

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL MOMENT

– MARCH 14. – 1 SAMUEL 11:1-15. –

KING SAUL, ALTHOUGH ANOINTED OF GOD, WAITED FOR THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE – HIS OPPORTUNE MOMENT AND HOW HE UTILIZED IT – HIS ACCEPTANCE BY THE PEOPLE – OPPORTUNITIES OPEN FOR ALL – LESSONS FOR ALL IN SAUL'S EXPERIENCES – SPECIAL LESSONS TO THE CHURCH, ALSO CALLED TO KINGLY OFFICE – THE ROYAL PRIESTHOOD – ALL MEN TO BE MADE KINGS AGAIN BY MESSIAH'S REIGN – ALL LOVERS OF INIQUITY TO BE DESTROYED.

"He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." – Proverbs 16:32.

ISRAEL had asked for a king. God, through the Prophet Samuel, had caused the anointing of Saul to be the king. The people of Israel had assembled, and God's Prophet Samuel had indicated God's choice for them. Some of the people had gladly accepted the choice; but the rougher element had refused it, sneeringly saying, Who is he? What is his record, that we should hope for anything great in his hand?

It looked as though the Lord and His plan had failed – as though the choice had been an unsatisfactory one and had come to naught. Saul made no attempt to exercise authority, seeing that he had such half-hearted support from the people. He returned to his home – resuming his life as a farmer; but we may be sure he was patiently waiting for the opportune, or psychological, moment to arrive when, with God's blessing, he would enter upon the duties and responsibilities of a king, for which he had been Divinely anointed.

Saul's farm life continued only a month, until the opportunity offered which brought him the support of all the people as king. The Ammonites, residing in the east of Israel's possessions, were making war on one of the tribes of Israel. For some time they had besieged Jabesh-gilead, until the city was in such straits for food, etc., that they asked terms for surrender. The taunt of the Ammonite general was that on one condition he would save their lives; namely, they should each submit to having one eye put out, as a shame on the whole people of Israel.

Time was asked – seven days – for decision. If they could not get help in that time, they would submit to the terms. Messengers were dispatched, possibly to all the tribes. At all events some came to the place where Saul resided, evidently hoping that the one who had been chosen king, acceptable to some, would take steps for their deliverance. The disgrace of the situation struck home to Saul's heart. Israel to whom God had promised the possession of the land and His assistance, lacked faith and leadership.

Saul was appointed leader, and the psychological moment for him to lead had come. He killed the yoke of oxen he had been driving and sent pieces to all the tribes, saying that whoever did not respond, to become a defender of the general interests and to wipe out the shame, would have his oxen hewn to pieces. This was a peculiar command for a king; but it seems to have touched the right spot, for three hundred and thirty thousand men responded. The messengers returned to Jabesh-gilead with assurances of succor before noon the next day; and they gave answer to their besiegers to the effect that they would by the time appointed march out for the Ammonites to do with them as they thought best – meantime expecting such a deliverance as would make their enemies impotent to harm them.

King Saul divided his army into three sections, and from three different quarters came suddenly upon the besieging hosts, routing

them, destroying many lives and delivering the people of Israel. Thereupon the masses of the Israelites realized that God had indeed given them a wise king, whom they had been slow to recognize; and they inquired for those who had spoken against Saul at first, saying, Let them now be slain. However, the king was wise and generous, and said, "There shall not a man be put to death this day; for today the Lord hath wrought salvation in Israel." – Verse 13. [R5635 : page 60]

THE DIVINE CHARACTER VINDICATED

We again remind our readers that although this war and the slaughtering of those Ammonites had the Divine approval and blessing, it did not signify what many of us once supposed; namely, that those thousands of Ammonites slaughtered in their sleep or in their waking moments, went immediately to the theological Hell, there to suffer eternal torments. On the contrary, they merely went to the great prison-house of death, the tomb, there to sleep until in God's arrangement Christ would die as the world's Redeemer – and more, until at His Second Advent the Redeemer should take His great Power and reign, begin His work of calling back from death all that are in their graves. – John 5:28,29. See Revised Version.

To grasp the situation we must remember that all men are under a death-sentence, conviction, not worthy of life everlasting. All were to die anyway; and it mattered little whether they would die from starvation or sickness or pestilence or by the sword. The penalty merely reads, "Dying, thou shalt die" – not live, anyhow or anywhere. This view of matters has a distinct bearing on everything appertaining to the Lord's authorization of wars, and permission of famines, sickness, etc. While God has enforced the penalty, "The wages of sin is death," and has thus manifested His justice, He in another way has been preparing for the manifestation of His Love. The first step of this love-manifestation was in the

sending of His Son to be man's Redeemer – to die for Adam's sin, under which all the race is condemned to death.

Still the Divine Plan is hidden from the world in general. Only the Lord's consecrated people may have a clear understanding through the Bible of God's great purposes of love for the race. These are informed, and are able to comprehend the Message, that ultimately God will establish a Kingdom which will bind Satan's power, [R5636 : page 60] release humanity from its mental, moral and physical weaknesses – the results of the curse – and restore all the obedient to full perfection and to relationship with God.

