

1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 9:1-12:25  
Saul Becomes King

Introduction

1. Last week we saw a critical turning point in Israel's history.
2. For the first 400 years of Israel's existence (Exodus to Saul) Israel had been governed by God through His judges and priests
3. In spite of God's proving Himself faithful in delivering and protecting Israel from their enemies, all of this changed when Israel rejected God and asked for an earthly king so they could be just "like all the other nations" around them
4. So last week, we looked at chapter 8 of 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel where we learned of Israel's demand for a king and it wasn't good:
  - a) Their demand was actually a rejection of God as their King
  - b) And, there would be consequences in serving an earthly king
  - c) Yet, even so, Israel hardened their hearts and insisted on a king
5. Today, we are introduced to Saul, the man God would appoint as Israel's first king
6. Due to the amount of material (four chapters), I will be summarizing chapters 9 through 11 which lead up to Saul's coronation
7. We will then spend most of our time in chapter 12 examining the speech Samuel delivers to Israel at the coronation where he both admonishes Israel and encourages them

A. Summary of 9:1-11:15

1. Our introduction to Saul (READ 9:1-3)
  - a. Israel wanted a king "**just like the other nations**" and that's exactly what they got
  - b. Saul was from a prominent family:
    - 1) his father Kish was "**a mighty man of valor**" (lit: power but used of wealth, influence-- other translations: "**a prominent person**" (NET), "**a man of wealth**" (ESV), "**an influential man**" (CSB), "**a man of standing**" (NIV))
    - 2) The fact that his family had a herd of donkeys and servants also indicates wealth
  - c. Saul was good looking (2a): "**a choice and handsome man, and there was not a more handsome person that he among the sons of Israel**"
  - d. He was also tall (2b): "**from his shoulders and up he was taller than any of the people**"— this is something generally only said of Israel's enemies (Deuteronomy 1:28; 2:10; 9:2; 1 Samuel 17:4; Numbers 13:33)
2. Saul learns of his calling as king (9:4-26):
  - a. He is sent on a journey to recover his families lost donkeys
  - b. When he can't find them, he is convinced by his servant to find Samuel (the "man of God") who can tell them where to find them
  - c. A day before Saul arrives at Samuel's home, God reveals to Samuel that Saul is on his way and announces His plans for Saul (READ 9:16): "**About this time tomorrow I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him to be prince over My people**"

**Israel; and he will deliver My people from the hand of the Philistines. For I have regarded My people, because their cry has come to Me."**

- d. After honoring Saul at a sacrificial feast, Samuel informs Saul of his calling
3. Samuel anoints Saul privately as the first king over Israel (READ 10:1, 5-7, 9-13):
  - a. This is a private anointing that takes place only between God, Samuel and Saul (his coronation comes later)
  - b. During this anointing, Samuel prophesies that three things will happen to Saul on his way back home to prove that God is with Saul (7), and all three come true:
    - 1) He meets two men from his home region who tell him that the donkeys have been found
    - 2) He meets three men who are on their way to the holy place at Bethel to present offerings and make sacrifices—they give him some of their sacrificial offerings (which may represent homage)
    - 3) The Holy Spirit came upon him when he meets some prophets and he begins to prophecy along with them
  - c. Samuel also tells Saul that when the Holy Spirit comes upon him that he **"will be changed into another man"** (10:6) something also indicated in v. 9 with the statement that **"God changed his heart"** when he left Samuel)
4. Samuel publically announces Saul as king—with a stern rebuke (10:17-27; READ 17-19)
5. Saul's first military victory validates his role as king (11:1-13):
  - a. Nahasa the Ammorite king prepares to attack Jabesh-Gilead, a small town east of the Jordan in the region of Manasseh
  - b. Jabesh-Gilead cry out for help from the tribes on the west of the Jordan, specifically the region around Saul's home
  - c. Saul raises up an army of 130,000 and destroys the Amorites

**B. Samuel addresses Israel one last time as judge at Saul's Coronation (11:14-12:25)**

NOTE: after Saul's victory over the Amorites, Samuel calls all Israel together for Saul's official coronation as king, at which he gives his last major speech to Israel. It falls into three parts:

1. Samuel defends his lengthy service as a faithful judge and prophet over Israel (READ 12:1-5):
  - a. He had served them and been faithful to them since he was a youth—over 40 years (1-2):  
**"Then Samuel said to all Israel, "Behold, I have listened to your voice in all that you said to me and I have appointed a king over you. 2 "Now, here is the king walking before you, but I am old and gray, and behold my sons are with you. And I have walked before you from my youth even to this day."**
  - b. In stark contrast to former judges and the priests of his day, he had been faithful to the Lord and conducted himself in accordance with the Law (READ 3-5)
  - c. In some ways, this served as a rebuke of Israel's leaders for in spite of Samuel's Godly, faithful leadership, they had indeed rejected him when they rejected God in their demand for a king (see 8:4-6, 8)
2. Samuel asserts himself one more time as their judge by reminding them of just some of the things God had done for them and then rebukes them for rejecting God (READ 6-12):
  - a. He mentions five of God's **"righteous acts"**:

