

THE ROCK COMMUNITY CHURCH

1 Samuel 9:1-10:16

“Donkeys, Oil, and a Chosen King”

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24:33

So I want to invite you to grab your Bible, make your way to First Samuel chapter 9.

24:38

First Samuel 9, if you didn't bring one, there should be a black Bible underneath of your chair or maybe the one in front of you. We're on page 281 in those Bibles, 281. So as you guys are making your way to First Samuel 9, just to give you kind of a heads up, this morning we're going to look at one of the biggest chunks of text, one of the biggest passages that we're going to cover in this series, and to be totally honest, this is one of the largest passages that I've ever attempted to preach at one time.

25:07

So that means that we should, you know, we've got it planned out. You guys should be fine getting to work on time in the morning, but we got some work to do, right? So what we're going to do this morning, we're going to read through the entire text at the

beginning, but I'm not going to go back and individually cover every little detail of every little thing all the way through this, like we sometimes do.

25:27

So we've got some work to do. Our story, our passage that we're going to look at this week, we've got some lost donkeys. We've got a by reservation only dinner that Saul is invited to. We see Saul anointed as the first king of Israel, all kind of crammed together in this week's passage.

25:46

So what we're going to see as we dive into this passage, we're going to see some kind of strangely conflicting reports in this passage. So we see Saul, King Saul is called by God and filled with the spirit of God to fulfill this role that he's called to, to be the first king of Israel.

26:04

You know, there's times in Saul's life where it seems like Saul is being obedient to do what God tells him to do, but there's other times where it seems like Saul is ignoring God, is kind of doing things his own way.

26:17

So what we're going to see, there's this, there's this back and forth in Saul's life that's going to continue through Saul's story as we continue through the rest of the book of first Samuel. But there's one thing for sure.

26:28

When we see Saul show up on the scene, you remember last week, Israel demanded, God, we need a king. And so what they're going to find this week as Saul is the man that's chosen for them to be their king.

26:40

Saul is exactly what they asked for. They demanded a king like all the other nations and they're going to receive Saul, a king, just like all the other nations. So we're going to jump in. Let's get to work.

26:51

We're going to read first Samuel 9. We're going to start in verse one. We're actually going to go halfway through chapter 10 as we finish up. So let's, let's jump in. First Samuel 9, starting in verse 1.

27:04

There was a man of Benjamin whose name was Kish, the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Becorath, the son of Aphiah, Benjaminite, a man of wealth. And he had a son whose name was Saul, a handsome young man.

27:19

There was not a man among the people of Israel more handsome than he. From his shoulders upward, he was taller than any of the people. But now the donkeys of Kish, Saul's father, were lost. So Kish said to Saul his son, take one of the young men with you and arise, go and look for the donkeys.

27:37

And he passed through the hill country of Ephraim, passed through the land of Shalishah, and they did not find them. And they passed through the land of Shaalim, but they were not there. And then they passed through the land of Benjamin, but they did not find them.

27:50

And when they came to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant who was with him, come, let us go back, lest my father cease to care about the donkeys and become

anxious about us. But the servant, he said to him, behold, there is a man of God in this city.

28:04

He is a man who is held in honor. All that he says comes true. So now let us go there. Perhaps he can tell us the way that we should go. And then Saul said to his servant, but if we go, what can we bring the man?

28:18

For the bread in our sacks is gone and there is no present to bring to the man of God. What do we have? The servant answered Saul again, here I have with me a quarter of a shekel of silver. I will give it to the man of God to tell us our way.

28:32

Formerly in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, he said, come, let us go to the seer. For today's prophet was formerly called a seer. So Saul said to the servant, well said, come, let us go. And so they went to the city where the man of God was.

28:47

And as they went up the hill to the city, they met young women coming down to draw water and they said to them, is the seer here? And they answered, he is. Behold, he's just ahead of you. Hurry, he's just come now to the city because the people have a sacrifice today on the high place.

29:04

And as soon as you enter the city, you will find him before he goes up to the high place to eat. For the people will not eat until he comes since he must bless the sacrifice. Afterward, those who are invited will eat.

29:15

So now go up for you will meet him immediately. And so they went up to the city, and as they were entering the city, they saw Samuel coming out toward them on his way up to the high place. Now the day before Saul came, the Lord had revealed to Samuel, tomorrow about this time, I will send to you a man from the land of Benjamin.

29:35

You shall anoint him to be prince over my people, Israel. He shall save my people from the hand of the Philistines, for I have seen my people because their cry has come to me. And when Samuel saw Saul, the Lord told him, here is the man of whom I spoke to you.

