

## **Dr. Robert Chisholm, 1 & 2 Samuel, Session 7, 1 Samuel 9-10**

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This is Dr. Bob Chisholm in his teaching on the books of 1 and 2 Samuel. This is session 7 on 1 Samuel 9-10. Meet Israel's New King.

Today, in this lesson, we're going to be looking at 1st Samuel chapters nine and 10. If you recall, in our previous lesson, which covered 1st Samuel chapter eight, Israel asked for a king. This was disappointing because, in 1 Samuel 7, Israel had repented of their sins and their idolatry.

They'd thrown away their Ba'al idols and they had returned to the Lord and the Lord had given them a great deliverance from the Philistines. So, this was a high point in Israel's history and in their relationship to the Lord. But as is so often the case in the Old Testament, after a spiritual high, there sometimes is a major letdown.

And that occurs in 1 Samuel chapter eight when Israel comes to Samuel and says, we want a king, and not just any king, but we want a king like all the nations have. And what we discover is that Israel is very concerned about their national security. The Ammonites are creating some problems on the east side of the Jordan.

Israel feels threatened and they want a king that they can look at with a standing army to deliver them. The Lord regards this as a rejection of his rule. For a long time, he had been protecting Israel, raising up armies as the need arose.

We see that throughout the book of Judges. But the Israelites were not satisfied with this. They wanted a king like all the nations, with a standing army, with horses and chariots.

They would feel more secure in this situation. So, the Lord felt like this was a rejection of his kingship. And surprisingly, he tells Samuel, to give them what they want, but before you do that, warn them.

And so, in 1 Samuel 8, Samuel warns the Israelites about what kingship will involve and entail. The consequences will not be good. They may think they're getting security, but a king will prove to be oppressive.

Ancient Near Eastern kings were oppressive. The king needed to sustain his army and so he would take crops, children, and possessions from the Israelites. And in the end, they would curse the king that they had asked for.

So, Samuel warned them about what kingship would eventually mean for them. But nevertheless, the Israelites insisted upon having a king and the Lord told Samuel, to give them the king that they wanted. It sounds as if the Lord is ready to reject his people and just give them over to their foolish desires and requests.

Interestingly, Samuel doesn't do that right away. It's as if he says, okay, everyone to their corners. And he tells the people to go home.

He doesn't begin to give them a king. He just tells the people to go home. And it almost seems as if he's disobeying the Lord.

But I think this is a form of intercession where Samuel is giving the Lord an opportunity to reconsider, perhaps. And if this seems theologically problematic, remember that Moses did the same thing with the Lord. When the Lord came to Moses and said, leave me alone.

I'm going to destroy the people. Moses said you don't want to do that. And the Lord relented.

And that happens a couple of times in the Pentateuch. So that brings us to 1 Samuel chapter 9. We're not sure exactly what's going to happen here. Israel has been sent home by Samuel.

They want this king. The Lord has basically said, well, give them the king they want. And so, we're a little unclear as to what exactly is going to happen if we're reading the story for the first time.

So, in 1 Samuel 9:1, we're introduced to a Benjaminite from the tribe of Benjamin whose name is Kish. And he has a son. And his son's name is Shaul or Saul as it's pronounced in English.

Saul is a handsome young man. And he's very, very tall. He looks like he would make a good king.

If we're looking at things from the strictly superficial human perspective, Saul looks king-like. Handsome, tall. It's interesting that his name is Shaul because in Hebrew, that name means asked for.

And Israel in chapter 8 has asked for. In fact, the Hebrew verb that's used there, Sha'al, is the same verb from which Saul's name is derived. And so, they've asked for a king.

Later in 1 Samuel 12, the prophet is going to refer to Saul as the king for whom they asked. And Israel is going to repent of their sins at that point and say, we sinned in

asking for a king. So, Saul's very name, Sha'ul, "the asked for one," is going to be a constant reminder of Israel's sin in asking for a king like all the nations.

But we're introduced to Saul. The story moves very slowly at first. And this is by design.