- 1) He rescued them from Egypt
  - 2) He sent them Jerubbaal, Bedan, Jephthah and Samuel as judges to deliver them from their Canaanite enemies (even after they had forsaken him)
  - 3) And, most recently, He delivered them from King Nahash of the Amorites
- b. But, in spite of these righteous acts of God on their behalf, they rejected him and demanded an earthly king
3. Finally, Samuel admonishes and encourages Israel (13-25):
- a. As they had demanded, the LORD had set a king over them but it came with a warning and an act of God's power and sovereignty:
    - 1) The warning (13-15):
      - a) V. 14: **"If you will fear the LORD and serve Him, and listen to His voice and not rebel against the command of the LORD, then both you and also the king who reigns over you will follow the LORD your God."**
      - b) V. 15: **"If you will not listen to the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the command of the LORD, then the hand of the LORD will be against you, as it was against your fathers."**
    - 2) An act of God's power and authority (READ 16-19)—there was a three-fold purpose in this divine act of destruction:
      - a) One was to demonstrate God's power and authority and validate Samuel's warning to Israel
      - b) A second was to judge Israel's wickedness
      - c) A third was to bring about Israel's repentance—which it did (at least temporarily)
  - b. In spite of their sinful demand, there was still hope for God's blessing and favor—and this hope was anchored in four things (20-25):
    - 1) The first was their faithfulness to the LORD (20-21): **"Samuel said to the people, "Do not fear. You have committed all this evil, yet do not turn aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart. 21 "You must not turn aside, for then you would go after futile things which can not profit or deliver, because they are futile."**
    - 2) The second was God's faithfulness to them (22): **"For the LORD will not abandon His people on account of His great name, because the LORD has been pleased to make you a people for Himself."**
    - 3) The third was Samuel's faithfulness to them (23): **"Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by ceasing to pray for you; but I will instruct you in the good and right way."**
    - 4) The fourth was remembering the great things God had done for them (24): **"Only fear the LORD and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you."**
  - c. But if they continued in their wicked ways, both they and their king would swept away (25): **"But if you still do wickedly, both you and your king will be swept away."**

Conclusion
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There are a number of things that stand out in our passage today.

1. One is the humble nature of Saul:
  - a. He listens to the counsel of his servant when he recommends they go see Samuel about the lost sheep
  - b. He is humble, and a bit surprised, when Samuel reveals God's plan for him as king (9:21)
  - c. When his uncle asks him what Samuel revealed to him, he only told him about the donkeys but refused to mention anything about becoming king
  - d. When he was presented to Israel as their king and "**certain worthless men**" opposed him, he "**kept silent**" (10:27)
  - e. After his first military victory (over the Amorites) the Israelites wanted to kill those "worthless men" who opposed him above, but Saul refused to allow them to be put to death (11:13)
  - f. All of this stands in contrast to the wicked king that Saul ultimately will become
    - 1) One has to wonder what happened to Saul (the phrase "power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely" comes to mind)
    - 2) One might also wonder why God would choose such a man as Israel's first king knowing what he would become (was it an act of judgement, or possibly a way of revealing to Israel the consequences of their sin)?
2. Something else that stands out is the grace which both God and Samuel extend to Israel in spite of their wickedness:
  - a. Both God and Samuel had been rejected by Israel
  - b. Yet, both extend grace to Israel:
    - 1) God gives them a king that would deliver them from their enemies (first in the Amorites and later in the Philistines)
    - 2) Samuel also extended grace to Israel, by continuing to admonish Israel and give them hope for their future under a king
  - c. Is this not what we see in the Gospel—grace extended to those who least deserve it, both before we come to Christ and even afterwards when we sin?
3. A final element that stands out is also reflected in both God and Samuel:
  - a. One of the things Samuel shared with Israel was that God would not abandon His people for His name sake, and that he was pleased to make them His own—God's covenant loyalty to His people is dripping in this passage, as it is throughout Israel's history
  - b. Samuel also shows a tremendous loyalty to Israel by assuring them that he would continue to pray for them, and teach them right from wrong
  - c. This loyalty and faithfulness is the anchor of our salvation, is it not? God doesn't abandon His people...no matter what!