

Theme: When Israel demanded a king, God graciously provided Saul, a man of great promise possessing the characteristics Israel desired, to lead the people under Yahweh their King.

I. Game of Thrones - Review & Intro

- A. We are doing a multi-part series on kings of Israel
- B. So long we are breaking it into “seasons”
- C. First season - Israel’s failure under the Judges
- D. Ended with a cry for a king - to be like other nations
- E. This season - The Rise & Fall of Israel’s first king - Saul

II. God Gives The People Their Desire

- A. The people cried out for a king, rejecting Yahweh
Appoint a king to lead us, **such as all the other nations have.** ⁶ But when they said, “Give us a king to lead us,” this displeased Samuel; so he prayed to the Lord. ⁷ And the Lord told him: “**Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king.** ⁸ As they have done from the day I brought them up out of Egypt until this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are doing to you. ⁹ **Now listen to them; but warn them solemnly and let them know what the king who will reign over them will do.**” 1 Samuel 8:5–9

- 1. The people’s request is wrong - it will harm them
- 2. God will give them their desire - but it will bring pain
- 3. This is a major theme in this section
Samuel summoned the people of Israel to the Lord at **Mizpah** ¹⁸ and said to them, “This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: ‘I brought Israel up out of Egypt, and I delivered you from the power of

Egypt and all the kingdoms that oppressed you.’ ¹⁹ But **you have now rejected your God, who saves you out of all your calamities and distresses. And you have said, ‘No, set a king over us.’ So now present yourselves before the Lord by your tribes and clans.**” 1 Samuel 10:17–19

- a. Very similar to Judges 2:10-19
- b. Done at Mizpah - where Yahweh had delivered from Philistines!
- c. A king can’t solve the problem of our hearts!

“But when you saw that Nahash king of the Ammonites was moving against you, you said to me, ‘No, **we want a king to rule over us**’ — **even though the Lord your God was your king.** ¹³ **Now here is the king you have chosen, the one you asked for; see, the Lord has set a king over you.**” 1 Samuel 12:12–13

- a. They wanted a king to replace Yahweh
- b. This is the third time they were told this was wrong!!
- c. But they stubbornly persist in this path!
- 4. God gave them a king - but then sent terrible hail
- B. It is fearful to persist in foolishness until God grants it
 - 1. Israel would not listen - and suffered for it
 - 2. The problem was not the request - but the motive
 - 3. The motives of our hearts are always being uncovered in the Game of Thrones
 - 4. God will use these things for our good - but the lesson can be painful

III. Saul - A Promising Young Man

A. Saul is introduced as an impressive young man

There was a Benjamite, **a man of standing**, whose name was Kish son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Becorath, the son of Aphiah of Benjamin. ² He had a son named **Saul, an impressive young man without equal among the Israelites — a head taller than any of the others.** ¹ Samuel 9:1–2

1. Kish - a man of standing/wealth/power
2. Saul - “asked of God” - they asked for a king (8:10)
3. Saul is externally impressive - taller than any others
 - a. Also stated in 1 Samuel 10:23-24
 - b. God is looking at the heart (1 Samuel 16:7) - but that is for another day
4. This is the kind of man the people are looking for!
5. He is looking for donkeys - but the people are looking for someone like him

B. God has chosen Saul to be the people’s leader

Now the day before Saul came, the Lord had revealed this to Samuel: ¹⁶ “About this time tomorrow I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin. Anoint him leader over my people Israel; he will deliver my people from the hand of the Philistines. I have looked upon my people, for their cry has reached me.” ¹⁷ When Samuel caught sight of Saul, the Lord said to him, “This is the man I spoke to you about; he will govern my people.” ¹ Samuel 9:15–17

1. God has already revealed that Saul will be coming
2. God says that Saul is the man chosen to rule

C. God confirms his choice with miraculous signs

“I am the seer,” Samuel replied. “Go up ahead of me to the high place, for today you are to eat with me, and in the morning I will let you go and **will tell you all that is in your heart.** ²⁰ **As for the donkeys you lost three days ago, do not worry about them; they have been found.** And to whom is all the desire of Israel turned, if not to you and all your father’s family?” ¹ Samuel 9:19–20

1. God gives a sign that Saul is the chosen one

2. A series of miraculous signs!

Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on Saul’s head and kissed him, saying, “Has not the Lord anointed you leader over his inheritance? ²When you leave me today, you will meet two men near Rachel’s tomb, at Zelzah on the border of Benjamin. They will 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 is asking, “What shall I do about my son?”’ ³ “Then you will go on from there until you reach the great tree of Tabor. Three men going up to God at Bethel will meet you there. One will be carrying three young goats, another three loaves of bread, and another a skin of wine. ⁴ They will greet you and offer you two loaves of bread, which you will accept from them. ⁵ “After that you will go to Gibeah of God, where there is a Philistine outpost. As you approach the town, you will meet a procession of prophets coming down from the high place with lyres, tambourines, flutes and harps being played before them, and they will be prophesying. ⁶ The Spirit of the Lord will come upon you in power, and you will prophesy with them; and you will be changed into a different person. ⁷ Once these signs are fulfilled, do whatever your hand finds to do, for God is with you. ¹ Samuel 10:1–7