29:51

He it is who shall restrain my people. And then Saul approached Samuel in the gate and said, tell me, where is the house of the seer? And Samuel answered Saul, I'm the seer. Go up before me to the high place, for today you shall eat with me.

30:06

And in the morning I will let you go and will tell you all that is on your mind. As for your donkeys that were lost three days ago, do not set your mind on them, for they've been found. And for who is all that is desirable in Israel?

30:18

Is it not for you and for all your father's house? But Saul answered, am I not a Benjaminite from the least of the tribes of Israel? And is not my clan the humblest of all the clans of the tribe of Benjamin?

30:31

Why then have you spoken to me in this way? Then Samuel took Saul and his young man and brought them into the hall and gave them the place at the head of those who had been invited, who were about 30 persons.

30:44

And Samuel said to the cook, bring the portion that I gave you, of which I said to you, put it aside. So the cook took up the leg and what was on it and set them before Saul. And Samuel said, see, what was kept is set before you.

30:57

Eat, because it was kept for you until the hour appointed that you might eat with the guests. So Saul ate with Samuel that day. And when they came down from the high place into the city, a bed was spread for Saul on the roof and he laid down to sleep.

31:11

Then at the break of dawn, Samuel called to Saul on the roof. Up, that I may send you on your way. So Saul arose and both he and Samuel went out into the street. And as they were going down to the outskirts of the city, Samuel said to Saul, tell the servant to pass on before us.

31:27

And when he's passed on, stop here yourself for a while, that I may make known to you the word of God. Chapter 10, verse 1. Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on his head and kissed him and said, has not the Lord anointed you to be prince over his people, Israel?

31:45

You shall reign over the people of the Lord and you shall save them from the hand of their surrounding enemies. And this shall be assigned to you that the Lord has anointed you to be prince over his heritage.

31:56

When you depart from me today, you shall meet two men by Rachel's tomb in the territory of Benjamin at Zelzah. And they will say to you, the donkeys that you went to

seek are found. Now your father has ceased to care about the donkeys and is anxious about you, saying, what shall I do about my son?

32:12

And then you shall go on from there farther and come to the oak of Tabor. The three men going up to God at Bethel will meet you there. One carrying three young goats, another carrying three loaves of bread and another carrying a skin of wine.

32:25

And they will greet you and give you two loaves of bread, which you shall accept from their hand. After that, you shall come to Gibeath-Elohim, where there is a garrison of the Philistines. And there, as soon as you come to the city, you will meet a group of prophets coming down from the high place with harp and tambourine and flute and lyre before them, prophesying.

32:45

Then the Spirit of the Lord will rush upon you and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man. Now when these signs meet you, do what your hand finds to do, for God is with you. And then go down before me to Gilgal and behold, I am coming down to you to offer burnt offerings and to sacrifice peace offerings.

33:06

Seven days you shall wait until I come to you and show you what you shall do. And when he turned his back to leave Samuel, God gave him another heart. And all these signs came to pass that day. When they came to Gibeah, behold, a group of prophets met him and the Spirit of God rushed upon him and he prophesied among them.

33:26

And when all who knew him previously saw how he prophesied with the prophets, the people said to one another, what has come over the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets? And the man of the place answered, and who is their father?

33:40

Therefore it became a proverb. Is Saul also among the prophets? When he had finished prophesying, he came to the high place. And Saul's uncle said to him and to his servant, where did you go? And Saul said to seek the donkeys.

33:55

When we saw that they were not to be found, we went to Samuel. Saul's uncle said, please tell me what Samuel said to you. And Saul said to his uncle, he told us plainly that the donkeys had been found.

34:06

But about the matter of the kingdom of which Samuel had spoken, Saul did not tell him anything. These are the words of the Lord. Would you pray with me? God, we thank you for your word and we thank you for this narrative that we can look at how Samuel and Saul interacted with one another.

34:22

God, how you called Saul and how you brought Saul into perfect alignment that Samuel might ordain him, anoint him to be the next king of Israel. And God, we pray this morning that as we consider these stories that perhaps at first glance seem a bit random.

34:37

God, I pray that you would help us to discern and to hear from your spirit what you would have for us this morning. God, that you would speak for your servants are listening here today. God, we give this time to you.

34:48

We pray that you would use it to accomplish your work. And it's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen. All right. Well, as we start to work through this passage, the first little chunk, the

first section that we see for those taken an outline is we see them seeking donkeys and finding Samuel, right?

