

A King Anointed

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[0 : 0 0] so we've skipped ahead a little bit more in the life and the story of Samuel as I said last week I'd love to have gone through this from beginning to end with you however I just don't have the time but maybe in the future maybe your future minister will take you through these books again that would be great but if you look back throughout human history you know we looked a bit this morning Alexander the Great as an example you will see that people have always been led they've always had leaders they've always had kings or chiefs or pharaohs or whatever you want to call them people have more or less always been led by powerful individuals there are of course a few famous exceptions if you look at ancient Athens for example or the Roman Republic there were occasions where people were led by some form of democracy or by you know senates and these kind of things Israel though was very very different of course they did have powerful leaders from time to time during their history when the occasion called for it they had great leaders such as Moses and Joshua and then the judges but they didn't have a king they didn't have a hereditary head of state they didn't have anything like that because Israel was in the unique position of having God himself as their king as their head of state but the sad truth was that for the people of Israel this was just not enough last week we we saw how Samuel had brought the people together again after many years of wandering and led them to repentance we heard how he interceded for them in prayer how he sacrificed to the Lord on their behalf how he led them to repent and confess and recommit their lives to God and to trust in

God to deliver them from their enemies which he did and to receive his blessing the people had been saved on that day from the Philistines they'd been saved by none other than their king they'd been saved by God but the very next thing that you read the very next thing that happens is they seem to have forgotten all this and they're asking Samuel for a king Samuel in chapter 8 we're told had grown old and he had pointed his sons to be his successor judges however like Eli's before him Samuel's sons had fallen to corruption not in religious matters it would seem this time but rather in judicial matters they were accepting bribes and perverting justice they weren't doing their jobs properly so people the people came to Ramah where Samuel stayed they came to see him and they asked him for a king you read about this in first Samuel 8 where it says in verse 4 then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah and said to him behold you are old and your sons do not walk in your ways now appoint for us a king to judge us like all the nations but the thing displeased Samuel when they said give us a king to judge us and Samuel prayed to the Lord

Samuel was not happily was not happy understandably with this situation you can think all he had been through to bring Israel back to God and now we're being told that they want to be like all the other nations they want to be like everyone else they want to have a king to judge them says in 8 chapter 8 verse 6 the Lord said to Samuel obey the voice of the people and all they say to you for they have not rejected you but they have rejected me from being king over them according to all the deeds they have done from the day I brought them up out of Egypt even to this day forsaking me and serving other gods so they are also doing to you now obey their voice only you shall solemnly warn them and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them God as always sees the truth of the matter he sees that the people had rejected him but despite everything he had done for them despite saving them from their enemies countless times despite leading them out of slavery in Egypt despite delivering them through the wilderness and giving them the land which they now dwell despite all of this they had rejected him but God rather than scorn them rather than getting Samuel to preach on the error of their ways instead God grants their request but not before warning them not before telling the people what it would mean for them to have a king there's a long list of things that they are warned about the people are warned that a king will take their sons and use

them as he pleases that they'll be put to work for military use or for the civil service or whatever the king had in mind the people would have to obey him we're told that he will ride on chariots and some would have to follow him on foot so the king would ride in splendor and comfort on these big chariots and yet the people would have to run beside him to keep up with him we're told he would appoint captains and the people would have no choice in the matter they would have to obey his orders if you were pressed into military service you couldn't turn around and say you know what actually

I think I'd rather be a farmer or I'm quite happy you know doing my job being a carpenter or building houses I think I'd rather not be in the army you know if the king told you you were going to be a captain in his army you were going to be a captain in his army you had no choice they were warned that their daughters would be taken to be cooks and bakers and to make perfume for the royal house again taking valuable skills away from the community and put into royal service he would even have the power to take their lands to take their fields something that was sacred to the people in a sense the people of Israel by having a king would be made into slaves to that king of a sort however despite these warnings the people seemed quite happy with this arrangement and happy to proceed chapter 9 goes into great detail about how God worked in an amazingly providential way to bring Saul into a position to be Israel's first king we didn't have time to read it all tonight but if you go home and you find yourself with a spare 10-15 minutes it would be good to read through the whole of 1st Samuel especially these chapters that we are having to skip but there's a really amazing example of how God uses again an ordinary situation just how God used the ordinary situation of Hannah to bring about Samuel and do great things he uses the ordinary situation of the case of some missing donkeys to bring about a great change in the nation of Israel in this case it was the anointing of their first king however most of us know

