Maybe he realized that the people sinned against God by demanding a king. Saul may have understood that the present time was not opportune for Israel to have a king because the Ammonites were an impending threat. Nevertheless, verses 25-27 indicate a defining moment in Israel’s history.

## **GOD GRANTS THE VICTORY**

(11:1-15) Chapter 11 records the public vindication of Saul in a battle against the Ammonites. Saul returned to his country

home in Gibeah after he was publicly recognized as king. Perhaps “the children of Belial” opposed his appointment (1 Sam 10:26-27). Nevertheless, the incident will provide Saul an opportunity to earn the confidence of all the people and prove his kingship (ch. 11). The military victory over the Ammonites was confirmation that God chose Saul as king. Consequently, all Israel affirmed the kingship of Saul at Gilgal (11:15).

Nahash the Ammonite may have desired to test the resilience and tenacity of the new king. Therefore, he attacked Jabesh-gilead, a city on the east side of the Jordan River in the tribal allotment to Manasseh. Initially, the elders of Jabesh sought to make a treaty with Nahash, but the Ammonite desired only to dishonor and disgrace all Israel (11:2). Surprisingly, the elders were allowed to send messengers throughout Israel with the hope of someone or a tribe providing help. When he heard the news, “the Spirit of God came upon Saul mightily” and “he became very angry” (11:6). The anger was righteous on the behalf of God’s people. Saul summoned the nation to battle, and through his military strategy, the troops “came into the midst of the camp . . . and struck down the Ammonites” (11:11). The victory over the Ammonites confirmed that God chose Saul as king.

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**IT IS ALWAYS THE LORD WHO GRANTS THE VICTORY; THEREFORE, SEEK HIS WILL FIRST (CF. MATT 6:33).**

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In the emotional height of the victory, those who previously opposed Saul were remembered, and demand was made for their death (11:12; cf. 10:26-27). Saul wisely refused the demand with gracious mercy (11:13). The king understood “the LORD has accomplished deliverance,” and it was not his abilities that saved the people. It is always the Lord who grants the victory; therefore, seek His will first (cf. Matt 6:33).

Samuel called a solemn assembly of the people at Gilgal to “renew the kingdom” (1 Sam 11:14). The sense of “renew” is not completion, but may suggest a renewal of prior faith in the rulership and sovereignty of God. Samuel knew the request to put to death those who formerly opposed Saul was based upon one victory. Knowing that more crises and tests would arise, Samuel’s actions sought for the leadership of Saul to develop consistently. God’s confirmation of Saul’s leadership would require the king to prove himself faithful, and this is a message to those who have been called to any degree of leadership to demonstrate consistency by asking God for the grace to humble yourself, and trust Him to confirm your calling, and not to seek unduly the approval of others (1 Pet 5:6).

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<sup>1</sup> H. D. M. Spence and Joseph S. Exell, eds., *The Pulpit Commentary*, 23 vols. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, n.d.) 179-80.