35:06

They go out looking for one thing and they find something different. So at the very beginning of this passage, we're introduced to a man named Saul. Verse 2 describes him for us in chapter 9, verse 2, it says that Kish had a son whose name was Samuel.

35:21

He was a handsome young man. There was not a man from among the people of Israel more handsome than he. And he stood head and shoulders above the rest of the crowd. We're talking about a good looking dude, right?

35:33

He was tall. He was strong. He kind of when you walk into a room, Saul was kind of the one that if you just look around the room, you'd pick him out. You'd say that's the guy that's in charge, right?

35:43

He was standing there among all the other people and he's just like head and shoulders above everybody else. Essentially, he was what the Israelites were asking for last week. You remember they came to Samuel.

35:54

They said, we want a king like all the other nations have a king. Someone who will lead us into battle, who will lead us to fight our enemies. And so Saul was what the people were asking for last week when they were looking for a king.

36:07

They wanted someone strong and powerful, someone to follow. Pick the tall guy. He's a good one to follow, right? Dale Ralph Davis, one preacher, he jokingly said people would have voted him Mr. Israel if there had been such a contest, right?

36:22

You know, maybe, I don't know. Maybe he looks something like that. Probably not. But we see Saul shows up on the scene. Let's move off of him. We'll go back to the outline. There you go. We don't need Arnold sitting over my shoulder all day.

36:37

But Saul goes out and he's looking for the donkeys, right? We see this story kind of starts. It tells us that because his father's donkeys have wandered off, Saul and a servant are sent to go and to find them.

36:49

But after they've been wandering around, they go to this town and they don't find them. They go to this town and they don't find them. They've been wandering around for three days and we see that Saul just kind of wants to abandon the quest.

36:59

Saul wants to quit, but the servant who goes along with him says, no, no, Saul, I've got an idea. He suggests, let's go visit the man of God. This town that we're approaching, there's a man of God who lives here, a prophet.

37:12

Maybe we can go and we can talk to him and maybe he'll tell us where we should go or what we should do. He'll be able to give us some additional direction on our quest to find these donkeys. And so as they approach the city, it tells us in verse 14 that they encountered Samuel, that they bump into Samuel.

37:29

And so when they meet Samuel, we see Saul comes marching into town, big guy looking around. All right, where's the prophet? Where's the seer? Where is this man of God? And Saul marches up to the first guy that he sees asking for, where is the prophet?

37:44

And in verse 18 and 19 of chapter 9, it tells us that Saul approached Samuel in the gate and said, tell me, where is the house of the seer? And Samuel looks at Saul and says, here you go. Here I am.

37:56

I'm the seer. We continue in the next couple of sentences in verse 20, Samuel kind of redirects Saul, redirects his focus a little bit. Verse 20 says that Samuel tells Saul, as for the donkeys that were lost three days ago, don't worry about them.

38:16

They've been found. So don't worry about those things. But then he makes this kind of strange statement. He says, for whom is all that is desirable in Israel? Is it not for you and for all your father's house?

38:28

Samuel meets Saul and Saul is just worried about finding these donkeys. And Saul is told by Samuel, don't worry about the donkeys. We found the donkeys. The donkeys are taken care of. Stop worrying about the donkeys.

38:40

But Samuel then makes this comment, kind of gives this first hint, this first glimpse into the fact that there might be something greater in store for Saul. He makes this statement for whom is all that is desirable in Israel.

38:53

Some other translations kind of communicated a little differently. The NIV says to whom is all the desire of Israel turned? Simply put, this statement is suggesting that Israel is looking to someone to be king.

39:09

Saul, that someone is you. Who is Israel looking to? Who is their hope being placed in? Who's gonna be the one to lead them? Well, Saul, that's you. We see a lot of details in this first big chunk of 21 verses that we see here right at the beginning, but there's a few key things that I want us to just kinda touch on and make sure that we see here in this first section.

39:35

You remember, if you were with us last week, Israel in first Samuel chapter 8, they came to Samuel, they said, we want a king like all the other nations. And as we're introduced to Saul here, it seems to me like Saul kinda checks most of those boxes.

39:49

We've got this big, powerful, handsome, that he looks like the leader, right? But we also notice that his spiritual IQ, kinda non-existent, right? We see he makes some pretty grave mistakes in the midst of this narrative that we see.

40:08

First off, he's out wandering around looking for the donkeys with his servant, but he never thinks to consult God in his quest. He never thinks to consult the man of God or the seer. He doesn't think of that option until the servant that's along with him suggests it.

