

Chasing Donkeys

(Is God Leading, or You? Are You Missing God's Plan?)

1 Samuel 8, 9, 10

Israel Demands a King

We all recall how God miraculously delivered the children of Israel from the bondage of Egypt. We remember how Jehovah led them, protected them, sustained and provided for them. He performed a miracle by opening up the Red Sea when the armies of Egypt were pursuing them, and led them across dry ground.

We recall how Moses was Israel's leader, under the authority of Almighty God.

Then Moses died, and Joshua assumed the position of leadership for the Israelites. After the death of Joshua, God appointed judges delivering the people from the oppression of neighboring enemies and leading them in faithful obedience to the Lord.

Samuel was one of those God appointed judges.

In 1 Samuel, chapter 8, the scripture tells us that Samuel had reached old age, not physically able to carry out the demanding duties of his office. (Pastor's always have a 'to do' list.)

So Samuel appointed his two sons, Joel and Abiah, to take his place as judge over the people.

But Joel and Abiah were not dedicated to the Lord like their father. They were greedy, selfish and perverted, and so was their judgement. In other words, they were "crooked politicians" giving out unjust and misguided judgement.

They turned from the right course and distorted what was right, taking bribes from the people and making a complete mockery out of justice.

So the people became weary with this corrupt leadership and thought it best that the order of judges be discontinued and instead have a king as other nations around them did.

1 Samuel 8:4-5 (ESV)

Israel had prophets, priests, and judges, but God was their King.

Sadly, they weren't satisfied with God's plan; they wanted to institute their own plan.

Isn't it funny how people think they know more than God! They think their plan is better than God's plan. They think their method is much better than God's method.

So Israel wanted a king to rule over them like the other nations around them. Samuel, however, was displeased with their request.

Samuel took their request personally, and felt they were rejecting his leadership. However, God said, “they have not rejected you, they have rejected me that I should rule over them. It’s not about you Samuel, it’s really about me!”

1 Samuel 8:7-9 (ESV)

So God tells Samuel, “sternly warn them, and show them the manner of the king that shall rule over them. Let them know the repercussions of having a king ruling over them.”

1 Samuel 8:10-20 (ESV)

God's Reply

Do you really want a king?

vs 13...He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers.

Are you sure you want a king?

vs 14...He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards and give them to his servants.

Are you absolutely positive you want a king?

vs 15-17...He will take the tenth of your grain and of your vineyards and give it to his officers and to his servants. He will take your male servants and female servants and the best of your young men and your donkeys, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your flocks, and you shall be his slaves.

You are going to be paying a big price for this monarchy you want to establish.

vs 18...And in that day you will cry out because of your king, whom you have chosen for yourselves, but the Lord will not answer you in that day.”

You will one day be sorry but it will be too late! You will have made your decision! There will be no one to complain to, no higher courts to appeal to.

You will cry out, but you must remember, you are the ones who made the decision to have an earthly king rule over you.

vs 19-20...But the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel. And they said, “No! But there shall be a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles.”

What the people so blatantly missed is: Who had been fighting all their battles? Who had been providing everything for them? Was it not GOD, was it not Jehovah?

Wasn’t their God, JEHOVAH-ROHI,
‘The Lord my shepherd’

Wasn't their God, JEHOVAH-RAPHA,
'The Lord our healer'

Wasn't their God, JEHOVAH-JIREH,
'The Lord will provide'

Wasn't their God, JEHOVAH-NISSI,
'The Lord our banner'

Wasn't their God, JEHOVAH-SHALOM,
'The Lord our peace'

Wasn't their God, EL-SHADDAI,
'God Almighty'

Wasn't their God, EL-OLAM,
'The everlasting God'

But a gracious God gave them what they asked for.

vs 21-22...And when Samuel had heard all the words of the people, he repeated them in the ears of the Lord. And the Lord said to Samuel, "Obey their voice and make them a king." Samuel then said to the men of Israel, "Go every man to his city."

How many of us today are like those people?

We think we know more than God, what is best for us and the direction of our lives. But God knows what is best for us. He knows what will make me happy and satisfied. I think I know, but I am almost always wrong! (How many times have we had buyer's remorse?)

Chasing Donkey's

1 Samuel 9:3-10 (ESV)

Kish was from the tribe of Benjamin, and the name Kish means "mighty man of power". Meaning, he was a very wealthy man.

