

“One-Eye’d Christians!”

I. **INTRO:**

- A. **Troop 412** of the *California Inland Empire Council* was started by the Ghironzi family as a distinctly Christian Troop. The Troop number is significant as it represents the **Troop 412 theme verse**, which is 1Tim4:12, **Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.**
1. Please remain seated as the color guard posts the colors.
- B. **Independence Day** commemorates the adoption of *the Declaration of Independence* on July 4, 1776, declaring our independence from the Kingdom of Great Britain.
- C. **John Adams** wrote to his wife **Abigail**: The 2nd day of July, 1776, will be the most memorable epoch in the history of America. I am apt to believe that it will be celebrated by succeeding generations as the great anniversary festival. It ought to be commemorated as the day of deliverance, by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with pomp & parade, with shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires, & illuminations, from one end of this continent to the other, from this time forward forever more.

II. **ONE-EYE’D CHRISTIANS!**

- A. **CRISIS - A COVENANT W/A SERPENT!** (1-11)
- B. **Read** 1-11; **Then show Keynote**(#’s 1-9).
1. Let me read from the **Dead Sea Scrolls** *from cave 4 at Qumran*.
 - a) “Now Nahash, the king of the Ammonites, had been oppressing the Gadites & the Reubenites, gouging out the right eye of each of them & allowing Israel no deliverer. No men of the Israelites who were across the Jordan remained whose right eye Nahash, king of the Ammonites, had not gouged out. But 7000 men had escaped from the Ammonites & entered into Jabesh-Gilead.”
 - b) Maybe that’s why he’s called “*snake-man*”! [Nahash=serpent]
- C. (1) **Nahash** (serpent)- a cruel Ammonite King surrounds the Israelite town of *Jabesh-gilead*.
1. When the people ask for a peace treaty, he demands they allow him to gouge out the right eye of every citizen.
 - a) This was both **arrogant & cruel**. **He had supreme confidence in himself..so he gives them 7 days**. He just knew the tribes West of the Jordan were too disunited to be able to raise an army in 7 days.
 2. This group of Semitic people appear also in the Book of Judges, where they are seen to be **Bedouins**.
 - a) They live on the fringe of the desert & continually raiding the more civilized area.

- D. Some people respond to crisis by **giving in!** (1-3) [Ok, b back in 7 days so you can poke our eyes out!]
 Some people respond to crisis by **giving up!** (4) [wept]
 Some people respond to crisis by **gettin er done!** (5-11) [Larry the cable guy, “get er done”]
- E. (5) Its 1 thing to have **authority & ability** quite something else to **prove yourself a leader**.
 1. So, **how do you rally a whole country together?**
 2. **Nothing better than a common enemy!** (we saw this at 9/11; Osama Bin Laden)
- F. (6) The news became the fulcrum on which Saul established his kingdom.
 1. **God** empowered Saul to fight the battle & win.
- G. (6,7) A **furious & spirit-filled** Saul, sends out **a call to arms** & **gathers** an army to fight.
 1. The **Spirit of Yahweh** came upon him, & flooded his being w/a spirit of **courage & enthusiasm**. [*Is there not a cause?* David to big brother]
 a) He suddenly became aware of a new ability to **size up a situation; determine what needed to be done; & inspire others to follow him w/confidence**.
 2. He takes **symbolic action** by cutting up 2 of his fathers oxen, sending the dismembered pieces throughout Israel, & declaring that he would do likewise to **the oxen** of any cowardly fellow countrymen.
 a) **Keynote:** I did find a **before & after** photo of this! (#’s 10-12)
- H. (7) Then **the dread of Yahweh** came upon them, & as 1 man they gathered together at Bezek. [Bezek: 15 west of Jabesh-Gilead, yet situated in a valley surrounded by hills so Ammonites would have seen them coming]
- I. (11) **The morning watch** (3-6am) - As the sun began to peak over the hills of Bashan, Saul wo had divided his forces into 3 groups, launched his attack.
 1. For 6 hours they relentlessly slaughtered the enemy.
- J. The men of Jabesh-gilead, who had expected to spend that night in **humiliation & agony** were able to **rejoice greatly** in God’s goodness to them.
 1. The men of Jabesh-Gilead never forgot that day. (explain Ch.31)
- K. **CONFIRMATION - A COVENANT WITH GOD!** (12-15)
- L. (12,13) It can be as dangerous **after the Victory** as it is **during the battle**, for Saul was tempted to get rid of his critics. (see also 10:27)
 1. **How many young men & women returning from doing a tour in Iraq or Afghanistan have more problems upon their return?** [Now doin multiple tours]
 2. Here Saul gives **God the glory** & did not use his authority & success as weapons to attack his own people.

