

Chapter 11

Good morning and thank you for joining us.

I have to take us on a quick, but important detour this morning. Would you please turn to Revelation 13?

Revelation 13 16 He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, 17 and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or [fn] the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

18 Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.

Article regarding the Fed and major banks launching a digital dollar...

SHOW GRAPHIC

“The Bible does tell us in Revelation Chapter 13 that there will come a time where a global economic system is digitized, that all those who participate in a global economy will need to do so with what we would call a prefix, meaning a number that is the head of an account,” he told The Christian Post. “That number, the Bible is very clear about. That number says that your account will be preempted by the number 666, that famous number that people always wonder about and make mention that it’s Satan’s number.”

CLOSE GRAPHIC

Would you please turn in your Bibles to 1 Samuel chapter 11?

Last week we saw Saul’s insecurity cause him to shrink back from answering God’s call in his life. Saul started off as a reluctant

king! But when you see the beginning of Saul's kingship, you can see that Saul started out with great promise. He was:

SHOW GRAPHIC

Chosen and anointed by God. v.10:1

Filled with the Holy Spirit. v.10:10

Supported by a great man of God. (Samuel)

Enthusiastically supported by most all the nation. v.10:24

Surrounded by valiant men, men whose hearts God had touched.
v.10:26

Wise enough to not regard every doubter or critic as an enemy.
v.10:27

CLOSE GRAPHIC

With all these great advantages, Saul's reign as king will begin spectacularly, yet end tragically. See Saul had to choose to walk in the advantages God gave him and choose to not go his own way. The rest of the book of 1 Samuel shows how Saul dealt with that choice.

The first real test of Saul's administration occurs in chapter 11

And the title of this morning's message is FRESH STARTS

Let's pray

1 Then Nahash the Ammonite came up and encamped against Jabesh Gilead; and all the men of Jabesh said to Nahash, "Make a covenant with us, and we will serve you." Jabesh Gilead was an Israelite city east of the Jordan River – and vulnerable to these kinds of attacks. Jabesh is outnumbered by the Ammonites, so they tell the Ammonites they want to make peace.

2 And Nahash the Ammonite answered them, “On this condition I will make a covenant with you, that I may put out all your right eyes, and bring reproach on all Israel.” The right eye was chosen because its loss would cripple them for future battles, and shatter any remaining self-reliance the residents of Jabesh Gilead had.

3 Then the elders of Jabesh said to him, “Hold off for seven days, that we may send messengers to all the territory of Israel. And then, if there is no one to save us, we will come out to you.” The elders of Jabesh are honest. Your offer is not our first choice! Give us a week to see if we can get some help.

Before we move on, you’ll notice a striking similarity between Israel’s enemy Nahash, and our spiritual enemy Satan.

Just like Nahash, Satan attacks us and wants us to serve him and will attempt to intimidate us into giving in to him.

Like Nahash, Satan wants to humiliate us and exalt himself over us.

Like Nahash who wanted to remove one of their eyes, Satan wants to take away our ability to effectively fight against him.

Satan wants to blind us and if he cannot blind us completely, he will blind us partially.

BTW, the name Nahash means serpent or snake.

4-5

4 So the messengers came to Gibeah of Saul and told the news in the hearing of the people. And all the people lifted up their voices and wept. 5 Now there was Saul, coming behind the herd from the field; and Saul said, “What troubles the people, that they weep?” And they told him the words of the men of Jabesh. Verse 5 shows us there wasn’t an established system of government in Israel, even though Saul was the newly minted king. Otherwise,

the king would be the first to know of the threat. Instead, Saul hears the news second or third hand.

6 Then the Spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard this news, and his anger was greatly aroused. Remember, we can be angry and it not be a sin. Ephesians 4:26 "Be angry, and do not sin":[fn] do not let the sun go down on your wrath,

Remember Jesus was angry when He drove the money changers out of the temple.