I'm sure how Saul's kingship went it didn't go very well but here at least Saul does portray some of the kind of majesty that he would later show during his kingship one commentator called his section on the life of Saul in his commentary he named the section majesty and mania which I think is a pretty good description for the life of Saul so let's look together then at three headings from 1 Samuel chapter 10 which is really going to be the focus of our study tonight we're going to look at a priestly anointing a spiritual anointing and a public anointing we read then in 1 Samuel 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

[9 : 09] Israel and you shall reign over the people of the Lord and you will save them from the hand of their surrounding enemies and this shall be a sign to you that the Lord has anointed you to be prince over his heritage now before we begin in earnest we do need to mention an issue that you may be aware of yourselves but depending on the version of the Bible that you are reading this verse may be very different or perhaps like the one the church Bible it will have a footnote or something explaining that there is a difference here between the Hebrew texts that we have access to and the Septuagint which is the Greek translation of the Old Testament the Hebrew text is quite shorter and this verse is a lot shorter all it says is then Samuel took a flask of oil poured it on his head and kissed him and said has not the Lord anointed you to be prince over his heritage it's quite a bit shorter than the one we read and the one that's in the ESV and some other translations

I think the version we read was the right version to read I think we were right to do that because it helps better feed in to the rest of the story that you read as you follow through chapter 10 it makes a better transition from the anointing to the signs that would soon follow but either way whether you prefer the shorter version or the longer version I think the overall message remains the same it remains true so I think we're going to stick with the version we have in our Bibles just for the sake of ease of access as it were so in the same way that Hannah had asked for Samuel had asked for a son Israel had asked for Saul they'd asked for a king albeit not fully aware of who it was that was to be their king both names as we saw right at the beginning are derivatives of the Hebrew word for ask they were given because they were asked for at the beginning of our passage Saul and Samuel are together and they're alone together for the first time Saul probably didn't have much of a clue as to what was going on he didn't really understand I think what was happening Samuel's actions would have been quite shocking to him I think having experienced this almost out of nowhere this simple series of events of going out to search for missing donkeys had now led him to this place of solitude with the great prophet Samuel himself how he poured oil on his head and now he was even being kissed by him kind of an act of loyalty was being shown to him and then

even more shocking are the words that Samuel speaks to him has not the Lord anointed you to be their prince to be their leader to be Lord over them to reign over the people of the Lord to save them from their enemies you can imagine that happened to you if you were going out to search for a missing dog or something in the park and all of a sudden someone came up to you and said oh by the way you're going to be king now would have been quite a shock

I'm sure Samuel had of course kind of been the de facto leader of Israel for many years now but now the Lord was using him to fulfill his purpose he was passing on that mantle of leadership to another Samuel was an important respected perhaps he was even revered by the people but God is infinitely more important infinitely more respective and should be infinitely more revered than any man whether he be prophet or king or whatever and although it is Samuel who is performing the action of anointing although it's Samuel that's pouring the oil on Saul's head it is really God that is performing the actual anointing it is God who is anointing his king Saul's anointing set him apart from the rest of the people it marked him as different it ordained him for a purpose in Saul's case he would be a king he would rule he would deliver his people he is being told this anointing is a private one there's just the two of them perhaps this was to give Saul time time to adjust to the news that he was going to be king of his people time to get it into his head perhaps that this shocking series of events had taken place that it was real that it wasn't a dream that it was true and that it's happening perhaps he still isn't totally sure he maybe is not convinced which is maybe why

Samuel tells him of these three signs he will encounter on the road something to help confirm to Saul what he has been told to reassure him that God is really behind this decision that he is to be their king firstly then we're told that he will encounter two men who will tell him that his father's donkeys have been found the thing which drew him away from home and into the situation he now faced was no longer a problem they had been found and they had been taken home and now his father is no longer concerned for his livestock but concerned now for his son thinking he's off in the wilderness and with his servant but they don't know where he is or where he's gone Saul's job then was now complete the donkeys didn't need finding anymore so these men would reassure him that they would pass on the news that he was okay to his father that there was no need to worry the second sign then he would encounter would involve three travelers that he would encounter on the road at the oak of Tabor these men will be carrying offerings to God things to take to the temple to sacrifice to God but of these things they would do something incredible and they will give Saul two loaves of bread and Saul we're told is to accept them in the beginning of chapter 9