40:25

Even as he marches into town, he bumps into, he meets this prophet who was known throughout the land. First Samuel chapter 3, verse 20, it tells us that all of Israel, from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established as a prophet of the Lord.

40:42

All of Israel knew. Apparently there's a little bit of hyperbole in that statement because apparently not all of Israel knew because there was at least one guy that's standing over here going, I don't know who Samuel is.

40:54

Saul didn't know who Samuel was, so not all of Israel, right? Almost everyone in Israel knew who Samuel was. Maybe Saul had been spending a little bit too much time in the gym making sure that he looked the part and the big, strong, powerful.

41:10

His spiritual IQ was non-existent. He was unaware or at the very least disinterested in the things of God. Saul shows up on the scene. A lot of the boxes that Saul checks off. There's some pretty big ones that he doesn't.

41:27

So the first chunk we see them looking for donkeys and finding Samuel. Now in the next little section, we see Saul honored and anointed. He's honored and anointed. So as we continue down in verse 22 and 23, we see Saul is honored as he eats with Samuel and his guests at this banquet, at this dinner.

41:47

Verse 22 tells us that Samuel took Saul and his young man and he brought them to the hall, gave them a place at the head of those who had been invited, who were about 30 persons. Samuel said to the cook, bring the portion that I gave you, of which I said to you, put it aside.

42:03

And what we see here, Saul is marched into this banquet, marched into this exclusive invite only dinner and he's given the seat at the head of the table. He's given the most important seat in the room.

42:14

He's given the best cut of meat. He's given the leg, right? And we get a chicken bucket, everybody fights over the legs. Maybe that was just me growing up. But Saul gets the prime cut, which Samuel had saved for him, it says.

42:31

God had told Samuel, Samuel, you're going to meet the next king of Israel today. That the man that I've chosen is going to come, is going to be here and Saul's given the seat of honor, is given the plate of honor.

42:45

Seems clear to me that Samuel knew that this was gonna be a celebration. That this was going to be a special moment as Samuel was told by God that Saul was going to be there and that he was going to anoint Saul to leadership over Israel during this visit.

42:59

So we see that Saul is honored. We also see that he's anointed as they finish dinner, as he chooses to spend the night there, as Samuel invites him to spend the night in town with them. They spend the night, then the morning they gather themselves to leave.

43:14

And as they're preparing to leave town, as they're leaving, Samuel tells Saul to hang back for a minute. Go ahead and send the servant along but I need to talk to you. I need a moment with you before Saul departs.

43:27

And so at the end of chapter 9 and just the very beginning of chapter 10, chapter 9, verse 27, it tells us, as they were going to the outskirts of the city, Samuel said to Saul, tell the servant to pass on before us.

43:40

And when he's passed on, stop here yourself for a little while that I might make known to you the word of God. Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on his head and kissed him and said, has not the Lord anointed you to be the prince over his people, Israel?

43:56

You shall reign over the people of the Lord, you shall save them from the hand of their surrounding enemies. Yeah, Samuel's question that he just asked right there, has the Lord not anointed you to be prince over his people, Israel?

44:08

That was affirmation that Saul was going to fill this role, that Saul was going to be the prince or the leader, he was going to be king of Israel. Saul is being anointed to a position of leadership that God has chosen him for.

44:23

This isn't just some task that Saul could muscle up and do in his own strength. There were certainly lots of things that I'm sure Saul muscled up and did in his own strength. He was taller than everybody, he was stronger than everybody, he was more handsome, more charming.

44:37

I'm certain there's many things that Saul was able to do in his own strength. But this was not a task for Saul to fulfill in his own strength. God was going to need to lead Saul if Saul was going to be successful in this role that he was being called to.

44:53

Saul's being called to the position, but we're gonna see in just a minute that he also needs to be empowered to this position. That it's not enough for Saul to just go do it in his own strength, and so as we're gonna see in the rest of chapter 10, we're gonna see what Samuel says right at the end of chapter 9, that the word of the Lord is going to be revealed.

45:13

That's the header for our last section, the word of the Lord is revealed. We see most of this show up in chapter 10 in our passage. The word of the Lord being revealed, that's God at work, and it's what Samuel says right at the end of chapter 9.

45:28

"Stop here by yourself for a while, that I might make known to you the word of God." Saul's being chosen by God, he's anointed as the next king, and we wanna point this out, and Samuel wants to make sure that Saul knows this isn't just some crazy guy with a flask of oil that has some interesting things to say about Saul.

