

## *I Can't Believe It!*

### Saul's p.c. Reign

Saul's biggest problem was also unbelief but it manifested in it's own way. Since Saul was never comfortable in God's placement and even less so after The Lord withdrew His blessing, appearance was everything. It had to look right, sound right, and have all the correct buzzwords to be received properly.

Few kings rivaled Saul for his attention to the pulse of the people. Every move was gauged by their reaction. He took more surveys, opinion polls, and straw ballots than any man should want to know about. But they never gave what he wanted, the confidence of resting in God.

From the first, he had an image problem. When his name was drawn in Samuel's lottery, he had to be found, hiding among the baggage. After all, he knew what was coming, as Samuel had already anointed the king privately. Nevertheless, some time later when leadership was needed, he rose to the occasion.

Although success alloyed some of his insecurity, it always haunted him, especially in times of confrontation. When faced with a tough battle with the Philistines, his ill-advised command to fast almost cost his victorious son Jonathan his life.

In another battle, as Saul saw his followers begin to scatter he intruded into the priest's office, offering a sacrifice that lost him God's blessing and doomed his posterity.

An ultimate joke must have been the challenge of Goliath. Saul's most distinctive feature was his stature, standing head and shoulders above his subjects. One can almost imagine him standing whenever a situation presented itself and as the surprised caller would be looking up and up, Saul might demand, AND WHAT DO YOU WANT? With Goliath the role was reversed, emptying the king's bag of tricks in a hurry.

David was a short little guy to start with. He found nothing unusual in looking up at someone. It was no problem to hear the giant's ranting and immediately classify him as a blowhard, an arrogant bully defying not just Israel, but the God she represented.

Everything Saul said or did at this point spoke against him. His failure to recognize David, the king's minstrel, told how much Saul valued, or even noticed those about him. The offer of his daughter to whoever would kill the giant was preemptory, grasping at straws and opening the door to generations of potential misery. Clothing David in the king's armor was foolish, putting a short guy into a suit custom made for a big tall fellow. Fortunately, David found a diplomatic way to refuse.

*Saul has slain his thousands and David his ten-thousands*, sang the women in the victory celebration. Politically correct Saul heard that and blanched. The words were prophetic,

as the only things David had slain thus far were a lion, a bear, and a giant. But as the king saw his P.R. campaign in ruins, bad things began to circulate in his bloodstream. David gained an enemy.

Saul not only created his own reality, he enforced it on everyone around him. Everything had to look a certain way, as befitting the dignity of the kingdom. There is some value here, and that which is beneficial and necessary was passed on to David through Jonathan. The shepherd boy was taught how to behave in the palace and what it took to lead men into combat. But Saul went to extremes over appearance.

Years later, Saul's daughter looked out the window and saw her husband dancing before The Lord. Everything she inherited from her father concerning deportment and protocol rose up. When it was time to worship and rejoice, she found herself a critic. Not only did she lose God's blessing but something died between her and her husband. The Bible is not clear whether her barrenness was judgment or a loss of marital intimacy. Tragic.

Saul's confidence problem was linked to an inability to trust and obey God. When push came to shove, Saul always went with his own thoughts, regardless of what God had said. Despite clear instructions concerning the victory over the Amalekites, Saul would have saved the best of the spoil and their king alive. Time and again he rejected the word of the Lord, or failed to wait for it, or decided he didn't need it after all.

By the end of Saul's life, he and the Almighty were not on speaking terms. One of his last acts as king was to attempt to contact Samuel by a séance. One last time the word came to Saul. It was short, to the point, and very negative. His reign was over, and with it his life. P.C. had won, not his but God's.

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