[15 : 44] Saul mentions how he and his servant have no bread left how they have ran out of food in their search and now God is telling his anointed that he is going to provide for his needs he is going to receive bread that would have been intended for priests because now as his anointed one he has a kind of a holy status amongst the people he has a high honor amongst the people and he will be provided for from God's own hand that's the second sign then and the third one will be even stranger you read then in verse 5 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 tambourine flute and lyre before them prophesying then the spirit of the Lord will rush upon you and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man this is an interesting one firstly we're being told of a garrison of the

Philistine soldiers this would suggest that again the Philistines had reared their ugly heads and were posing a real threat to Israel and the fact they were located in a place whose name literally means the hill of God would add further insult to injury the Philistines have posed problems for Israel again and again and now Saul would be the king who would deliver his people from them we're told he would encounter a group of prophets we don't know much about them we're not told an awful lot we know that they were probably not prophets in the same way that Samuel was maybe they were prophets with a small p you know small p prophets as one scholar wrote but it is clear that they are being moved in some way by the spirit of God that their actions are one of worship of praise and that Saul will be moved by the spirit also when he encounters them that it will rush upon him we're being told in the same way that the spirit had rushed upon

Samson back again in the stories of the judges and then he will join with them he will become a small p prophet himself in a sense and we're told he will be turned into another man what this probably means is that Saul is receiving some kind of spiritual anointing again setting him aside for his new purpose that he will be the man who will save God's people from their enemies again this is an awful lot to take in it's an awful lot for us to take in can you imagine what it was like for Saul way

back then there's something else that is worth bearing in mind I've been talking about Saul as being king really for our benefit because that's how we understand him that's how we know him because we know how the story goes but if you actually look at the language that

Samuel is using not once does he tell Saul he's going to be king he never uses the word king he just uses the word prince maybe he still doesn't fully understand what is happening to him Saul has been given his orders Samuel's told him what will happen and what he must do and now it's time for him to go and do them so we have his priestly anointing and then secondly we have his spiritual anointing you read in verse nine when he 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 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

Saul leaves Samuel and goes on his way and goes on his journey and something amazing happens again it would seem as soon as his back is turned God instantly steps in and begins changing Saul again I think we need to look at this statement and just think about what it means I don't think it means that Saul was born again in that moment not in the same way that we are the Christians are today I think really a highlight one of the great sadnesses about Saul's reign because God had blessed him so greatly God had worked in his life in such a powerful way he had done so much for him that he was working to change him into the man he needed to be to rule his people that he gave him all of these signs that he blessed him so greatly and yet eventually

[21 : 22] Saul will instead go his own way and he forget what God has done to him ultimately not only losing his throne but also his very life he is evident he was working in Saul's life even from a young age as a young man he was just a simple man from the countryside he wasn't cosmopolitan he wasn't well educated he didn't he didn't have any of these kind of things he didn't really have any idea what was going on he didn't know what it was he was meant to do so God now is equipping him he's making him a new man in that sense he is equipping him for his newly appointed tasks and this verse reminds us that God often works very quickly it was almost as soon as he turned his back on Samuel that this change began to happen in his life it didn't take a long time God started right away we then see that the signs that Samuel described were then fulfilled that very same day there was no doubt there could be no doubt in Saul's mind there was no time to think and dwell on these matters to think oh well maybe it was a set up or maybe it was just coincidence but that very same day the three things happened

I do love this story one of the things that stands out from them and from this one particularly as we're looking at it tonight is once again the compassion and the patience of God we saw during Samuel's call just how God was patient with him how God called his name in such a gentle way and yet waited for Samuel to understand what was happening before revealing his true purpose and now we see God being patient with Saul we see him slowly guiding this man into an acceptance of his new role he's given a private moment with Samuel I can imagine only a handful of people in Israel had enjoyed a private moment with the great prophet and yet here he was a simple country boy being anointed as king he is then given three signs to help confirm this new calling in his life and God was working personally in his life to bring him to where he needed to be the Lord through Samuel had anointed Saul with oil had set him apart had ordained him for his new purpose and now the Lord was going to anoint him with the spirit we're told when he encountered the prophets that the spirit rushed upon him it's uncertain really what is happening a lot of the scholars don't have clear answers we obviously know Saul wasn't a prophet with a big P in the same way that Samuel was but it seems he was being caught up in the praise and the singing and the worship of this group of prophets that he encounters he's getting carried away with the whole experience and the spirit does touch him in some way to help bring him into this state of worship again I don't think this is a kind of permanent spiritual renewal it's not conversion in the same way that we might understand it but it's still quite a big deal it's still a big thing for the spirit of God to touch someone in such a way that makes them worship him in this way

