



**BETHEL**  
PRESBYTERIAN

# **MINISTRY OF THE WORD**

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## **The Workings of God on Behalf of His Kingdom, Part 2**

In John 5 we read these incredible words:

John 5:39, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me."

Everything written in the Old Testament was given to instruct us with regard to the Messiah, Jesus Christ. And our text is no exception. This passage represents a shift of epic proportions in the unfolding of the revelation of God's grace.

Prior to 1 Samuel, God signified and proclaimed the Christ through various and sundry means:

- The patriarchs.
- The judges.
- The former prophets.
- The priesthood.
- The elders.

All these people and positions reveal a different facet of the person and work of Christ. And yet when we come to Samuel, Redemptive History takes a huge leap forward as now we get a foretaste not only of the Messianic Kingdom but of the King Himself!

Notice what God promises here:

1 Samuel 9:16, “To morrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and **thou shalt anoint him to be captain<sup>1</sup> over my people Israel**, that he may save my people out of the hand of the Philistines: for I have looked upon my people,”

This is an incredible passage. It is written to a people who longed for a “king like the nations” God responded. He gave them a king and yet far more. The word for *captain* or *prince* in this text goes beyond the office of king. It is a word which epitomizes the work which Christ, the Messiah came to do.

Daniel 9:25, “**Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince<sup>2</sup> shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks:** the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.”

From this we note that Saul, and for that matter, every king of Israel, was to be far more than a king. He was to function as a type of Christ/Messiah in the context of the Kingdom and so serve as a king, but also be

- A servant/leader.
- A care-taker of souls.
- A shepherd.
- A deliverer.

In light of this, Saul was given a specific charge.

1 Samuel 9:16, “To morrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be captain over my people Israel, **that he may save my people out of the hand of the Philistines:** for I have looked upon my people, because their cry is come unto me.”

Truly while the people wanted a king akin to the nations surrounding them, it was God's will with the monarchy to give them the fullness of what a king ought to be. And this “gift” to the people was to result in their ultimate deliverance from all foes! This was the charge that rested upon the people's choice. This is what the calling of a “prince” was all about.

From this we conclude that before us is a passage which NOT ONLY details the calling and charge of the first King of Israel BUT ALSO gives a foretaste of the nature of the coming Messianic Kingdom of which we are a part.

Last time we saw that God's work as it pertains to His Kingdom both past, present, and future BEGAN BEFORE THE TIME OF ITS APPEARING! This is such a comforting truth. Everything that is occurring in our lives is but the process which God has deigned to manifest:

- His glory.
- His Messiah.

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<sup>1</sup> נגיד or נדר נגיד a leader, ruler, prince:— This word is rendered prince in the NASB

<sup>2</sup> נגיד נגיד

- His Christ.

## The Needs of God's People

And thus, with an eye on the future prize we accept all that is in our life as a crucial part of God's will and calling for us that we might be able fully to enjoy Christ in heaven. And yet this morning we learn another facet of the Messianic Kingdom of God. Notice secondly that the working of God on behalf of His kingdom encompasses the needs of God's people.

1 Samuel 9:16, "To morrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be captain over my people Israel, that he may save my people out of the hand of the Philistines: for I have looked upon my people, because their cry is come unto me."

This is a most important text when it comes to understanding the whys and wherefores behind God's Kingdom workings. Before our study, I think most of us could have articulated the ultimate rationale behind all of God's dealings: "In all things God is glorifying Himself!".

Deuteronomy 9:6, "Understand therefore, that the LORD thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness; for thou art a stiffnecked people."

Moses said it plainly. God's work is not nor is it ever out of obligation to man. Ezekiel gives us the rationale behind God's treatment of His people in the wilderness.

Ezekiel 20:9, "But I wrought for my name's sake, that it should not be polluted before the heathen, among whom they were, in whose sight I made myself known unto them, in bringing them forth out of the land of Egypt."

In all things God is acting that He might be glorified. This we know is our chief end.

## God's Compassion

Truly, God is working all things unto His own glory, honor, and praise. And yet to stop here is to state just half of the story. For our text reveals another motive behind God's dealings.

