

Depression and Saul

1 Samuel 16:14-23

By Dr. Gary M. Gulan, ©1988, (rev. 06)

Introduction: Israel wanted a king like the other nations around them, (1 Sam. 8:5). This made Samuel very angry, (1 Sam. 8:6). The Lord told Samuel that the people had rejected Him, (1 Sam. 8:7). Samuel tried to tell Israel what a king would do to them, (1 Sam. 8:10-18), however, the people refused to obey Samuel, (1 Sam. 8:19). Israel wanted to be like the other nations, (1 Sam. 8:20). The Lord told Samuel to give the people what they wanted, (1 Sam. 8:22). The emphasis was placed on externals, a man named Saul who was: (1.) choicest man, (2.) very handsome, and (3.) very tall, (1 Sam. 9:2-3; 10:23). God gave the people of Israel what they wanted, (1 Sam 9:17; 10:24; 12:1,13). God placed into Saul another heart (1 Sam. 10:9) and His Spirit, (1 Sam. 10:10) in order to serve as king. Two years into Saul's reign, Saul broke one of God's commands concerning sacrifices and the priesthood, (1 Sam. 13:9-11,13), because he feared the people and obeyed their voice, (1 Sam. 15:24). The consequences of Saul's sin was that he lost his kingdom, (1 Sam. 13:14). Saul admitted his sin and asked for forgiveness, (1 Sam. 15:24-25). Saul still wanted to be king, however, the Lord rejected him, (1 Sam. 15:26). God anointed David as a new king in Saul's place, (1 Sam. 16:1,12) who was chosen not because of his outward appearance but his heart, (1 Sam. 16:7).

I. THE CONDITION OF SAUL'S DEPRESSION

- A. He was "troubled" (Hb. "ba 'at") meaning, "to be overtaken by sudden terror, to be dismayed," (1 Sam. 16:14-15).
- B. He was "distressed" (Hb. "sara") meaning "make narrow, bind, cause distress," but also has a root meaning of "harassment or torment engendered by an enemy." (1 Sam. 16:14-15)
- C. He was "disturbed," (Hb. "bahal") meaning, "sudden panic, disturbed, alarmed, terrified," (1 Sam. 28:21).

II. THE CAUSE OF SAUL'S DEPRESSION

- A. Saul sinned by disobeying one of God's commands, (1 Sam. 15:24).
- B. Saul lost his position as king, (1 Sam. 15:26).
- C. Saul was judged by God (15:28).
- D. Saul lost the Spirit of God and His influence on his life, (16:14).
- E. Saul was given a messenger or angel from God as a part of judgment, (16:14-15). In the rest of the book we see Saul with baseless suspicion, bitter jealousy, cruel vengeance, and periodic madness.

III. THE COMFORT WITHIN SAUL'S DEPRESSION

- A. Music made Saul "refreshed" and "well," (1 Sam. 16:16,23).

Conclusion: God used "depression" for two purposes:

1. God used "depression" to judge Saul.

"Saul whose inward constitution was already prone to questionable judgment and the fear of men, began to experience God's judgment in the form of severe bouts of depression, anger, and delusion, initiated and aggravated by the evil spirit assigned to him." (John MacArthur Study Bible, p. 401)

2. God used the "depression" for David's advantage.

"God used the evil messenger which was upon Saul to introduce David into the court of the king and to the watchful eyes of Israel," (John MacArthur Study Bible, p. 401) David had the Spirit of the Lord upon him, (1 Sam. 16:13).