45:50

Saul's being chosen by God, and so in order to make sure that there's no doubt about that, that there's no question about that, that there's no confusion, Samuel tells Saul that there's three different prophecies that are mentioned here that are going to affirm, that this isn't just something that Samuel came up with, this is God and his hand at work.

46:09

It mentions that they're going to be as they are headed home, that they're going to make their way to Rachel's tomb, and that there's gonna be two men by Rachel's tomb that come to Saul and to his servant, and say, guys, the donkeys have been found.

46:23

They're gonna continue on their journey, they're gonna make their way to the oak of Tabor, there's gonna be three men that are there that are gathered around as well, they're carrying goats and bread and all kinds of different things, but says that these men are gonna give two loaves of bread to Saul and to his servant.

46:40

Then as they continue on, it tells us that they're gonna make their way to Gibeath-Elohim, and they're going to meet a group of prophets, that they're gonna be playing instruments, they're gonna be coming down from the high place there, and it tells us in that space that the spirit of God is going to rush upon Saul, and that he's gonna prophesy, that he's gonna speak God's words.

47:02

And so the prophecies of Samuel, it tells us that all of these prophecies were fulfilled, that this is not just something that happened by coincidence, this is God at work. This is not some natural occurrence, God is the one who is lining up these events, is leading his people to his locations for his purposes.

47:21

But as Saul is placed into this position of being anointed as the next king of Israel, as the first king of Israel, it seems clear to me that God is going to need to continue to work in Saul's life, is going to need to continue to work through Saul to accomplish all of the work that God had planned for the people of Israel.

47:41

So it tells us in verse 6, there's this promise that the spirit of God is going to rush upon Saul, that Saul is gonna be turned into a new man. It says that he's gonna be turned into another man in verse 6, it tells us as these events happen in verses 9 and 10, that Saul is given a new heart, that the spirit of God rushed upon him.

48:01

First Samuel 10, verses 9 and 10, it says that when he turned his back, when Saul turned his back to leave Samuel, God gave him another heart, and all these signs came to pass that day. When they came to Gibeah, behold, a group of prophets met him, and the spirit of God rushed upon him, and he prophesied among them.

48:21

Saul was being empowered to this new role that God had for him. You know, I wanna pause for just a second here, because I think it's important for us to stop and to acknowledge, this is a key qualification for any leader that's put into a position that God places them in.

48:36

God doesn't look around, it's not the way that it works. God doesn't sit in heaven with his arms crossed looking down going. I wonder who I can find. I got a job to do. I wonder who I can find that checks all the boxes.

48:48

He doesn't just walk around and get out his big telescope or whatever he thinks. All right, I need somebody brave and strong and courageous, you, you're the one. God doesn't choose us because we're uniquely qualified to accomplish the work that God has for us.

49:05

God's not recruiting help into his service. God doesn't seek us out or choose us because he needs what we have to offer. God empowers those who serve him. God empowers those who he calls to accomplish something, to do something for him.

49:21

God is the one who empowers them to go and to do that. When we are surrendered to God, when we are led by him, when we are obedient to what God tells us to do, God empowers us to do the work that he calls us to.

49:36

If Saul's going to have any measure of success in leading Israel, it was only going to be through God's spirit empowering him, rushing upon him and giving him the strength and the ability to go and to do what God was calling him to do.

49:49

It tells us in this passage that God had empowered and called Saul to action. Verse 7, it says, Samuel, it lays this all out in front of Saul and now as these events are happening, verse 7 says that when these signs meet you, do what your hand finds to do for God is with you.

50:08

Do what your hand finds to do. That requires Saul to take some appropriate action whenever the circumstances that God brings into his life. When those things line up, it means, Saul, you need to get up and you need to do something.

50:21

I was just reading a book a few weeks ago, it says just, the title of the book is called Just Do Something. It talks about the reality that so many of us as Christians, we get paralyzed by, you know, this fear, say, well, what's God's will in my life?

50:37

Well, what exactly do I need to do? Should I go eat dinner here or should I go eat dinner there? Should I marry this person or that person? Should I go to college here or there? You know, the premise of the book, and I tend to agree with it, is that most of the decisions that we make in life, we should probably take a step back from those things because we've so spiritualized this, I need to find the exact right thing that God wants me to do in this.

51:02

Should I have chicken or should I have beef tonight for dinner? No, no, no, no, no. There's some things that God makes really clear to us. He says, love me. He says, follow me. He says, live in my ways.