The problem is most of our anger is selfish.

Yet Saul's anger wasn't out of a personal sense of hurt or offense, no he had a righteous anger for the harm about to befall God's people.

7 So he took a yoke of oxen and cut them in pieces, and sent them throughout all the territory of Israel by the hands of messengers, saying, "Whoever does not go out with Saul and Samuel to battle, so it shall be done to his oxen." Pause here This seems like something straight out of a mafia movie doesn't it? He cuts up the oxen and sends it all around the land.

Saul is sending a message. Failure of the people to step up and defend the cause of God at this time would be punished. Notice too, old man Samuel, the prophet goes out with them to battle.

...7 And the fear of the LORD fell on the people, and they came out with one consent. 8 When he numbered them in Bezek, the children of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty thousand. Large numbers of Israelis rallied around Saul.

9 And they said to the messengers who came, "Thus you shall say to the men of Jabesh Gilead: 'Tomorrow, by the time the sun is hot, you shall have help.'" Then the messengers came and

reported it to the men of Jabesh, and they were glad. The situation, which days before had just seen hopeless, has now turned around. The men of Jabesh are glad that Israel is coming to save them!

Aren't we glad we have a Savior? Let's make sure we share that gladness with others!

10 Therefore the men of Jabesh said, "Tomorrow we will come out to you, and you may do with us whatever seems good to you." They pose a fake surrender to Nahash the Ammorite.

11 So it was, on the next day, that Saul put the people in three companies; and they came into the midst of the camp in the morning watch, and killed Ammonites until the heat of the day. And it happened that those who survived were scattered, so that no two of them were left together. The Ammonites are thoroughly routed. The threat is no longer.

And you can imagine what this victory does for a new king's approval rating amongst the people-it goes through the roof!

You can almost hear the excitement from the people-Israel has a king and he's victorious!

That's when someone remembers the rebels who opposed Saul's coronation in chapter 10. We saw this last week **1 Sam 10:27** **But some rebels said, "How can this man save us?" So they despised him, and brought him no presents. But he held his peace**

12 Then the people said to Samuel, "Who is he who said, 'Shall Saul reign over us?' Bring the men, that we may put them to death." Now that Saul was victorious, those who supported him wanna bring out Sauls political opponents and kill them for not supporting their king.

You see what's happening here. Satan, having failed in the previous attack through Nahash, now tried to attack Israel — even in victory — by dividing the nation against each other. Remember Satan always tries to bring persecution to hinder the church, and if that fails, he tries to attack from within.

And look at Saul's response...

13 But Saul said, "Not a man shall be put to death this day, for today the LORD has accomplished salvation in Israel." Saul wisely says it wasn't appropriate to take revenge on his political opponents.

And look at Saul's statement—he knew it was the LORD who did the saving. At this moment of victory, it would be easy, and I'm sure tempting, for Saul to take the credit for himself. This is true humility that's rarely repeated in Saul's life.

14-15

14 Then Samuel said to the people, "Come, let us go to Gilgal and renew the kingdom there." 15 So all the people went to Gilgal, and there they made Saul king before the LORD in Gilgal. There they made sacrifices of peace offerings before the LORD, and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly. It wasn't that Saul wasn't king before this. He was already anointed as king by Samuel in chapter 10. Saul was recognized as king by much of the nation of Israel at the end of chapter 10. What took place here at Gilgal was the worship of a united people, recognizing Saul as a victorious king over the nation.

No one really knows it at the time, but this is King Saul's finest hour. The rest of Saul's story goes downhill from here. Never again will he act this honorably.

Chapter 12

As chapter 12 picks up with the nation gathered together, and Samuel gives a sermon the nation won't ever forget!

1 Now Samuel said to all Israel: "Indeed I have heeded your voice in all that you said to me, and have made a king over you. Samuel reminded the people it wasn't his idea to appoint a king over Israel. This idea began in the hearts of Israel, and you'll recall wasn't God's intention.