We discover that Saul's father has some donkeys. And these donkeys are lost. They've wandered off.

They're stray donkeys. And so, he sends his son Saul along with one of the servants to go and retrieve the donkeys. And they're going all through the hill country of Ephraim and looking for these donkeys and just unable to find them.

They come back into the territory of Benjamin, but they could not find the donkeys. And so, they reach a certain point and Saul says to his servant, come on, we need to go back home. We need to give up on trying to find these donkeys.

My father's going to start worrying about us. We've been gone for so long. But the servant says, no, no, no.

There's a town over here. And in that town is a man of God. That phrase refers to a prophet.

And we're going to discover as we read through here that Samuel is the one he's referring to, the prophet. He's highly respected. Everything he says comes true.

So, the servant is suggesting, let's go and consult the prophet. He can tell us where the donkeys are and we can fulfill our mission. But Saul is hesitant to do this.

And he says, well if we go, what will we pay him? And the servant says, well, I've got a little money and we can give that to him. And so, you're forced to ask as you're reading this little story, why is this here? I mean, it's always good to ask that question when you're reading the Old Testament narrative because everything is here for a purpose. And it just seems like a lot of detail here that we don't really need.

But I think a couple of things are going on. What we're seeing is God's providence is at work. Even though Saul just seems to be sort of random in his search for the donkeys, God is overseeing all of this and God has led him to the prophet Samuel.

The prophet Samuel is going to anoint Saul as king over Israel in a private ceremony here in chapter 9. So, God's providence is at work, but also, we see characterization involved here. The author is characterizing Saul for us. Throughout the story to follow, Saul is going to be portrayed as one who is hesitant.

He is one who is going to impede action rather than further the action. And this is often the case in a show on TV or a movie. You might have a scene at the beginning that its function is mainly to give you a feel for the main character in the story and what they're like.

And that's what's going on here. So already we're seeing Saul as someone who is hesitant, someone who is not really spiritually in tune with what's going on. The servant knows that there's a prophet here.

Saul doesn't seem to know that. And even then, his first question is, well what will we pay him? As if the servants of the Lord are in it for the money. He just doesn't seem to quite be tuned in to what is going on in Israel at this time.

It's also interesting when the servant says, everything he says comes true. This is a case of foreshadowing. You may have seen this in watching movies or reading novels.

There are often scenes that foreshadow later scenes. And you really don't appreciate it until you watch the movie the second time or you read the story the second time. A second time reading this story, that would really stick out.

Everything he says comes true. Because as the story unfolds, Samuel is going to say a lot of things to Saul. And eventually, unfortunately, because of Saul's disobedience, Samuel is going to have to tell Saul, the Lord has rejected you as king.

He has rejected your dynasty first. We're going to see that in 1 Samuel chapter 13. And then he is going to reject the individual Saul as king in 1 Samuel chapter 15.

Everything the prophet says comes true. And so that's going to prove to be very foreboding for Saul. The second time through the story, you would pick up on this.

At this point, you're just thinking, well, the servant is thinking of the donkeys. And so, the prophet can tell us where the donkeys are. And it'll be true information and we'll be able to find them.

But there's more to it than that as the story proceeds. So, they go to find Samuel, the prophet. And as they're going into the town in 1 Samuel chapter 9 verse 11, they meet some young women who are coming out to draw water.

And they ask these young ladies, where is the seer? The text tells us that back in the days of Saul, prophets were referred to as seers, ones who get visions from the Lord. And they say, well, he's ahead of you. He's come to our town today to draw water, to offer a sacrifice, and to hold a feast.

And then they say to Saul and the servant, the people will not begin eating this feast until he comes, because he must bless the sacrifice. Afterward, those who are invited will eat. So go up now, you should find him.

Another case of foreshadowing in the story. These young ladies, simply in passing, they say, oh, he's up there. The prophet's here.

You're in luck. He's here today, and you'll be able to find him. And they're getting ready to hold the feast and have a sacrifice.