51:12

He says, do these things. The scripture's really clear on some things that we need to go do. If we love God and we pursue life the way that he calls us to, there's a lot of things. Just go do something.

51:25

Use your best wisdom. Make the decision. Whatever you think is best. You want chicken tonight? Go eat chicken tonight, right? That's okay. If you're young and you're trying to decide who should I marry, should I marry him or should I marry her?

51:39

Should I marry her or should I marry her? Well, make that decision based on the information that's available to you. Yeah, is this the person that I want to spend the rest of my life with? Yes or no?

51:49

Once you make that decision, God's will for your life is to be married to that person, right? But in that moment where we're, you know, what should I do? Love God. Live in the way that he calls you to and go do something, right?

52:05

Go do what God puts in front of you. Go and make the decisions that are in front of you. I think there's some level of that that that's what Saul's being invited to here. Verse 7 says, go and do what your hand finds to do for God is with you.

52:21

You know, that requires Saul to take some appropriate action. It requires him to get to work that if you're being obedient to what God commands of you, God is with you. Go do what seems right to you, Saul.

52:35

Get to work. Most commentators believe that this is referring to rectifying the situation that continues to come up and come up and come up with the Philistines. The Philistines continue to try to push into Israel's territory.

52:49

They kind of continue. They want to take over. They want to occupy Israel. It tells us that there's a garrison there in that town that they're wandering through. King Saul is wandering through. But this verse tells us, verse 7, it says that God is with you.

53:08

It assures Saul of the divine blessing that when he is called to do God's work, when he is obedient to do what God tells him to do, that God's blessing is on him, that God is going to lead his people, that Saul's not just sent out there to figure it out for himself.

53:27

But even after receiving this divine assurance that God is going to be with him, Saul is slow to act upon it. Because verse 7 says, go do what your hand finds to do. Go push back the Philistines.

53:37

Go and do the things that seem right to you, but what does Saul do? What do we see here? Do we see any sort of pushing back on the Philistines that he goes and immediately obeys? Nope. He just goes home.

53:52

It tells us he just packs up, he just goes home. We see that he's greeted by his uncle who sees him coming, says, you know, what's up? You know, Saul's reply is evasive at best. I dare say it might even be considered dishonest as he's withholding from his uncle what he had just experienced.

54:11

He tells the uncle, hey, we were out looking for the lost donkeys. We were out looking for him. We couldn't find him. So, you know, the servant over here said, let's go talk to the man of God. So he went and we talked to Samuel.

54:24

And that mention of Samuel's name, it catches the uncle's attention. He says, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa. You talk to Samuel? What's Samuel have to say? Samuel is known by all of Israel, right? Except for Saul.

54:41

What's Samuel tell you? Nothing much. He just told us about the donkeys, right? Saul is withholding. He refused to tell his uncle about the whole conversation, the fact that he had been anointed, that he had been prophesied and told that he was going to be made the leader of Israel.

55:00

He avoided all of that. He's dishonest. He's withholding. He doesn't say all of the things that Samuel had said to him. You know, throughout these books of first and second Samuel, as we work our way through, we're making our way through, making some good progress.

55:16

But throughout these books, a key theme that we're going to see is we're gonna see over and over again what it takes to be a true king, a true leader in Israel. You know, in this passage, we see the first king of Israel.

55:30

We see King Saul is introduced. And there's many positive qualities that are portrayed that are shown in King Saul as we meet him, right? We see that he's physically imposing, that he's handsome. We see he looks the part.

55:47

Yeah, as best as we can tell, he seems dutiful, right? He's doing all the things that he's supposed to do. He's fulfilling the responsibilities that his father gave him. Saul, go take a servant and go find the donkeys.

55:59

Off they went, right? He did what he was supposed to do. But there's also some warning signs that show up that the narrator of first Samuel is kind of pointing to the fact that even early when we meet Saul, there's some problems with Saul.

56:15

It seems to me that he's easily led, that he's more of a follower than he is a leader. He's swayed by the suggestions of those that are around him, which by the way we're gonna see continue to show up in Saul's life.

56:27

Whose idea was it to go and to ask the seer, to ask the prophet, hey, where are the donkeys? It wasn't Saul's, it was the servant, right? And then Saul shrugs his shoulders and goes, well, we don't even have a gift.

56:37

We're out of resources. We didn't plan ahead for this. And the servant says, no, I've got it. I'll take care of it. He's easily swayed by the people around him. He struggles to make decisive decisions.