2 And now here is the king, walking before you; and I am old and grayheaded, and look, my sons are with you. I have walked before you from my childhood to this day. Back in chapter 8, Samuel was challenged to take his sons out of leadership because they were not godly men. And it appears Samuel did just that- the words 'my sons are with you' show that Samuel's sons were simply a part of the general assembly of Israel and not "up on the platform" with Samuel.

After the victory of Saul over the Ammonites we just read in chapter 11, Samuel knew the nation would now begin to look to their king for leadership.

So Samuel is helping Israel with their transition plan-from Samuel's leadership to Saul's leadership.

This demonstrates Samuel's humility. He was willing to hand over the reigns voluntarily. Lot's of folks, including Christians, are not so gracious with change. Samuel didn't resist the change God had implemented.

Samuel continues..

3 Here I am. Witness against me before the LORD and before His anointed: Whose ox have I taken, or whose donkey have I taken, or whom have I cheated? Whom have I oppressed, or from whose hand have I received any bribe with which to blind my

eyes? I will restore it to you.” Samuel challenges the nation: “If I have wronged you or been corrupt, come forward now and declare it.”

4-5

4 And they said, “You have not cheated us or oppressed us, nor have you taken anything from any man’s hand.” 5 Then he said to them, “The LORD is witness against you, and His anointed is witness this day, that you have not found anything in my hand.”

And they answered, “He is witness.” Everyone agreed that Samuel led Israel well. Samuel now challenges Israel to serve God under their new king.

6-7

6 Then Samuel said to the people, “It is the LORD who raised up Moses and Aaron, and who brought your fathers up from the land of Egypt. 7 Now therefore, stand still, that I may reason with you before the LORD concerning all the righteous acts of the LORD which He did to you and your fathers: Samuel is about to give a history lesson of a few of God’s righteous acts towards Israel, going all the way back to the book of Genesis.

8 When Jacob had gone into Egypt,[fn] and your fathers cried out to the LORD, then the LORD sent Moses and Aaron, who brought your fathers out of Egypt and made them dwell in this place. Israel needed to remember their salvation from slavery and the new life God gave them in the Promised Land.

9 And when they forgot the LORD their God, He sold them into the hand of Sisera, commander of the army of Hazor, into the hand of the Philistines, and into the hand of the king of Moab; and they fought against them. We often don’t like to think about God’s chastisement, but His chastisement is one of God’s righteous

acts. Proverbs 3:11 My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD,

Nor detest His correction;

12 For whom the LORD loves He corrects,

Just as a father the son in whom he delights.

Israel needed to remember how God allowed them, in their disobedience, to be dominated by their enemies. God allowed this chastisement to bring the nation to a place of repentance.

God's discipline is just as righteous as His deliverance.

Samuel continues to recount their history...

10-11

10 Then they cried out to the LORD, and said, 'We have sinned, because we have forsaken the LORD and served the Baals and Ashtoreths;^[fn] but now deliver us from the hand of our enemies, and we will serve You.' 11 And the LORD sent Jerubbaal,^[fn] Bedan,^[fn] Jephthah, and Samuel,^[fn] and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side; and you dwelt in safety.

Samuel mentions some of the judges-we just studied the book of Judges a couple months ago and you'll recall Jerubbaal was another name for Gideon.

Now Samuel moves to the most current event...

12-13

12 And when you saw that Nahash king of the Ammonites came against you, you said to me, 'No, but a king shall reign over us,' when the LORD your God was your king. 13 "Now therefore, here is the king whom you have chosen and whom you have desired. And take note, the LORD has set a king over you. Samuel says 'you wanted a king. You got a king.'

At this point, if I were God, I would say, “So long. Good luck.” But watch what God declares through Samuel...

14-15

14 If you fear the LORD and serve Him and obey His voice, and do not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then both you and the king who reigns over you will continue following the LORD your God.