- M. **Saul began well.** During his first 2 years he is a man of God, humble, zealous for the honor of God and the salvation of His people.
1. **First**, he is **elected by the sovereign choice of God** as prince over God's people; From the very beginning he reveals his true humility.
 2. **Second**, Saul is **transformed by the Spirit of God**. He was made "another man". He was given a "new heart". The Spirit of God came upon him mightily. He prophesied under the power of God's Spirit. All who knew him before his conversion were amazed at his spiritual transformation.
 3. **Third**, he displays an amazing trust in God to **glorify Him** as His appointed king. He refuses to exalt himself.
 4. **Fourth**, he reveals his **zeal for the name of Yahweh & the salvation of His people** in his victory through the power of the Holy Spirit over the Ammonites.
 5. **Fifth**, he **refuses to take vengeance** upon those who opposed him. He chooses to **glorify** the Lord instead.
 6. **Sixth**, because of Saul's exemplary conduct, **all Israel reaffirms its covenant with God**.
 - a) Saul brings the whole nation back to God. **Here** is a king after God's own heart who will bring nothing but blessings to the people of God...*well, for 1 more chapter!*
- N. (14,15) **Samuel had the right idea**: it was time to renew their covenant with the Lord.
- O. **Come, let us go to Gilgal** - NIV "*Come, let us go to Gilgal and there reaffirm the kingship.*"
1. **Gilgal** was the **1st place** the people had camped after being led into Canaan by Joshua.
 2. **Gilgal** was the place where they set up the **12 stones** taken from the dry bed of the Jordan River as a testimony to what the Lord had done for them^(Josh 4:-1-11)
 3. **Gilgal** was also the **tabernacle site** during the early conquest of the Land.
 - a) Samuel was in effect making it a **2nd Ebenezer!** For here was another **reminder of the way in which the Lord Helped them!**
- P. **Calvary Murrieta, Come, let us go to Gilgal!** Let's renew our covenant with God.
1. This morning do you need to **reaffirm the kingship, Jesus as King of your life?**
- Q. Do the **Crises** God permits in your life strengthen your faith?
- R. Do you use the **Victories** He gives to glorify Him & help others?
- S. **On this Independence Day** is there anything you need to declare your **Independence from?** (sin)
1. Is there **Someone** you need to declare your **dependence to?** (God)

2. Someone to pledge your allegiance to? (God)

- T. **Show Keynote**(#s 13-16): Declaration of Independence! [*maybe you'll want to sign it today?*]
1. Bob Hermsted has in the past asked his *Bound for Glory ministry* (ministry for addictions on Tues nights), to sign this document together. Listen/ look as I read their *Declaration of Independence*. (read)
 2. **When**, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary to break off the bonds of sin & addiction, it is important to explain why to those who know us. Habits of behavior, even destructive ones, become comfortable over time; breaking such a habit can be difficult & painful. We choose to do this because of our hope & belief in a new & better life as Christians. (flip)
 3. **We** hold these truths to be self evident, that we are created by God in His image, & that God gave us the liberty to choose. Whether we choose foolishly or wisely is up to us. For too long, we foolishly chose to be slaves to the world, serving the sin of addiction. Though this addiction gave us selfish pleasure, it caused great harm to our families, our friends & our relationship w/God. (flip)
 4. **By** confessing this sin to God, we know that we are forgiven through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, & that, with the help of the Holy Spirit, we can go forward towards the life God intended for us.
We now chose to be servants of God & friends of Jesus Christ. We exercise our God-given liberty to declare our independence from the world, its sins, & its temptations. So help us God.
Signed: July 4th 2010 _____ (flip)

III. Communion:

- A. Invite up the worship Team & ask ushers to get ready for communion.
- B. One of the most famous lines in *The Declaration of Independence*: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created **equal**, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are **Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness**.”
 1. This sentence has been called "1 of the **best-known** sentences in the English language" & "the most **potent** and **consequential** words in American history".
- C. **Jesus** came to give us *eternal Life, true Liberty from sin & ourselves, & to show us the way to pursue true joy & happiness*.
 1. May the **Bread** remind us this morning of: the **Life Jesus** gives; the **Liberty Jesus** brings; & the **Joy Jesus** shares with us.
 2. May the **Cup** remind us to *give thanks for* our redemption, our nation, our church, our families,