56:51

He was unprepared. He didn't, tells us they were out for three days looking for these donkeys and you know what? He ran out of food. They were out of resources. He didn't think to prepare himself well enough to be ready for whatever the trip held.

57:07

Not to mention probably the most significant flaw that we see in Saul is that he's spiritually inept, spiritually lacking. He has no spiritual IQ that he's, as he meets this man of God, as he is told that God is gonna work in his life, it seems like he's just kind of standing there going.

57:30

You're the guy? Duh, right? We're introduced to the first king of Israel. God selected Saul. God chose Saul to be the first king of Israel. And God chose Saul, I believe, not because he knew that Saul was gonna fail, because there was a lot of good in Saul.

57:52

But I think God chose Saul to be the first king of Israel because God is giving Israel exactly what they asked for when they came and said, we need a king. We want a king like all the other nations have a king.

58:02

No, no, no, no, no, no, you don't, right? Remember, that was last week. No, you don't. No, no, no, no, no, no. This is a bad idea. No, no, we want a king. We want a king just like everybody else. We need a big, strong, tall, powerful guy to lead the army into battle, to go fight our fights for us.

58:18

Their perception of a king was shaped by worldly influences, by worldly pressures, and by the surrounding culture, what they saw in everybody else. And their perception of a king was incomplete at best.

58:33

Because while Saul was humanly impressive, as a man, he stood tall, he looked the part. But nevertheless, he wasn't a true leader because he was no spiritual leader in any way, shape, or form. This is the major point made that we see through chapter 9 and the significant chunk of chapter 10 that we looked at this morning.

58:54

Israel had prioritized worldly values over heavenly values, and God gave them exactly what they wanted. We want a king like all the other nations have a king. Okay. Saul was not what they needed. Trust me, they're going to come to realize that in the next few chapters.

59:17

In the rest of first Samuel, as we see Saul's leadership play out, they're going to come to realize that maybe Saul wasn't what they needed. Israel's hope was going to be wrongly placed in spiritually immature Saul, and their misplaced hope was going to result in disappointed expectations.

59:37

Saul's going to give us—no, he's not. Saul's going to—no, he's not. Saul—he's just a man. He was a spiritually immature man. He was a poor leader. Even in the face of their misdirected optimism, you know what?

59:56

God was at work. God was in the midst of all of this, because as we look at these stories, as we look at all these verses, seems to me like there's an awful lot of coincidence that happens in here, isn't there?

01:00:09

We see all these things that Saul takes off with a servant. He goes, by the way, he took the servant along with them, who was going to have some great ideas along the way. They're chasing some donkeys, and if they had found the donkeys on day one, you know what they don't do?

01:00:22

They don't bump into Samuel. If they had found the donkeys on day two, you know what they weren't going to do? Bump into Samuel. If they had given up, like Saul suggested, you know what they weren't going to do?

01:00:34

Bump into Samuel. God was lining all of these details up. God was in control of what seems to be minor details in this week's story. God led Saul to meet Samuel. God led them to be there exactly at the time that he ordained and planned for them to be there.

01:00:54

It tells us that Samuel was told the day before, hey, there's going to be a guy that comes marching up right here at this time of the day, have the food ready for him. God dropped Saul on Samuel's doorstep at the exact time that he said he was going to be there.

01:01:09

Samuel had been informed by God that Saul was coming, and the lost donkeys led Saul to be exactly where God wanted him to be exactly in that moment. God was working his plan in his perfect timing. Through all the small affairs of human life, God fulfills his covenant promises.

01:01:31

God fulfills his purposes in all the little details, all the little things that we can look at and go, well, that's strange. Well, that's a cool coincidence. Look how God brought Samuel there, and Saul was there, and the – time out.

01:01:48

It's not coincidence. We don't serve a God of coincidences. We serve a God who's in control. We serve a God that knows what's happening. God had promised to provide Israel with a king. God had selected Saul to be that king, and God was working his perfect plan in his perfect timing.

01:02:06

So I think all of this – I point out those details because I want them to point us back to something that we talked about a few weeks ago. You'll remember that as God was faithful to rescue his people from the oppression of the Philistines, gave them victory over the Philistines in that battle, you'll remember that Samuel set up that big monument stone, that Ebenezer stone that we saw a couple of weeks ago.

01:02:30

Samuel set that stone up, established that monument so that the people of Israel could look back and could remember that when they see that stone, they'll go, wait, no, no, God was faithful before. That means that I can assume that God's going to be faithful now.