And everyone will wait until he comes because he must first bless the sacrifice. Another case of foreshadowing, because in 1 Samuel chapter 13, what is Saul going to do? If you're familiar with the story, he is going to wait for seven days, as Samuel told him. But then when the seven days are up and Samuel hasn't arrived, Saul is going to go ahead and offer the sacrifice.

Samuel never told him, if I don't get there in time, you have the freedom to offer the sacrifice yourself. No, no, no. Even when Samuel was late, Saul should have waited.

It was almost like a test for Saul. And he failed. But he should have remembered the words of the young ladies.

We don't do anything until the prophet comes and blesses the sacrifice. You don't get to freelance Saul. So, second time around, reading through the story, you'd pick up on this again.

Saul was kind of told about Samuel's status and his importance, and yet he violates this in 1 Samuel 13, and it gets him into big trouble. So, they go into the town and they run into Samuel. And then we discover that this is all by divine design.

As I said before, God's providence is at work here. God's providence simply refers to the fact that he's pulling the strings in human history. It's not that we're robots and we're all just playing out some script and we have no free will, but working with human freedom and circumstances, God brings about the events that he wants to transpire.

And he has already told Samuel the day before, there's a fellow coming. He's from the tribe of Benjamin, and I want you to anoint him ruler over my people Israel. And he will deliver them from the hand of the Philistines.

I have looked on my people, for their cry has reached me. That's in 1 Samuel 9, verse 16, and it is a very important passage because the Lord says to the prophet, I want you to anoint him ruler over my people Israel. And the word that the Lord uses for ruler here is the Hebrew word Nagid.

It is not the word king that was used in chapter 8, Melek. The people wanted a Melek, a king like all the nations. And the Lord on that occasion told Samuel, go ahead and give them the king that they want.

Samuel, I don't think, liked that, and so he said to the people, go home. Now the Lord is speaking again, and he's speaking in a different way. It's as if the Lord has decided I am not going to give them over to their foolish desire, at least completely.

I'll give them a ruler, but I'm not going to call him a Melek. He's going to be a Nagid. And I think in this context, in contrast to Melek, a Nagid, ruler, is one who is going to, yes, rule over the people, but he is going to almost be like a vice-regent under the Lord's authority.

It's clear here the Lord is not going to surrender control of his people. His initial reaction seemed to suggest that he would. He is not going to do that, according to this passage.

He's going to give Israel a Nagid, a ruler. And also, the Lord refers to Israel as my people. In chapter 8, he just referred to them as the people.

They had pulled away from the Lord. They had rejected his authority. They had alienated themselves from him.

But now the Lord is speaking, they are my people. And so, it's clear at this point, if there was any ambiguity at the end of chapter 8, the Lord is not surrendering authority and control over his people. He regards them as his people, and he is going to choose a vice-regent to rule over them, to take care of them, but to serve under his authority.

And he states a specific purpose here. He wants this ruler to deliver his people from the hand of the Philistines. So, it's quite clear what Saul's primary role is going to be.

The Lord wants to save his people from the hand of the Philistines. He says, I've looked on my people, and their cry has reached me. So what we see here is, even though God's people had disobeyed and rebelled against him and rejected him really as king, they wanted a human king that they could look at with a standing army, they really rejected the Lord as king, the Lord still has compassion on them.

He looks at my people, he says. Their cry has reached me. And they have a legitimate need.

Israel needs to be secure. And there are enemies roundabout. And the Lord is compassionate toward them, and he is going to provide their very real need in spite of the fact that they had rejected him as king.

So when Samuel catches sight of Saul, the Lord says to him, this is the man I spoke to you about. He will govern my people. And that's an interesting verb that's used there.

He will govern my people. It's the Hebrew verb *atzar*, which means to withhold or detain or restrain. It's not the word *rule*, *malach*, or *mashal*, or one of those terms that refer to rulership.

And so once again, we get insight into what the Lord wants this ruler to do and how he's going to function. His job is going to, as it were, reign the people in, to govern them, to restrain them, so that they won't go too far. This is, of course, in line with the idea of kingship that we see in Deuteronomy 17, where the king is supposed to be a spiritual leader.

