

The Seer

“All those who are childless can beseech God, but they must also be aware that if, after their prayer, God blesses the birth of a child, the child does not belong to them. If all children are gifts from God, this is especially true of a child who is the fruit of a special blessing following much prayer. Holy Scripture clearly shows that, when God bestowed a child after a long period of childlessness, He expected great sacrifices from the parents. He asked Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. Hannah dedicated Samuel in the Temple from the age of three. The All-Holy Virgin was also dedicated in the Temple at three years old, and entered the Holy of Holies. The Honourable Forerunner, St John the Baptist, left the protection of his parents from a very early age and lived in the desert, completely devoted to God. So all parents who receive the gift of the birth of a child after a severe trial should stand before God with much awe and veneration, and be ready to proceed with any sacrifice permitted by Him. Finally, we ought to leave ourselves in God’s hands with regard to every aspect of our life, because we do not know what is good and what we are able to endure. Can we endure childlessness, or can we bear the many sacrifices and crosses that having children would involve?”

Samuel’s Birth, Nursing and Dedication

* * *

“If someone reads about the events preceding Saul’s meeting with Samuel in a superficial way, from a worldly point of view, he may think that everything happened by chance. He could take the view that Kish’s donkeys just happened to get lost, that it just happened that Saul and his servant were looking for them for so long, in that particular

place where Samuel was, and by chance the servant mentioned his idea that they should meet Samuel to ask him about the subject that concerned them, and so on. He might think that these were all random events. Yet things were not as we might think.

In all these events God's intervention was clearly visible. Through these historical events God is creating the necessary conditions for Samuel to meet Saul and to anoint him King of the Israelites. This is the interpretation of the holy Fathers, who interpret Holy Scripture in terms of the providence of God and His intervention in history.

God Directs History

* * *

“One of the confirmations that Samuel gave Saul that God had chosen him as King of the people of Israel was that he would meet a band of Prophets who would prophesy. He not only told him that this meeting would take place, but he went further and told him that he would receive the Holy Spirit and would prophesy.

The words of the Prophet Samuel are very significant. He told Saul: ‘Then the Spirit of the Lord will come upon you, and you shall prophesy with them, and you shall be turned into another man’ (1 Kg./1 Sam. 10:6). The Holy Spirit would regenerate him and make him different. There would be a change in Saul's soul and in his life...

We should ask God to give us the Holy Spirit and that the Holy Spirit may act within our heart. This is the aim of the spiritual life. Christ was clothed in flesh so that man might be clothed in the Spirit. The purpose of the spiritual life is for us to receive the Holy Spirit. However, we need to prepare ourselves for this and follow the right path. Saul would not have reached the point of receiving the Holy Spirit without the Prophet Samuel. It is the deified spiritual father who will lead us to fulfil the purpose for which we were created. At the same time, however, we must regard the gifts of God with boundless reverence and awe. What is needed is not pride, but the most profound

humility, because spiritual mistakes have eternal consequences that may be irreparable.”

Saul's Discernment

* * *

“Saul received great grace from God. He received the Holy Spirit and his heart changed, so that he too began to prophesy, to pray and to worship God together with the band of Prophets. In spite of this, he was unable to retain this grace of God or to utilise it in the best way. The fact is that, as the holy Fathers teach, the disobedient, the proud, the selfish, the resentful and generally those who live carelessly lose God's grace.

It is a great blessing for someone consciously to receive the grace of God within his heart. He must, however, struggle to preserve God's grace and to keep God's gift. It is a privilege for someone to be a Christian, but he should not rest content with that. He should go on to be a real Christian and to express it in his life and all his conduct.”

Saul's Two Sins

* * *

“Saul went from one fall to another. He was disobedient to God's will and to the Prophet Samuel; he lost the Holy Spirit and an evil spirit entered him, so that he fell into melancholy; he was overwhelmed by the passion of anger and attempted to kill not only David but also his own son Jonathan; he resorted to a medium, a woman with a divining spirit, and so came into contact with evil spirits; and, of course, he was finally driven by evil spirits to commit suicide. Thus he lost divine grace and the kingdom in a tragic manner.”

Saul's Final Fall and Samuel's Grief