

## 55 February 5, 2022, Donkeys to King

The Bible is loaded with true stories of the ancients, particularly in the Old Testament, in the era of time noted as BC, Before Christ. Then from Genesis, the beginning of BC through Malachi, with 400 years of silence comes before the period known as AD, After Death. The last word in Malachi in the Old Testament is "curse" which is a word that means "to express anger and invoke supernatural power to inflict harm or punishment". Do you suppose that the Old Testament contained a warning for the ensuing generations of mankind? "AD 1", year one, signifies the birth of Jesus the Christ ushering in the era of New Testament Bible times which many of us relate to as in the period of Christianity. The New Testament with the first word of Jesus in His first sermon begins with the word "blessed" which means "to be made holy, sanctified, consecrated, and worthy of adoration and worship". So, we go through the many generations of wars, world turmoil, Christian persecution, prejudice, hate, plaques, greed and power-hungry rulers in 2000 years and counting to one day, probably soon, ending with another "curse" in the Book of Revelations: which says *"to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God shall add to him the plaques which are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city which are written in this book"* (Rev 22:18-19). How many of the world's population and political leaders even realize the power of these words and the consequences of their actions plus in current times relate to plagues in the current pandemic? One principal that should be, or has been, learned is that we should learn from the mistakes of the past and not continue to repeat those mistakes – in otherwise learn from the past and build the future in a different way!

The Israelites in the Old Testament and add to those Israelites plus the Gentiles in the New Testament played the dance across centuries of on again, off again in their belief and commitment to God. Satan was defeated at the crucifixion of Christ on the cross of Calvary in the human death of Jesus, but he still runs ramped in the World creating havoc with anybody who will listen to him. The Israelites failed to obey God in conquering the Philistines Moabites, Midianites, and Ammonites then occupants of the Promised Land and putting aside the worship of idols, so to this day Israelites have failed to occupy the land area that God gave them. Thus, they will not have that land area fully returned to them until after the 1000 Year Millennium. An interesting example of the saga of the Israelites is found in the book of 1 Samuel. When Moses died God gave Joshua leadership over the Israelites to lead them into Canaan, the Promised Land. After 40 years Joshua died, then God gave the tribe of Judah leadership in a loose federation of the twelve tribes, a command to clear out the land of all people and idols not believing in Him. Still after another 200 years including no monarch, but with twelve Judges in succession, the most prominent being, Othniel, Ehud, Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah, and ending with Samson over the people, the task had not been accomplished. During this period of time God raised up warrior leaders to fight the battles to expel evil peoples without success. In about 1000 BC God called Samuel as a Prophet.

Samuel, a son of Hannah (1 Samuel 1-2) was given by Hannah to serve in the Temple with Eli the Priest at that time. Eli's two sons did evil in the sight of God and defiled the priesthood in the lineage of Eli with Eli being too old to serve. God called Samuel from sleep three times in one night, the last saying "behold I am about to do a thing in Israel at which both ears of everyone who hears it will tingle". He revealed himself to Samuel and interjected Samuel to lead Israel as a Prophet succeeding Eli and the priesthood for a while. When the Philistines again came against Israel the Israelites went to battle with the Ark of the Covenant in their camp and were defeated losing 4000 warriors to the Philistines. Eli's two sons were killed in this battle and Eli hearing of the taking of the Ark fell backwards and died with

the glory of the Lord departing from Israel in losing the Ark. God unleashed His wrath upon the Philistines, killing them or infecting them with tumors until after seven months the Ark was returned with a guilt offering to the Israelites in the valley of Joshua. 50,070 men died that day who looked upon the Ark both Philistines and Israelites. After another attack by the Philistines against Israel, with Samuels guidance the Philistines were defeated, and peace reined with Samuel judging Israel until he died. Before he died Samuel appointed his sons as Judges over Israel, but they did not walk in the way of Samuel. The Israelites and surely God had enough and the people demanded a King to judge them be appointed by Samuel.

Samuel was not pleased, as well as God, but God told Samuel to heed their demands by saying "*they have forsaken Me and served other gods – so they are doing to you also*" (1 Samuel 8:8-9), but warn them of their choice and tell them the procedure of the King who will reign over them. The results of having a King was much like agreeing to servitude for the people as described in 1 Samuel 8:10-22 which they agreed to, and the Lord told Samuel to listen to their voice and appoint them a King. **Be careful what you ask for, as you might get what you do not expect!** There was a tall, handsome young man born to a Benjamite by name of Kish by the name of Saul. The donkeys belonging to Kish were lost, so he sent Saul to find them. Saul with his servants passed through many lands of the region but did not find the donkeys. They were about to give up finding them, until his servant said they should inquire of a holy man in a nearby city. The custom of the day was to take an offering if you inquire of God which they did, and the man was Samuel. The day before Saul's arrival, the Lord had spoken to Samuel that on the morrow He will send a man from the land of Benjamin. Samuel was to anoint him to be prince over My people Israel and Saul would deliver His people from the hand of the Philistines for God had regarded His people because of their cry to Him (1 Samuel 9). The donkeys were found, and Saul was anointed King of the Israelites by Samuel. The story of Saul is another tragedy but out of his rein there came David, a man after Gods own heart.