



+ This Sunday at Magdalen Road Church we continued our series in First Samuel - we reached the account of Saul being anointed as the first king for Israel.

Chapter 8v1 to 19 began the account: **+ The Problem with the King**

We noted three fundamental problems with the Israelites asking the Lord for a king to rule over them

1. Firstly their asking for a king is fundamentally a rejection of God. Israel was meant to be a theocracy as God rules his people through his word via priests and prophets, however the desire for a king is to be instead of Gods rule over them. We noted from Deuteronomy 17 that Moses foresaw this day and stipulated how the King they asked for ought to be one who lead as the Lord would, rather than as the nations would expect. For example he was to guard his heart by writing out the scriptures for himself and not being greedy or to have many wives.
2. The second problem with the king was that he would take from the people and they would cry out to the Lord against the King they have chosen.
3. The third problem we noted was that behind the desire for a king Was a desire to be like the nations. Rather than being distinctive and different and show the world how good God is, the people of God wanted to blending and be the same.

Chapters 9-10: **+ The Choosing of the King**

- secret anointing: Saul's introduced to us as he bursts onto the scene looking for lost donkeys! We mentioned that perhaps this is because he is a sort of 'bad shepherd', or perhaps because donkeys are royal animals in scripture, often associated with kings being welcomed and anointed. See for eg 1 Kings 1v33-34 as Solomon is anointed. This could be a metaphor for Sauls pursuit

by the Lord. Remember also that Jesus entered Jerusalem one a donkey.

We also noted the unusual meal that Saul enjoys with Samuel, possibly a marriage feast as in 9v11 onwards we see women by a well which can be a biblical picture for conversations about marriage (e.g. Genesis 24) however here there is no wedding and so we are left scratching our heads! Also because later in Samuel as David is anointed so the language of marriage is used (see Sam 5v1). As well as a marriage feast, the meal also has a priestly element because the share given is the thigh (see Leviticus 7v33 to 34). Just as the priest was anointed as the servant of the temple - the house of

God, so the king is to be anointed as the servant of the people - the household of God.

- confirmation by 3 signs:

1. We saw a 'kingly' confirmation as Saul finds his 'royal' donkeys. 10v2
2. We saw a 'priestly' confirmation as Saul is to be given bread (being used in sacrifice). 10v3-4
3. We saw a 'prophetic' confirmation as Saul speaks as a prophet. 10v5-6.

- public selection As the Lord highlights Saul as his chosen king by lot, for a time, So Saul is hiding among the supplies. Possibly due to humility, most likely due to cowardice!

At this point we *zoomed in* on 3 applications to consider

1. Do we ever reject the rule of God and yet still ask for his help? Here are God's people who didn't want him yet they did still want his blessing. Rather like the youngest son in Jesus' parable of the Prodigal son - do we want Gods blessing but not him?
2. Sometimes the Lord answers his peoples prayers, so are we careful with what we pray for? Usually the Lord restrains us in our foolishness but sometimes in scripture he gives his people what they ask for as a way to show them that what they want is not necessarily what they need.
3. What criteria for leadership are we using? The repeated description of Saul what his physical attributes rather than his character. Do we like the Lord, care more about internal character or externalities?

+ Jesus, the true king.

We then *zoomed out* to see that this is an account the cries out for Jesus!! 4 ways:

1. He is the true adopted son. Samuel is adopted by Eli, Saul is adopted by Samuel, David is adopted by Saul And yet David is promised that one from his family (2Sam 7) would be adopted by God and he would lead the Lord's people forever.
2. He is a true husband married to his people. The King is seen as the groom and the people his bride which points as I had to Jesus as the one will be described as the true bridegroom See also Paul in Ephesians 5 and John in Revelation 21 as this seems developed.
3. He is a true prophet, priest and King. As discussed in previous weeks, Jesus is a true prophet he speaks the words of God, a true priest who represents his people and represents his God...
4. Jesus is the true king who does not take from his people but rather gives as he pours himself out for us.

Here are some questions to start your group discussion...

Brainstorm what you remember so far...

Do we ever want to get rid of God and yet still want blessing from him as Israel did here? What does that look like? Have you ever experienced that?

Have you ever had a situation where the Lord has given you what you prayed for and yet you've realised that was more what you wanted rather than what you needed?

What criteria for leadership do you see used in the church? Why do we look for gifting over character?

How do we see Jesus being the answer to this section in Samuel?