Behold that which moved God in the establishing of His Kingdom in the days of Samuel, in a word it would be His LOVE for His people which here is manifested in two specific ways. First we see His compassion.

1 Samuel 9:16, "To morrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be captain over my people Israel, that he may save my people out of the hand of the Philistines: **for I have looked<sup>3</sup> upon my people**, because their cry is come unto me."

.The word rendered *looked* could be translated as to *regard*, *perceive*, or *understand*.<sup>4</sup> It comes from the

<sup>3</sup> ראה raah

<sup>4</sup> *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* by R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, and Bruce K. Waltke, Moody Press,

Hebrew for looking, seeing, or beholding... and so reflects the compassion and care of God in which He takes it upon Himself to know/understand His people's difficulties and struggles.

See, for many years now God's people have been longing and crying for deliverance from the yoke of the Philistines. Recall the era of the Judges and the four-fold cycle of God's people:

- They reject God and pursue their sin.
- God deigns to discipline them with foreign oppression.
- So Israel suffers severely such that they call out to God.
- God sends a deliverer who frees Israel that they might serve God without restraint.

Now unfortunately God's people were/are a rebellious lot such that they knew many long years of servitude to foreign powers, like the Philistines. And so when we come to the era of Samuel and our text, Israel has suffered on and off for no less than 300 years at the hand of the Philistines and the like. Accordingly we are not surprised to read of many pleas, sighs, and groans for deliverance.

- We saw it in Hannah, 1 Samuel 1.
- We saw it in the elders of 1 Samuel 4.
- We've seen it from the people at large, 1 Samuel 7.

Now though God appears to have remained silent throughout this time, we know that He wasn't. Indeed from verses 15-16 we see that He was working, planning, and preparing the way of deliverance.

Now again we ask why was that? What compelled Him to move on behalf of His people?

## God Looks Upon His People

The answer to these questions is found in verse 1 Samuel 9:16.

1 Samuel 9:16, "To morrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be captain over my people Israel, that he may save my people out of the hand of the Philistines: **for I have looked upon my people**, because their cry is come unto me."

Here we read that it was because God had looked or regarded His people. In other words, God took it upon Himself to know intimately the struggles of His people. He desired to understand what they were suffering. He knew their pain, fears, worries, and hopelessness. **AND THIS MOVED GOD!**

This sounds rather man-centered, doesn't it? Yet we must see that it is not!

If as we profess, God is God-centered in all He does **\*\*and\*\*** our burdens and woe move Him then we must conclude that our burdens and woe are intimately related to His glory!

Here we see that God has deigned to identify Himself and His name with us!

## Parenting

One of the struggles with parenting is that we do this: We identify our name with our children. We consider what our child does, how he acts, his/her success or failure and we can at times take it personally.

We do this because we have wrongly identified ourselves with our children.

Brothers and sisters, while this is wrong in our relationship with our children (since our identity ought to be bound in Christ) with God, this is not wrong, but the way He has deigned to work. He has chosen to unite His glory with our well-being! God tells us why he did not wipe out the apostate people of God in the Old Testament:

Isaiah 48:9, “For my name’s sake will I defer mine anger, and for my praise will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off.”

## God Hears our Cry

Israel was not wiped out because God's name had been attached to them! And so it wasn't a cold-hearted decision to raise up THE Prince as if an alarm clock rang out somewhere. RATHER, God was moved with compassion for His people on account of His name... and so He acted. And yet it just wasn't compassion. Notice God also moved on account of His Mercy.

1 Samuel 9:16, “To morrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be captain over my people Israel, that he may save my people out of the hand of the Philistines: **for I have looked upon my people, because their cry<sup>5</sup> is come unto me.**”

This is a strange expression; what is meant here by the “cries” of God's people “coming to [the Lord]”?

The word rendered *cry* means to call out for help under great distress.<sup>6</sup> For example it is used of the prophets who drank poison and so expected to die.<sup>7</sup> It is used for the woman who cries out for help while being violated.<sup>8</sup> It is used when Israel lost the ark in battle.<sup>9</sup> It is also used when people are plundered and ravaged by war.<sup>10</sup>

It is a strong word denoting intense emotion and grief. It is used for emotions so deep that the soul of the person crying is moved and shaken. These are the “cries” which “come to [the Lord].”