And so I think that's what the Lord intends for this ruler to do. He intends for Saul to restrain his people, as it were, to keep them from going outside the boundaries. So, this is good news if we're reading the story here for the first time.

We see that the Lord has not rejected his people, that he still considers them his covenant nation, and he is raising up a *Nagid*, a vice-regent, to govern them and to deliver them from their enemies, the Philistines, and also to restrain the people from going outside the boundaries. And so, what happens in the rest of chapter 9 is Saul and Samuel meet, and Samuel assures Saul, don't worry about those donkeys that you lost three days ago. Don't worry about them.

They've been found. And then he says to Saul in chapter 9 verse 20, and to whom is all the desire of Israel turned, if not to you and your whole family line? And Saul answers, and even though Saul is not really spiritually tuned in in the first part of this chapter, it would seem, I think he is aware of the fact that Israel asked for a king. That must have been big news.

He's aware of what transpired in chapter 8, and he understands, I think, what Samuel is suggesting here. The desire of Israel is turned toward you, which is kind of anticipating what's happening, but he's essentially telling Saul, the Lord has chosen you to be the king. And Saul balks at this.

Once again, he's hesitant. He tends to impede the action. He's going to sound very much like Gideon, the Judge Gideon, in this account.

And that's not good, by the way. Gideon is not presented in a positive light in Judges chapter 6. He hesitates. And Saul says, but am I not a Benjamite from the smallest tribe of Israel, and is not my clan the least of all the clans of the tribe of Benjamin? Why do you say such a thing to me? So, Saul's response is, who am I? I'm from an insignificant clan, the most insignificant of tribes.

Why would God want to do anything through me? And of course, he's showing ignorance of Israel's past. The Lord will, in the case of Jacob, choose Jacob over Esau. How significant your tribe is, or your family is, is irrelevant.

The Lord delights to work through those who are seemingly not qualified. We see that in Judges as well. He accomplishes great things through people who are seemingly nothing, and have nothing to offer.

And so that is not a legitimate response. He's hesitant like Moses was like Gideon was. But then Samuel brings Saul into the hall.

There are several people there. They have a meal. Saul dines with Samuel.

And then in verse 25, after they come down from the high place to the town, Samuel talks with Saul on the roof of his house. And then he tells him, I am going to send you away. But before he sends him away, he tells him that I have a message from God for you.

And that brings us to chapter 10. Samuel takes a flask of olive oil and pours it on Saul's head, and then kisses him. And says, has not the Lord anointed you as ruler? Actually, in our English translations, most of them include a very brief statement by Samuel at this point, NIV, has not the Lord anointed you ruler over his inheritance.

But I think in this particular case the ancient Greek version of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, preserves the original reading. And we can't get too technical here, but I think if you look at the text carefully, you'll see that what has happened, the scribe has made an accidental mistake in the Hebrew textual tradition and some extra material has been accidentally omitted. Fortunately, the Septuagint preserves the original text in this case.

And many commentators will agree with what I'm saying here. But I think the original text was a little longer, and I think this is what it said. Has not the Lord anointed you as leader over his people Israel? You will govern the Lord's people and you will deliver them from the hand of their enemies who surround them.

This will be your sign that the Lord has anointed you as leader over his inheritance. And if you take that Greek and retrovert it back into Hebrew, you'll see some of those same keywords that we focused on in chapter 9 showing up here. In other



words, Samuel is now communicating to Saul what the Lord had told him before Saul arrived in chapter 9. That word *nagid* is going to show up here, translated as leader.

And the word *govern* or *restrain* is going to show up as well. So, Samuel is clearly communicating to Saul how he is supposed to be functioning. You're going to be a vice-regent.

Your job is to restrain the people lead them and deliver them from their enemies. And so, I think this longer version of Samuel's statement preserved in the Septuagint is the original text. He also mentions this will be your sign that the Lord has anointed you as leader.

