

Samuel – God’s Kingdom and its King. (7) There’s a way back to God.

refs for Bible study 5/2/20: 1 Samuel 7v2-17

This passage teaches us that when we are in a sorry spiritual state there is always a way back to God.

Remote from God: When the Ark of the covenant was returned by the Philistines it stayed in the town of Kiriath-Jearim for 20 long years. During this time the Israelites continued to be oppressed, living defeated lives, in a spiritual wilderness, v1-2a.

There is no mention of Samuel in the whole of chps 4-6, but his ministry went on quietly and steadily, 3v20-4v1a. In ‘a day of small things’ he faithfully taught God’s Word, urging them to return to the Lord, eg Dt.28v1,7. Keep on preaching the Word!

Pray for those who do! Put yourself under God’s Word!

Returning to God: *‘There’s a way back to God...’* we sometimes sing. That way begins with –

- **Repentance:** ‘all Israel lamented’, v2b, the first sign they realise they are remote from God. This leads to repentance v3-4. No ifs or buts, Mt.3v8. Putting away idols and all known sin. Solemn assembly, v5-6. Not told why the ritual: 2Sam.14v14, Ps.22v14, Lam.2v19? ‘We have sinned’ – crucial words! Repentance is the first step Mk.1v4, Mk.1v14-15, Ac.2v38. It is the man-ward side. But what is the God-ward side?
- **A priest and a sacrifice:** When God is at work, so is the enemy, v7. Suddenly Samuel is the key man, v8-9. He is priest as well as prophet. He sacrifices a lamb as a burnt offering, Lev.1v9, Eph.5v2. He intercedes, v5,8,9. Yes, the people pray for themselves, but they also need an intercessor. Both sacrifice and priest point to Christ, Heb.9v14. On the basis of his sacrifice he intercedes Lk.22v31, Heb.7v25. Jesus is the Way back to God, Jn.14v6. There is always a way back to God – looking to Jesus and Calvary. Daily repentance is the only way to keep close to him.

Restored to God: The very moment that the sacrifice was offered the enemy attacked, v10. But the Lord thundered, fulfilling Hannah’s prophecy many years earlier, 2v10a. The enemy was routed, leaving Israel to mop up what was left, v11. Now Israel has the victory, not by superstition 4v3, but by being restored to God. They make sure to remember this day, v12, and can live in peace under a righteous and faithful leader, v13-17.

Parallel: Christ was offered, the devil attacked, God thundered, the enemy was routed, Mt.27v51-54. We too may know victory through repentance and humble trust in the Lamb of God, our High Priest. Let us praise God for the ‘One-greater-than-Samuel’ who has come!

There’s a way back to God from the dark paths of sin. There’s a door that is open and you may go in.

At Calvary’s cross is where you begin when you come as a sinner to Jesus.