15 However, if you do not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then the hand of the LORD will be against you, as it was against your fathers. God is unbelievably gracious. Samuel presents Israel with an important choice. They were disobedient in wanting a king, yet God gave them one. And if they obey God, and serve Him, despite their failures, God would still bless them.

God, however, says otherwise. That’s grace. God doesn’t give up on Israel—and He doesn’t give up on us even when we blow it.

16 “Now therefore, stand and see this great thing which the LORD will do before your eyes: Samuel is about to confirm his words with a miraculous sign from God.

17-18

17 Is today not the wheat harvest? I will call to the LORD, and He will send thunder and rain, that you may perceive and see that your wickedness is great, which you have done in the sight of the LORD, in asking a king for yourselves.” 18 So Samuel called to the LORD, and the LORD sent thunder and rain that day; and all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel. Thunder and rain were unusual during the wheat harvest. So you can be sure this was an unmistakable sign from God.

So picture the scene. The nation is celebrating the victory of Saul, and it's quite likely they're a little too overexcited over their king, and God gives them this reminder of who's really in charge.

And look what happens in verse 19-

19 And all the people said to Samuel, "Pray for your servants to the LORD your God, that we may not die; for we have added to all our sins the evil of asking a king for ourselves." Finally, Israel now sees their sin of wanting a king. But they're stuck with a king. They realize they blew it, is there any hope?

20 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 heart. Folks we can't do a single thing about our past failures. And at the present moment we can't serve God tomorrow. At the present moment all we can do is serve the LORD with all our heart.

Satan loves it when we live in the past or dwell on the future. But all we can really do, and the best thing to do, is be wholly sold out to Jesus Christ right now!

21 And do not turn aside; for then you would go after empty things which cannot profit or deliver, for they are nothing. How many of us in this room have testimonies about how we previously went after empty things, only to find out they can't profit or deliver. Only God can truly profit us and deliver us.

22 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. Despite all their failures, Israel could serve the LORD and still see His blessing, why? Because God loves them.

God's love towards Israel wasn't prompted by good they did, were doing, or promised to do. It was for His great name's sake because it pleased the LORD to do it.

23 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. Samuel knew the best thing he could do for Israel was to pray for them.

This statement of Samuel in v 23 makes it plain: it's a sin for a leader of God's people to stop praying for the people. It is the most basic of duties as a leader to pray.

When you boil it all down, a lack of praying for others is the epitome of selfishness. When we fail to intercede for others it means I am withholding that which would so greatly bless them.

That's why Jesus told us to pray for our enemies. **Matthew 5:43**
"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor[fn] and hate your enemy.' **44 But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,**

If we pray for someone—even someone we don't like—something happens within us. Because we find our heart knit to those we pray for.

Samuel wants the people of Israel to know that even as he steps back and allows Saul to emerge as a leader, he will not forsake Israel. He will continue to lead and to serve them, but more in a spiritual way through prayer and teaching.

24 Only fear the LORD, and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you.

Whenever we lose sight of the great things God has done for us, we immediately start to lose perspective, and then things get

distorted. When we lose sight of God's faithfulness we'll magnify our problems and lose sight of what great things He has done for us.

Jesus died on the cross for us. He shed His blood so that you and I can spend eternity with Him. What is it we have to fear?

25 But if you still do wickedly, you shall be swept away, both you and your king." This warning became the sad legacy of Israel when they were conquered and taken from the land in captivity.

Now we may see these words and say 'well that's God's instruction for Israel, but I'm not a Hebrew.'" As Christians, the name of Christ is on us. This means the Lord won't give up on, or turn away from us. No matter what we've done or how dumb we've been in some of our decisions, the Lord won't give up on us because we carry His name.

It pleased God to make us His people. I don't understand why God would want me to carry His name? That God would entrust us with the name of His precious Son is a mystery to me.

Oh but I'll bask in the benefits of it!