And that leads us nicely into verses 2 and following where we're going to have this threefold sign that the Lord is going to give to Saul. And so, Samuel says, you've been chosen as king and I've anointed you here privately. Of course, there's going to be a public ceremony later, but for now, this private anointing assures Saul that he is the chosen one.

And then Samuel says to him, and the Lord's going to give you a sign that all of this is true. And he lays out this sign for him in verses 2 and following. He says, when you leave me today, you'll meet two men near Rachel's tomb.

And they're going to say to you, the donkeys you set out to look for have been found. And now your father has stopped thinking about them and is worried about you. He's asking, what shall I do about my son? So, the first thing that's going to happen, Saul, is as you leave, you're going to run into these men and they are going to talk to you about the donkeys.

And this is a sign in the sense that it will show Saul that God is in control of things. If a prophet were to tell me right now, when you leave this building today, you're going to run into some individuals and they are going to bring up this topic. If that were to happen, I think I would sit up and take notice.

I would say, whoa, I think that prophet knew something. God is in control of the situation here. But that's just the first part of this sign.

Samuel then says, then you will go on from there until you reach the great tree of Tabor. And three men are going to encounter you there. They're going to be going up to worship.

They're going to meet you. They're going to be loaded down with goats and bread and a skin of wine. And they're going to greet you and they're going to offer you two loaves of bread, which you will accept from them.

So, you're going to go out. The first group of people that you're going to meet are going to talk to you about the donkeys. Then you're going to run into some other folks who are on their way to worship and they're going to offer you two loaves of bread.

So, the first sign would be enough to get my attention. But then when the second thing that the prophet says will happen comes true, that would really get my attention. That would show me, yes, God is orchestrating things in my experience.

The prophet knows. The prophet can see the future because the Lord is giving him that ability and the Lord is in control of these events. And so, these first two signs are designed to show Saul that God is providentially in control.

After that, it's not finished yet, there's a third phase of this. In verse 5, after that, you will go to Gibeah of God where there's a Philistine outpost. Or maybe there's some debate as to what that word means, maybe a Philistine prefect.

The Philistines are there. They've got a garrison there. And so isn't it interesting that Samuel reminds Saul there are Philistines there?

And of course, we know that Saul's job is to deliver Israel from the enemies of God specifically the Philistines. As you approach the town, you will meet a procession of prophets coming down from the high place with lyres, timbrels, pipes, and harps being played before them. And they will be prophesying.

So, a group of prophets shows up playing music and prophesying away. And then the Spirit of the Lord will come powerfully upon you, just as he did Samson in the old days. The same language is used here by the way.

And you will prophesy with them and you will be changed into a different person. Once these signs are fulfilled, Samuel says in verse 7, do whatever your hand finds to do, for God is with you. So, the third phase of this is supernatural intervention.

The first two phases of this sign involve just proof that God is in control providentially. People are going to say things that you wouldn't necessarily have been able to predict. They're going to give you bread.

But the third phase, the Spirit of God is actually going to empower you. And you are going to be controlled by the Spirit just like the prophets are. And this will be a sign to you that I have chosen you and I am empowering you to do your task.

And Samuel's words sound a little vague, whatever your hand finds to do, do it, for God is with you. Well, what did God expect him to do? Well, especially if we go back and look at that longer version of the commission at the beginning of chapter 10

that's preserved in the Septuagint, Saul should know, my job is to deliver Israel from the enemies of God. More specifically, God had told Samuel from the Philistines.

And Samuel reminds Saul, by the way, there are Philistines there. Where this is going to happen, there's a Philistine outpost. So, when God empowers you like he does his prophets, you need to do whatever your hand finds to do, for God is with you.

I think what the Lord is telling Saul to do is I expect you to get with the program immediately. You need to attack that Philistine outpost. We're going to begin the deliverance of Israel, like right now.

You will be empowered like Samson of old and you need to get about the business of being the deliverer of Israel. I've chosen you to do this. We're going to deal with this Philistine problem.