3. And then reconfirmed in the choosing by lots!

4. Talk about confirmation that God has chosen you!

D. Saul is a humble man

“To whom is all the desire of Israel turned, if not to you and all your father’s family?” ²¹ Saul answered, “**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?**” ¹ Samuel 9:20–21

1. Astounding words from the prophet!
2. Saul is not arrogant - he is humble and taken aback
3. Saul does not boast to his uncle
Now Saul’s uncle asked him and his servant, “Where have you been?” “Looking for the donkeys,” he said. “But when we saw they were not to be found, we went to Samuel.” ¹⁵ Saul’s uncle said, “Tell me what Samuel said to you.” ¹⁶ 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. 1 Samuel 10:14–16
 - a. He does not boast or show pride
 - b. He is not grasping at power (yet!)
4. Saul also does not step forward at choosing by lot - but hides (see 1 Samuel 10:20-23)
5. In every way, Saul shows humility in these chapters

E. God changes Saul’s heart & sends Spirit to Him in power

As Saul turned to leave Samuel, **God changed Saul’s heart**, and all these signs were fulfilled that day. ¹⁰ When they arrived at Gibeah, a procession of prophets met him; **the Spirit of God came upon him in power**, and he joined in their prophesying. 1 Samuel 10:9–10

1. And this is on top of all the things mentioned above

2. What a great start - what promise for the king!

IV. The Test - Dependence and Submission

A. Saul is also seen to have real limitations

When Samuel caught sight of Saul, the Lord said to him, “This is the man I spoke to you about; he will govern my people.” ¹⁸ Saul approached Samuel in the gateway and asked, “Would you please tell me where the seer’s house is?” ¹⁹ “I am the seer,” Samuel replied. “Go up ahead of me to the high place, for today you are to eat with me, and in the morning I will let you go and will tell you all that is in your heart. ²⁰ As for the donkeys you lost three days ago, do not worry about them; they have been found. And to whom is all the desire of Israel turned, if not to you and all your father’s family?” 1 Samuel 9:17–20

1. Saul seems to see nothing in this passage

- a. He can’t find the donkeys and wants to give up
- b. His servant has to suggest seeing Samuel
- c. He can’t find Samuel and does not recognize him

2. Samuel seems to see everything in this passage

- a. He knows Saul is coming
- b. He knows Saul is to be king
- c. He knows where the donkeys are
- d. He knows the signs to come

B. Saul must listen to God’s prophets and follow instructions

Go down ahead of me to Gilgal. 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.** 1 Samuel 10:8

1. Saul can not see his way alone - he needs Samuel
2. Saul must be willing to submit to God and obey
3. This is why there are regulations for the kingship (see 10:25 and Deuteronomy 17:18-20)
4. Yahweh is king - Saul only rules under Him
 - a. In chapter 9 the word used for Saul is ruler/prince (נָגִיד) - not king (מֶלֶךְ)
 - b. King is used 9 times in chapter 8 - but only in chapters 9 & 10 when repeating request from chapter 8
 - c. Yahweh - not Saul - is the real King of Israel

3. And I am always tempted to rule on my own!
4. Do I lead as under the authority of God?
5. Examples: work, church, family

C. The Table of Confession and Strength

Great Expectation - The Rise of Saul

1 Samuel 9-10 (1 Samuel 9:15-21)

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Communion

Numbers 6:24-26

The Lord bless you and keep you; ²⁵ the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; ²⁶ the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace. Numbers 6:24–26

V. Applying the Word

A. What am I desiring more than God's will?

1. We are all like Israel at times - wanting something more than we want to follow God
2. Israel wanted a king - at the wrong time and for wrong reasons
3. Is there anything I am wanting - at the wrong time?
4. Is there anything I am wanting - for the wrong reasons?
5. Examples: relationship, possessions, job, position

B. Am I submitted to God's will in my areas of responsibility?

1. This is the heart of the Game of Thrones!
2. When God grants me something I am still under His authority

Now the day before Saul came, the Lord had revealed this to Samuel: ¹⁶ “About this time tomorrow I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin. Anoint him leader over my people Israel; he will deliver my people from the hand of the Philistines. I have looked upon my people, for their cry has reached me.”

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1 Samuel 9:15–21