

**October 23**

**Scriptures:** Read 1 Samuel 11 & 12

**Key Verse:** “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.” (1 Samuel 12:14)

### **Overview**

The threat of Nahash the Ammonite upon the people of Jabesh Gilead gave occasion for Saul to assert his leadership for the first time. With righteous indignation and the Spirit of the Lord empowering him, he rallied together a unified Israelite army and brought deliverance from the Ammonite enemies. Saul rightly gave the glory to God for this great victory and, because it was a time of rejoicing in the Lord’s salvation, he showed mercy upon those who had insulted and opposed him by not putting them to death (11:13). This first victory under Saul’s kingship gave all Israel confidence in his divine appointment, paving the way for more victories to follow.

While all Israel was gathered together, Samuel took the opportunity to call them to Gilgal where they unanimously reconfirmed Saul’s kingship that had previously been decided upon at Mizpah (10:24). They followed a joyous official coronation ceremony (11:15). Saul was now the undisputed leader of the nation and had total support. It was time for Samuel, the faithful judge, to step down from his role as Israel’s leader.

In his final address, Samuel reminded the people of his honest and unselfish service to them during his years as judge. He once again rebuked them for their wickedness in requesting a king, and made it clear that God was still to reign supremely over all Israel and over the new king as well. Samuel also reminded them of how God had brought salvation through His chosen leaders in the past, coming only when the Israelites had repented of their sin and turned back to God. He spoke these words in order to encourage them to keep on in obedience to God, for only then would they see national blessing and continue to see God’s deliverance, through the anointed king. Likewise, when we cry out to God in repentance and live in obedience to Him, He grants us salvation, deliverance, and a victorious life through His Son, the anointed King Jesus.

To underscore the truth of his words, Samuel called upon God to send thunder and rain, which in that land was (and still is) extremely unusual at the harvest time (around the end of May). This miraculous phenomenon deeply affected the people, causing them to have greater respect for God and Samuel as well as bringing about heartfelt repentance.

Samuel officially resigned from his post, yet, much to the people’s relief, he reassured them he would not stop interceding in prayer for them, nor cease to teach them “the good and the right way” (12:23). This is a sign of a noble character and a true leader. Although he was no longer their official leader, Samuel was concerned for their welfare and would continue to be faithful in serving the nation in the best way he knew how — to pray and teach them about God. Similarly, a true minister of the Gospel, though he may have reached the age of

retirement, will never cease praying and witnessing about Jesus. Samuel even considered it a sin not to pray (12:22). Would that all God's people have this same spirit and motivation to commune with God, interceding on behalf of others and bringing glory to Him!

### **Prayer**

Lord Cod of Samuel, we pray as Samuel did for our family, our neighbours, and all others for whom we should pray. Bring all to Yourself and bless them. Amen.