And then Samuel says, do whatever you're supposed to do. And I think he's telling Saul you need to attack the Philistine outpost. But then go down ahead of me, verse 8, to Gilgal, and I will surely come down to you to sacrifice burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, but you must wait seven days until I come to you and tell you what you are to do.

So once Saul has done whatever his hand has found to do, I think that's a military action, then Saul is to go down to Gilgal and wait for Samuel for seven days. Samuel will come and offer a sacrifice and will give Saul further instructions as to what the Lord wants him to do, probably following up on his initial charge against the Philistines. So, what's Saul going to do? Well, in verse 9, Saul turns to leave Samuel and God changes Saul's heart.

And all these signs were fulfilled that day. So, it happened just as the prophet had said. And when he and his servant arrived at Gibeah, there were the prophets.

The Spirit of God came powerfully upon him. He joined in their prophesying. It was so obvious that Saul had been changed.

People noticed it and they said, what is this that has happened to the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets? And so, people noticed that Saul had been changed. So, what's Saul going to do now? Well, in verse 13, after Saul stopped prophesying, he went to the high place. So, this appears to be what his hand found to do.

Now you might be thinking, well that's okay, it's always good to worship God and maybe he's going to worship God, pray, and then go out and attack the Philistines. No, that's not what happens. He just goes up and apparently worships.

And this once again is a characterization of Saul that we're going to continue to see. Saul seems to be obsessed at times with religious ritual, with sacrifices and vows and things of that nature. And that becomes primary for him rather than simple obedience to the Lord.

And so, Saul does not do what Samuel suggested strongly that he do. He did not attack the Philistine outpost. He doesn't go to Gilgal.

That's not part until later. And he runs into his uncle there at the high place apparently. Now Saul's uncle asked him and his servant, where have you been? Looking for the donkeys, he said.

But when we saw that they were not to be found, we went to Samuel. And Saul's uncle said, tell me what Samuel said to you. Saul's uncle is fishing for information here.

And Saul replied he assured us that the donkeys had been found. But he did not tell his uncle what Samuel had said about the kingship. I don't see an individual here in Saul who is grabbing hold of God's commission to him.

I don't see that. He's hesitant. He's going to prove to be this kind of person in these early days.

And he's hesitant when he shouldn't be. Sometimes he's not hesitant when he should be more cautious. He just seems to constantly be going counter to what God wants.

And so, he doesn't tell his uncle anything about being chosen as king and he doesn't do what Samuel had suggested that he should do. And so, we're wondering, what kind of king is this person going to be and what is going to happen next? Well, in verse 17, Samuel summons the people of Israel to the Lord at Mizpah. Remember, the people had been waiting.

They were sent home earlier. They wanted a king, like all the nations. And Samuel warned them about what that king would do and then he sent them home.

And so apparently they've been waiting for an official summons. And finally, Samuel summons the people of Israel to the Lord at Mizpah. And he says to them, this is what the Lord, the God of Israel says.

And he reminds them of what the Lord has done for them. I, actually Samuel's quoting the Lord here, I brought Israel up out of Egypt and I delivered you from the power of Egypt and all the kingdoms that oppressed you. But you have now rejected your God who saves you out of all your disasters and calamities.

And you have said, no, appoint a king over us. And he quotes the people at this point. They use the word Melech, king.

No, appoint a king over us. So now present yourselves before the Lord by your tribes and clans. Actually, this sounds like a judgment speech to me.

And I'm not the only one who has observed this. The Lord says, here's what I have done for you. But you have rejected your God who saves you.

So now come before the Lord. But the Lord doesn't judge them. It doesn't seem as if he does anyway.

But instead, he gives them Saul. But some have suggested, and I think they may be correct, this is a form of judgment. Saul is not going to be a good leader.

And eventually, kingship is not going to work out well for Israel. Samuel warned them that eventually, their king would bring them trouble. And so, in a sense, this is a form of judgment.

The Lord had delivered you in the past. You rejected him as king. You demanded a king like all the nations.

And okay, as a form of judgment, he's going to give you what you wanted. And so Samuel brings all of Israel before him. The tribe of Benjamin is chosen by Lot.

