

Day 28 – Mar. 8

So much in today's reading is important in both historical and eternal ways. Let's take a look at a few.

1. Saul continues to disobey God, sometimes by directly going against God's orders and sometimes by following his own path rather than patiently waiting for God's command. How like us he is – always thinking he knows better than God. What has God commanded you? Do you find yourself disobeying or just ignoring these commands? Do you find yourself moving forward with a plan that is all your own instead of waiting in prayer for God's will? How like Saul we can be.

2. It's an interesting thing to ponder that God both doesn't change His mind and yet can regret His previous actions. We see this with Noah's story and with Saul's kingship, where God directly states that He "regrets" or "is sorry" for creating humankind or for making Saul king. There are many ways for us to justify this – we are using anthropomorphic language for God and so describe Him as having regret, or God's ability to regret things that He foreknew – but today instead let this idea draw you to God in prayer and ask Him about it. And then wait to see if He answers you!

3. We get some important, quotable lines from scripture today. In fact, some of my favorites:

*"Obedience is better than sacrifice, and submission is better than the offering of the fat of rams."*

*"People judge by outward appearances, but the LORD looks at the heart."*

These are worth some time to ponder as well. How are we "going through the ritual motions" rather than seeking God's will for us to obey? How are we judging others by their outward appearance, including their words, behaviors, dress, color, or looks, rather than by their hearts?

4. Last but certainly not least is the top of p.114 where we find God sending a tormenting spirit that fills Saul with depression and fear! God sends a demon into Saul? God torments Saul for disobeying? How do we rectify this one (and why do we keep having to justify God's actions in these writings in the first place?) Much of this springs from the biblical theology of God's sovereignty again. God is King and therefore completely in charge of everything that happens, this thought-path goes. Therefore, everything that is must come from God and be God's will. (Otherwise God is not sovereign and things happen outside His control!) So if Saul became depressed, it must have been God's doing. If Saul was terrified it must come from God. And if Saul had a demon, it must have come from God. It is a hard thought-path because it requires that we assign all human atrocities to God's will, and this has chased a LOT of people away from God. So, many follow the thought-path that God allows evil, depression, fear, and demons for a time, allowing God to be in control yet free from blame for the evils of this world. Which is the Truth? I don't know, but once again, I let it pull me into prayer with these questions, and then in to a waiting period where I await God's explanation. And I'm still waiting. And that's ok. Because our ultimate Goal in life is to draw near to God, not to understand everything about Him (thank God!)