Saul, the son of Kish was a good man, he was of a good quality, fine appearance, substantial size. He was a good looking kid.

Now we see that Kish has lost some of his donkeys.

They probably had wandered off, and simply gotten lost and couldn't find their way back home. So Kish sent his son Saul and a servant to try to find them. After much searching, they have not seen hide nor hair of these donkeys, so Saul decides to start back home empty handed.

But the servant says, “Hey, we are at a place where there is a seer. Let’s ask him if he knows anything about the missing donkeys. We’ve exhausted ourselves looking for these donkeys, so let’s see if the man of God can help.”

Isn’t that the way we are?

We exhaust ourselves trying to do things our own way, and so finally we decide to turn to God. If we had given it to God in the first place, we would have saved ourselves a lot of stress and anxiety!

So Saul agrees with the servant, and they went into the city to find this seer, or prophet. Now the Lord has already told Samuel that Saul is coming. God even points him out to Samuel. Samuel tells him; “These donkeys you’re looking for have been found. But don’t worry about the donkeys, you have a far greater purpose for being here!”

You are here looking for some insignificant lost donkeys, but God has something else in mind that will completely change your life.

A lot of you today are out looking for donkeys instead of pursuing after the will of God.

I’m here to tell you, God has a purpose for you. God has a plan for you. But you are focused on chasing down a bunch of worthless donkeys! (relationships, money, prestige, etc.)

Too many Christians today are wasting time chasing after the fleeting things of this life, instead of dedicating themselves to the service of the Lord.

Busy, Chasing after their dreams.
Chasing after their selfish desires.
Chasing after the things of this world.
Chasing after the cares of this life.

With no regard for God’s purpose and plan for their lives.

Just Chasing ever-wandering donkeys...

God has a plan for you.

He has a purpose for your life.

He has a plan for you to be a blessing to those around you.

But He can’t perform that plan until we step aside from chasing donkeys and wait upon Him.

Discovering God’s Plan

1 Samuel 9:19 (ESV)

Samuel says to Saul, “Don’t worry about the donkeys. They are being taken care of.” He tells Saul, “Go with me to the high place.”

The high place; where worship by sacrifices or offerings were made. This is where God wants us to be when we step aside from chasing donkeys. Step aside from chasing after the things of this world, and worship God and offer praises to Him.

Samuel informed Saul that in God's plan, the donkeys don't matter.

Quit worrying about the donkeys. Stop fretting about those donkeys. Come and experience the presence of the Lord, and He will reveal what He has in store for you.

Now Saul had no intentions of going to church that morning. He had no intentions putting his plan on hold and going to worship God. But God had BIGGER plans!

Saul went with Samuel to the high place and worshipped God.

After the blessings and worship, Saul was invited to a feast where he was fed a special chunk of meat that had been ordered and set aside just for him.

1 Samuel 9:26-27 (ESV)

Samuel says to Saul, "Send your servant away, but you stand still because there is something I must tell you."

"Remove those who are distractions and stand still, I know you are worried about your father, I know you are anxious to get those donkeys and head back home, but stand still, slow down, because God wants to speak to you."

God is saying to you today, here in this service;

- I know you are worried about your problems.
- I know you are worried about the burden you are carrying.
- I know you are worried about your finances.
- I know you are worried about your job.
- I know you are worried about your children.

But stand still, slow down, because God has a word for you!

- He has a plan for you.
- He has a program for you.
- He has designed a life for you.
- He has an intention to use you.

Praise God!

Chapter 10 begins with Samuel taking a vial of oil and pouring it upon the head of Saul and revealing to him with confirmation that God has anointed him to be king over God's people.

It was not uncommon for kings to be anointed with oil in this way.

Even pagan nations, which surrounded Israel, anointed their kings with oil. However, they used animal fat to anoint because they believed that by pouring on the fat of a bull or an ox, and rubbing it into the man's head, somehow the individual would be infused with the strength of the animal itself.

But the oil used by Samuel was from the olive tree, a symbol of God's covenant, that we are not strong by ourselves, but strengthened by the root of Christ.

Too many Christians are wasting their lives chasing donkeys.

We must do it God's way first, because God's way is better. Everything you've gone through to attain the plans for your life, the setbacks and the waiting, the blessings, is God leading you to a place where He can reveal His plans for you.

You just need to step back, wait on God, and listen to His voice.