And they narrow it down and down and down until finally, Kish's son Saul is chosen by Lot. The Lord would work through this Lot experience to accomplish his will. It was a cultural thing that he accommodated himself to.

So, they inquired further of the Lord, has the man come here yet? And the Lord said, yes, he has hidden himself among the supplies. So, Saul is chosen as king officially, and publicly, but there's no Saul. He's not to be found.

He's hiding among the baggage. So, we see, what we suspected earlier in the chapter is definitely true here. Saul is not crazy about the idea of becoming king.

When Samuel first mentioned it to him, he said, who am I? When Samuel said, once the signs are fulfilled, go, do what the Lord has empowered you to do, he doesn't do that. He just goes up to the high place and worships. When his uncle starts the probe, he doesn't say anything about being a king.

And here he has come to the event, but he's hiding. So, they ran and brought him out, and he stood taller than all the people. And Samuel says to all the people, do you see the man the Lord has chosen? There is no one like him among all the people.

He looks very king-like, doesn't he? And the Lord has chosen him. Notice that Samuel doesn't say, do you see the king? Long live the king. That's the language the people use.

But Samuel says the Lord has chosen him. They, in a sense, had chosen a king, but in this particular case, the Lord decided who the individual would be. And this kind of alludes back to Deuteronomy 17, where the Lord says when you ask for a king like all the nations, I'm not going to give you that.

I am going to choose the one that I want, and that's what's happening here. The people shout, though, Long live the king. So, Samuel is reminding them the Lord is the one who does the choosing.

In verse 25, Samuel explained to the people the rights and duties of kingship. He wrote them down on a scroll and deposited it before the Lord. Then Samuel dismissed the people to go to their own homes.

So, one question that interpreters have wrestled with here is, what is meant by the rights and duties of kingship? And there's some debate on this. We won't get into all the ins and outs, but I do believe that what Samuel is doing here is he is reminding the people of God's rules and regulations for kingship. And those can be found in Deuteronomy chapter 17.

We've alluded to this passage a couple of times in our discussion in this lesson, but I think it would be wise for us to go back and read Deuteronomy chapter 17, beginning with verse 14, to refresh our memories on the kind of king that God is going to give to Israel. Deuteronomy 17.14, when you enter the land the Lord your God is giving you, and have taken possession of it and settled in it, and you say, let us set a king over us like all the nations around us. So, Moses anticipated in Deuteronomy 17 the day that arrived in 1 Samuel 8, where Israel said, we want a king like all the nations.

And here's what Moses says, when that day comes, be sure to appoint over you a king the Lord your God chooses. So, the Lord has sovereignty in this thing. You have to look to him for a decision.

He must be from among your fellow Israelites. Do not place a foreigner over you who is not an Israelite. The king, moreover, must not acquire great numbers of horses for himself.

Why would he do that? He'd want horses to draw chariots. And the major armies of the ancient Near East during this time period had horses and chariots. But the Lord says, your king will not do that.

We're not going to have horses and chariots. You can trace this horse and chariot theme all the way through the Bible. Starting with the Red Sea, where the Egyptian horses and chariots come out and the Lord destroys them.

Right on into the conquest period, where the Canaanites have horses and chariots, the Lord defeats them. In Judges chapters 4 and 5, Sisera and his 900 iron chariots, the Lord defeats them. This comes up in the prophets, in the wisdom literature, and in the Psalms.

Horses and chariots do not provide security and deliverance. The Lord does. So this king is not going to be like the kings of the nations or make the people return to Egypt to get more of them, referring to the horses.

For the Lord has told you, you are not to go back that way again. He must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray. So the Israelite king is not supposed to have a big harem, or foreign wives.

They would sometimes marry foreign wives to solidify alliances and that sort of thing. Nope, the Israelite king is not going to do that. He must not accumulate large amounts of silver and gold, and use his position to make him wealthy.

Lots of times they would use silver and gold in alliances. If there were a more powerful king, they would pay him off, they would pay tribute. We are not going to do that.

