

Two Kingdoms, One True King (1 Sam. 11:12-15)

The culmination of this narrative since the people requested a king (8:4-5) is not in the victory against the Ammonites. Instead, it is in the words of Saul and the proceeding gathering at Gilgal where the kingdom is “renewed” (11:15).

1. The Reaction of Saul (v.12-13)

- Saul has unified the nation, with the LORD’s help, in the defeat of the Ammonites (v.6-11) who wanted to bring disgrace on Israel (v.2).
- The people inquire of Samuel, “Where are the worthless men?” Why Samuel?
 - They inform him of what they would like to do: they want to put to death the worthless men in 10:27.
 - These people may not know where the worthless men are, or their exact identity. Samuel may be able to find out by asking the LORD.
- Samuel did not answer their request. Saul did. Why?
 - It is time for Saul to act as the king for whom they have requested.
 - Saul has proven himself since his many doubts (9:21). In particular, he credits the LORD with the victory (v.13).
 - Saul and Samuel were of the same mind. Samuel was hopeful that this will be a precedence for how the king and prophet are to function now moving forward.
 - Saul, not Samuel, had that authority to extend clemency; only the LORD’s anointed (king) was able to pardon.

2. The Readiness of Jesus Christ to Deal Gently (Hebrews 5:2)

- God in flesh is described in Scripture as “gentle” (Matthew 11:29). Jesus dispenses kindness and gentleness that radiates from His being.
- His gentleness refers to His “restraint” and “moderation” in His relationship to rebels and sinners. There is a tenderness toward sinners that exists in the heart of God. His gentleness is seen in how He relates to the:
 - Ignorant: unintentional sin (Numb. 15:22-29)
 - Wayward: intentional sin (Lev. 4-7)
- The writer of Hebrews has a rock-solid understanding of the OT Levitical system where sacrifices would be offered when there were intentional, and unintentional sins.
- Christ will deal gently with all sinners who come to Him, regardless of the heinousness and degree of their sin. If they do not come, they will not be forgiven. What elicits the tenderness of Jesus is not the severity of the sin but whether or not the sinner comes to Him.
- This kindness is meant to lead us to repentance (Rom. 5:8) because He does not repay us according to our iniquities (Psalm 103:10).

- Christ’s gentleness to those who come to Him is not because He is unaware of their sin. He has a greater knowledge of the sin and also a more complete understanding of it; He is omniscient and holy. Sin is more offensive to the LORD than it is to the sinner, regardless of his or her own maturity in sanctification and godliness.

3. The Rule and Reign of the LORD (v.13)

- Saul did not ultimately save the people; the LORD did. The LORD empowered Saul for the task of delivering the nation from the Ammonites (v.6) and was also responsible for the dread (fear) that fell on upon the people, so they would obey the call of their new human king, Saul.
- Fear brought unity among the nation. Those who fear the LORD (reverence/awe) will pursue righteousness and shun evil.
- The fear of the LORD is listed as one of the highest virtues in Scripture (Prov. 1:7). It brought about good fruit for the nation and resulted not only in obedience to the LORD’s anointed (Saul), but also victory over the enemy (Ammonites). It also resulted in unity of the nation, and would eventually produce repentance and righteous action (v. 15).

4. The Renewal of the Kingdom (v.14-15)

- Samuel recommends that the nation “renew the kingdom at Gilgal.” Why Gilgal?
 - It was closer to Jabesh-gilead than Mizpah.
 - It was the location of Joshua and the encampment of Israelites where twelve memorial stones were erected to celebrate God’s faithfulness, and a renewed fidelity towards God (Josh. 4-5:12).
 - The purpose of this location was to tie this new victory at Jabesh-Gilead to God’s faithfulness, reminding the people that victory and blessing comes through faith in the LORD (1 Sam. 12:14).
 - It was also the “lynchpin” that aligned the northern and southern tribes (Josh. 15:7). This had both religious and political significance.
- “Renewed Kingdom.” The kingdom has already been mentioned (10:16) which is distinct from kingship (10:25). The kingdom was renewed, not kingship. How?
 - A. Saul’s Kingdom: It was a call to follow Saul as the new king. There were some who hailed him as king (10:24), some who followed him (10:26) and some who doubted (10:27). There is unity now as a nation through Saul.
 - B. Recommitment to the LORD as their King: The terror of the LORD fell on them, not the terror of Saul. It is a renewal of fidelity to the LORD.
 - Peace Offering: The Sinai covenant was ratified with a peace offering and burnt offering (Ex. 24:4). While there was no burnt offering, the principle still remains. They are covenanting themselves to the LORD while acknowledging Saul as their king.