Well what does that mean, to have your cries come to the Lord?

The word behind “come” is the fourth most common verb used in the Old Testament.<sup>11</sup> It conveys the idea of “going,” “arriving,” or “entering into a house.” Placed in this context, it has a rather peculiar

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<sup>5</sup> צעקה tseaqah

<sup>6</sup> *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, page 772

<sup>7</sup> Compare 2 Kings 4:40

<sup>8</sup> Compare Deuteronomy 22:27

<sup>9</sup> Compare 1 Samuel 4:14

<sup>10</sup> Compare Jeremiah 49:12

<sup>11</sup> This word בוא bo is used 2570 times in the Old Testament.

implication: WHEN A CRY COMES TO THE LORD IT MEANS THAT GOD NOT ONLY HEARS IT, BUT HAS DEIGNED TO ACT UPON IT IN MERCY. The cry enters into His house such that He doesn't ignore it! Think of it in this way...

Isaiah 59:1-2, "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."

It is said that God "does not hear" the prayer of the unrighteous in this text. That does not mean that He has no knowledge of their prayer. He's omniscient; He knows everything. Rather, it implies that though they pray and He knows it, on account of their sin He DOES NOT ANSWER or RESPOND to it! God simply CHOOSES TO IGNORE IT!

Accordingly when we say that God "Hears our prayer" or that "Our cry has come to God" the implication is that God not only knows what we have asked, but in His tender mercy He has deigned to answer/respond to it.

In light of all of this I hope you see what an incredible text is this. God's people here are pictured as crying out to the Lord on account of the oppression which their sin has created, and God NOT ONLY understands and sympathizes with their weakness BUT He deigns to respond favorably to their prayer for deliverance.

And from this we see a crucial part of the Nature of God's Kingdom work. In all that God is doing, He indeed is bringing glory to Himself, BUT He also is moved by the needs of His people.

James 5:11, "Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy."

.This is an important message for us! Yes, God is working all things for His glory and honor. Yes, God's chief end is to glorify and enjoy Himself forever. But a large facet of God's Kingdom work involves the welfare of His people whereby He attends to their needs, weaknesses, trials, and failings. God intently listens to our prayers. It is as Isaiah put it:

Isaiah 64:4, "For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him."

This is another primary characteristic of God's Kingdom work! In all that God is doing in this life, our needs are on His heart and mind. In every providence, from the dust particles on the mantel to the travesties and disasters of our time God is moved by our struggles, our aches, and our pleas!

## Redemptive History

We see this truth manifest throughout Redemptive History. At the time of Abraham why was Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed? The angel of the Lord put it plainly:

Genesis 19:13, "For we will destroy this place, **because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the LORD; and the LORD hath sent us to destroy it.**"<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Compare also 2 Peter 2:7 and Genesis 18:20

Sodom and Gomorrah was destroyed because God's people there grieved! In their plight, they got down on their knees and asked God for mercy, righteousness, and justice. And God answered!

At the time of Moses why did the Exodus occur? The Scripture plainly tells us:

Exodus 3:7-9, "And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites. Now therefore, **behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them.**"

Did you get that?

The Pharaoh was humbled, and all Egypt, because God heard the cry of His people! Their plight was known to God! God understood their groanings and struggles! **AND SO ON ACCOUNT OF HIS PEOPLE, HE ACTED!**

We see this truth also (not surprisingly) at the time of Christ. Peter declares this truth to an afflicted and desolate people in order to encourage them.

1 Peter 3:12, "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil."

Though we might be dispersed abroad and struggling under persecution and difficulty God knows and understands our struggles. He hears our prayer. And He acts; He attends to our prayer!

When two blind children of God called out for healing, we read these words:

Matthew 20:34, "So Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him."

Christ groaned deeply because of their suffering.

Do you see it?