So, it is obvious in Deuteronomy 17, that when the people ask for a king like all the nations, you can give them a king that the Lord chooses, but he is not going to be like all the nations. He is not going to accumulate horses and chariots, women, and money. No.

When he takes the throne of the kingdom, verse 18, he is to write for himself on a scroll a copy of this law, taken from that of the Levitical priests. It is to be with him, and he is to read it all the days of his life, so that he may learn to revere the Lord his God, and follow carefully all the words of this law and these decrees, and not consider himself better than his fellow Israelites, and turn from the law to the right or to the left. Then he and his descendants will reign for a long time over his kingdom in Israel.

So that is the kind of king that God wants his people to have. And I believe that back in 1 Samuel chapter 10, verse 25 when Samuel explains to the people the rights and

duties of kingship, he is reminding them of what Deuteronomy 17 said. So the Lord, yes, you can shout, Long live the king, but realize the kind of king the Lord is giving you is not a king like all the nations.

The Lord is going to continue to maintain control. Of course, the irony is, that as people disobey God, Solomon really became a king like all the nations. It is going to disintegrate into a situation that is very much like the nations, and in the passing of time, Israelite kings are going to look like that, and that is going to prove to be oppressive to the nation.

And you can read about all this in the books of Kings. Well, Saul went to his house in Gibeah, accompanied by valiant men whose hearts God had touched. But there are some scoundrels.

In the Hebrew, it is sons of Belial, worthless sons. There are some scoundrels, and they say, how can this fellow save us? They are not satisfied with what has happened here. And you might think initially, well, they saw Saul's hesitation.

This guy, he may be tall, he may be good looking, but he doesn't look very king-like to me, hiding in the baggage. They may be referring to that, but I think there is more to it than that. They heard Samuel lay out the rules of kingship, and they realized, this is not what we asked for.

And they despised him and brought him no gifts. But Saul kept silent. So that brings us to the conclusion of this lesson, and I think in summary, we could sort of call 1 Samuel 9 and 10, to meet Israel's new king.

But we could also have a title, watch out what you ask for. We see a couple of major themes emerge here. Even when his people's faith falls short of his expectations, the Lord remains faithful and makes provision for their deliverance.

We see God's grace toward his people here. They rejected him as king, yet he provided them a leader who he intended to give them security, and he made provision for their deliverance. And so, if we want to flesh that out a little bit, we could say that even when God regards his people's lack of faith as a rejection of his authority, he maintains his commitment to them.

And the Lord recognizes his people's legitimate need for security and mercifully intervenes to prevent their destruction. So, there's definitely a positive side to this story, but there's also this be careful what you ask for dimension to the story. The Lord decides the form of leadership for his covenant community.



He's going to place some restrictions on what this king can do, yet he sometimes gives his people a taste of what they want as a form of discipline. Remember Saul is Shaul. He is the one asked for, and he's not going to be a real successful king.

And so, to flesh that out a little bit, we could say when God's people foolishly embrace cultural norms and reject his authority, he exercises his right to rule his covenant community in a way that is best for them. He doesn't surrender control. But when God's people foolishly seek false security and reject his authority, he may discipline them by letting them experience the consequences of their behavior.

And they're going to have some negative experiences through Saul. Saul is not going to provide the kind of security that Israel needs. And so, it's almost as if God says, I'm not going to give you entirely what you want, a king like all the nations.

I'm maintaining control. But I'm going to give you a taste of it. You need to be careful when you ask for things from me.

I know best. You want something that glitters like the nations have. It's not in your best interests.

And I'm going to show you that through this individual Saul who looked so king-like to begin with. So that brings us to the end of this lesson. We'll pick it up from here.

Actually, we'll move into 1 Samuel chapter 11 and we'll see that Saul has a good day. 1 Samuel 11 is Saul's finest hour. And we'll begin with that chapter in our next lesson.

This is Dr. Bob Chisholm in his teaching on the books of 1 and 2 Samuel. This is session 7 on 1 Samuel 9-10. Meet Israel's New King.