GREAT OPPORTUNITIES AWAIT ALL

Looking out into the world, we perceive that opportunities for progress and greatness are by no means equal. Nevertheless, few men and few women make use of all the golden opportunities which do come to them for their own betterment and for usefulness on their part to their fellows. All such may take a good lesson from Saul; for he had naturally some good traits which he subsequently diverted or misused.

That Saul had humility is evidenced by the fact that when the suggestion of his becoming king was made, he repudiated the thought of his worthiness of the position, saying that there were greater tribes than the one of which he was a member, and that even in his own tribe, his family was not the most prominent. Again, at the time when Samuel the Prophet called the people, that the Lord's lot might be determined as to who should be the king, Saul was in hiding amongst the stuff, sitting amongst the piles of baggage. He knew how the Lord's lot would fall; and it was to his credit that he was not strutting about amongst the people showing himself, and saying, The Lord would surely choose me. Again, when some of the people murmured that he was not acceptable, Saul quietly went to his home and to his farming, letting the matter rest. Thus he displayed patience and wisdom, as well as humility.

His subsequent action and leading the army of Israel showed his faith in God and his courage. Had Saul maintained these characteristics, his experiences later would have been very different. But nearly every young man and young woman on the threshold of life, as well as when older, can gain some valuable and lasting lessons from Saul's experiences.

It may surprise some when we say that Christians – God's consecrated people – may especially learn lessons of profit from Saul's experiences. They, like Saul, have been nominated of God, not only to be kings, but also to be priests, "a Royal Priesthood." As Saul was anointed with the oil, so the Royal Priesthood are anointed with the Holy Spirit. As the people rejected Saul, and he waited patiently for the Lord's time, so the people, mankind, are not yet ready for the Reign of the Royal Priesthood, of which Jesus is the Head; and God's time has not yet come for the establishment of the Kingdom. Lessons of patience, of humility and of confidence in God are requisite that after enduring, they might inherit the promises. – Hebrews 6:12.

The great Armageddon is at hand, and terrible lessons will be learned by the world at great cost. Thereafter the Kingdom of Messiah will be very popular; and they will be saying, as they did in Saul's case, Let all those who oppose be put to death. However, The glorified Christ – Jesus the Head, the Church His members – will be very gracious, and a general amnesty will be proclaimed for all who will desire to come in line with the Kingdom.

Not only those who persecuted the Savior will be forgiven and be assisted back into harmony with God through Him, but those, also, who have despised the Royal Priesthood and persecuted them unwittingly, will be mercifully dealt with. "Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for My name's sake, said, The Lord be glorified: [We do it for the good of the cause] but He shall appear for your joy, and they shall be ashamed."

The shame that will then come upon all who in the meantime had resisted the Lord's choice for His Kingdom class will be a sufficient penalty. After the shame and God's forgiveness to all the willing and obedient, The Christ will bring blessings of "Restitution, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all the holy Prophets since the world began." – Acts 3:21.

A WORLD FULL OF KINGS

God created Father Adam the king of earth. Had he remained loyal to his God, he would have retained not only his life and health and happiness, but also his kingly authority over the beasts, the fish and the fowl – ruling them with telepathic powers. The breaking of the Covenant with God by Adam not only brought death and separation from God, but impaired his ruling powers as respects the lower creatures. The redemption accomplished by the death of Jesus is eventually to reach every member of Adam's race, and not merely will be applicable to their restoration to human perfection of mind and body, but will include a restoration of kingly powers.

In a republic there is a recognition of the fact of a human equality before the law. In a republic, every man is a king; and these kings vote for one of their number to be a president-king, or otherwise to hold a government executive position as the servant of all. This is a theory, an ideal, but we all know that it is more or less defective. It is in vain to claim that all men are born free and equal when we know that there are great inequalities of birth, of character, of talent, of will-power. While, therefore, a republic would be the ideal condition for perfect men, it only partially meets the requirements of the case so long as man is imperfect.

Nor will Messiah's Kingdom be established as a republic. Instead of giving humanity more power and leaving everything to be settled by the popular will and **[R5636 : page 61]** vote, Messiah's Kingdom will do the reverse. It will lay down the law, punish every infraction of the law, and point men to the fact that

they are not qualified to govern themselves, and that therefore, God has decreed the establishment of Messiah's Kingdom to rule over humanity, while they are in the imperfect condition, and to bring them up by Restitution to full perfection, where they will be able, as originally designed, to all be kings; or, failing to come up to this standard, they will be destroyed as incorrigible, lovers of iniquity.

Surely the Divine Program for humanity is beautiful, simple, and sublimely grand! It leaves nothing to be desired further. As the Bible declares, it will be "the desire of all nations." Those whose eyes and ears of understanding are open to appreciate this Message of the Bible have much advantage every way over the average man at the present time. This knowledge is very assistful to them as they come to realize that the anointing of the Holy Spirit upon them is with a view to preparing them to be the Royal Priesthood of the future and, with Jesus, to bring to mankind the blessings of Jehovah, lost by sin, redeemed at Calvary.