One of the characteristics of the Messianic Kingdom is a divine compassion for His people whereby God acts on behalf of His children! In fact it couldn't be clearer than Hebrews states.

Hebrews 4:15, "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

## **God Cares**

Truly let us all come to know and be convinced: A primary facet of God's Kingdom work is that He takes into consideration our needs. We are not robots or as dust before God. He cares about us intimately, personally, and passionately. Walter Brueggemann put it this way, speaking of 1 Samuel 9:16:

“Notice that in this brief statement Yahweh says 'my people' three times... This anointing is not for the sake of the monarchy, not to establish a new institution, not to enhance Saul. It is for 'my people,' whose affliction has evoked a firm response.”<sup>13</sup>

And so as we consider the providence of God, be it bitter or sweet, we must become convinced that it is orchestrated with our needs, best, and good in mind. We must hold and maintain as a core conviction that a loving and compassionate God has orchestrated the events of life such that what I presently am experiencing is for my ultimate good and God's glory! Know that this too is necessary if we are to enjoy the crown of life.

Ah, but herein is the difficulty. For we have not done anything to warrant such care. Have we?

In fact to the contrary, we have done many things to earn God's displeasure such that when bad things happen, we have no grounds to complain. In the words of Jeremiah:

Lamentations 3:39, “Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?”

Truly, for so many Christians today their life-verse is taken from 1 Samuel. Do you remember what God promised to His people who were dead-set on their sin?

1 Samuel 8:18, “And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the LORD will not hear you in that day.”

.Forget that God is writing to a people He is in the process of disciplining, it doesn't matter. The character of God portrayed in this verse is presumed to be God's disposition toward us on account of our sin that He does not hear, and that he will not hear!

## **God Regards His People**

Family of God I want you to notice a very important truth: God does not forget His people.

What was the state of God's people at the writing of our text?

They had just finished casting off God. They had just told God that they no longer wanted Him as their God. They had rejected Him to His face. Recall God's words to Samuel.

1 Samuel 8:7, “And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.”

This is where many of us live.

Years ago you professed a love for Christ, but of late you have been guilty of foul revolt against Him. You have committed heinous sins. You have done unmentionable things. You have knowingly trampled

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<sup>13</sup> Walter Brueggemann, First and Second Samuel, Presbyterian Pub Corp (May 01, 1990), Hardcover, ISBN 0804231087, page 72



underfoot Christ. And there is a side of you still which doesn't care. And now today you are convinced that God must have it out for you, for if someone did to you what you have done to God, you'd throw the book at him.

And yet what was God's response when Israel acted this way?

He regarded His people. He got in their shoes and said, "I understand!" \*\*And\*\* He heard their cry for forgiveness and so answered!

God loves and cares for each of us continues. His regard for you as His child is NOT predicated upon your actions or based upon your good intentions. RATHER God's continued care is housed in His good pleasure to deliver rebellious people like you and me "to the praise of the glory of His grace" (Ephesians 1:6a)!

Oh, Christian be gone with the doubts and suspicions when it comes to God's love or intentions. From this moment on, come to know and be convinced of the disposition of God toward you when you sin! We read of it in Luke.

Luke 15:20, "And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him."

Luke 15:22-23, "But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry."

Truly, in the words of John:

1 John 3:1, "**Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God:** therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not."

## **About Bethel Presbyterian Church**

*The Bethel Presbyterian Church Ministry of the Word* is published regularly.

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Feel free to visit Bethel Presbyterian Church when in Broomfield, Colorado. Bethel Presbyterian Church meets at Broomfield High School, Eagle (10<sup>th</sup> Street) and Main, Broomfield, Colorado. The telephone number of the church is 303-469-6912. The worship services are at 9:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. each Sunday. Bethel Presbyterian Church is a member of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

All our sermons can be accessed via the World Wide Web. The recording for this sermon and the these notes can be found at [God Hears our Cry](#) . The web address for all sermons at Bethel Presbyterian Church can be found out as follows: <http://bethelpresbyterian.sermonaudio.com>

### **About the Preacher**

Greg Thurston preached this sermon on January 28, 2007. Greg is the preacher at Bethel Presbyterian Church.