01:02:46

That means that in the future when I'm scared, that in the future when I don't know what's going to happen, God's going to be faithful then as well. Remember how God worked in the past? Well, that means that that's going to inform our present, that we can trust God in the present, that we can trust God with the future.

01:03:01

If God was perfectly able to line up some lost donkeys and some dinner parties, God is certainly in control of the events in our lives as well. Because the reality is that life gets hard on us sometimes, doesn't it?

01:03:16

I look around the room, there's, you know, 75, 100 people, whatever it is in here. I look around, I don't know your life circumstances. I don't know everything that led you to this morning that brought you here this morning.

01:03:28

I'm sure in a group this size, there's some people that it took everything you had in you just to make it here this morning. You got some stuff going on in life, right? There might be some medical stuff over here, some work stuff over there, some financial stuff, some this and that.

01:03:43

There's some stuff in this room, I'm sure of it. But you know what? But when the water gets deep and you can't swim, God's in control. When things get scary and you don't know what the future holds, you know what?

01:03:59

I know that God knows what the future holds because he was able to tell Sam, hey, guess what? Tomorrow, this guy is going to come walking in. God knew what was coming. That gives us hope. That gives us meaning.

01:04:13

That gives us purpose. That gives us a peace that when life gets hard, it's okay because we know that God has been faithful before. We look back at that stone. We remember those moments where God was faithful before and we go, no, no, no, no.

01:04:26

I don't have to be afraid. I don't have to worry about how I'm going to make it through this. I don't have to try to figure out, God, what am I going to do? You just obey. You just trust. You just walk in the path that God has set out for you to walk and in the same way that it told Saul, hey, do what God tells you to do.

01:04:50

Live the way that God tells you to do. Follow God and do what your hand leads you to do. We make good choices. We do our best. We love God and we follow God and we live in the way that he's told us to live, but we don't carry the burden of what are we going to do tomorrow because we know that God's got tomorrow figured out.

01:05:12

If God is able to perfectly line up all the details in this week's story, he is certainly in control of the events of our lives as well. So that gives us an encouragement. Take heart this morning. Be encouraged this morning because God sees what's going on.

01:05:27

God knows what's going on in your circumstances and you know what? I want you to know God is in control. And God is working his plan in his perfect timing for his glory and for your good. We can trust that God has our good and his glory in mind in whatever it is that's going on in life.

01:05:50

So if God's bringing you through something, you know what? There's a reason for that and he's still good. The Bible tells us that, hey, human, earthly fathers, if you can give good gifts to your children, how much more can your heavenly father give you exactly what you need, exactly when you need it?

01:06:11

God doesn't look at us, he's not an abusive father, he's not a bad father. Some of us might have seen ugly from some men or women, parents that God has given to us in this life, but God is not like that.

01:06:24

God is the perfect father. God is a good father that gives good gifts to his children and so if God has brought you to something, God is going to lead you through it. If God has put this in your life, God sees and God knows and you know what?

01:06:38

God is still in control. So leave here with a smile, right? That's okay. The water might be deep, but you got some Jesus floaties on, they're going to be okay. Our prayer team is going to be down here after the service.

01:06:58

If you've got something going on in life, they would love, love, love, love to pray with you about whatever it is that's going on. You're too shy, you don't want to come down here and pray with the team.

01:07:07

If you go out the back doors and look to your right, we've got a prayer wall back there. You can write those prayer requests down and stick them in our prayer wall. We'd love to pray for you even if you don't want to come pray with us.

01:07:16

That's okay too, but leave here knowing that God's in control and it's going to be okay. All right. Would you pray with me now? God, we thank you for your love for us. We thank you for this beautiful story, this a little bit strange and a little bit of a winding journey, but God, we know that this story shows us that God, that you're in control and we can trust you.

01:07:42

God, that you are at work and you are accomplishing your purposes and God, as we see you giving Israel exactly what they demanded and asked for, God, as we're going to see Saul kind of wander off the path more than a few times.

01:08:01

God, I pray that you would use these stories, God, use these realities that we're going to look at and consider and study, God, use these stories to remind us what the blessed path of obedience looks like and God, the dangerous path of what the path of disobedience looks like.

01:08:23

God, help us to be obedient to walk in the path that you have set out for us. God, to trust that you are in control, and God, that we can simply walk in your ways and know that you're gonna sort out tomorrow.

01:08:36

God, we love you. We thank you so much for Jesus. We thank you for the opportunity that we have to come to you and to know you and to be yours, your son or your daughter through the work of Jesus. It's in his name we pray this morning, amen.