Saul is again being confirmed he's being confirmed as the one to deliver Israel from their suffering and God is using this as a visible sign not only for Saul but also for the people because while his priestly anointing was private only him and Samuel saw it this one was public everybody in the area witnessed it Saul received the confirmation that he needs however it doesn't last because again if you follow the story of Saul from beginning to end you find out later on the sad news that the spirit

of the Lord departed from Saul for the true believer for the true Christian this isn't possible once you have the Holy Spirit dwelling within you it stays there forever but there are times where God may withdraw his favour from us for a short while if we backslide or something along those lines but once we have the spirit of God within us it never leaves us again which is one of the reasons I don't think Saul was converted in that way but throughout Saul's life he was comforted by his spiritual anointing until it was taken away from him it gave him confidence and yet that same spirit would be taken from him because of his sin and because of his disobedience it's one of the great privileges we have to be we have as Christians to be a child of God is even when we sin even when we grieve God by our actions he doesn't remove his spirit from us he doesn't forsake us he doesn't kick us out of the camp because we've done something wrong instead

[27 : 21] I often find that God draws us closer to himself in those moments when we sin he convicts us of that sin he leads us to repentance and confession of that sin he draws us closer to himself so that we may find forgiveness so that we can have reassurance he leads us to Christ who died for that sin that sin that we had just done Christ died for that one too and more and more through our life he shapes us and molds us into the image of Christ and throughout our lives we become more and more sanctified we become more and more like Jesus we have the desire to sin less and less it never goes away not in this life anyway but it will do one day how blessed we are how comforting this can be because we all know that we all make mistakes you all know when you've sinned and you've done something that grieves

God and yet he doesn't throw us out he draws us near to him how confident we can be that our God is always there for us unfortunately it wasn't the case for Saul anyway Saul is worshipping alongside the prophet and he has been seen he's been spotted by people who know him he can't keep it secret anymore something has changed in him we're told in verse six he's another man that he has another heart as it says in verse nine my son has escaped yes you have hello it's obviously evident to all who knew him previously that something had changed in Saul's life that he was a different man than the one he was maybe even the day before that something had changed within him a second question is then asked once people recognize is that

Saul is that the son of Kish how can that be he's he's not one of these kind of men but yet there he was a second question is then asked is Saul also among the prophets and this we're told became a proverb in Israel it was such a remarkable experience for people to witness this that it became a proverb it became a well-known statement among the equivalent maybe something you know like wonders never cease or never have seen that coming in a month of Sundays or these kind of ideas that something so strange had happened something so unexpected had occurred that nobody could ever have seen it coming and yet there it was Saul's inclusion among the prophets was shocking but the people were now aware that something was happening Saul's new position as leader of Israel was being revealed they had been crying out for years for leadership and now it was about to be provided so we have a priestly anointing a spiritual anointing and finally we have a public anointing

Samuel regathers the people together at Mispur the same place he had gathered them previously for their great time of repentance and he tells them since they rejected God as their king that God will give them what they asked for God had already chosen his man Samuel had already anointed him set him aside for his purpose Saul knew it Samuel knew it but now the people needed to know it they had seen something had happened in Saul but they probably didn't understand really what was going on so they drew lots not an unusual thing in the Bible it crops up quite a lot it can be used in various contexts as a means of figuring out what God's choice is for a certain situation so they work through the whole of Israel they start with the tribes and the tribe of Benjamin was then selected from them and then out of Benjamin the clan of the Matrites were selected and then out of that clan Saul the son of Kish was selected the man had been chosen the king had been revealed and when they looked for him they couldn't find him he wasn't there apparently despite everything that happened to him he still wasn't ready so he hid amongst the baggage however there was no hiding from God and God quickly tells them where he is hiding and he is brought out and he is announced by Samuel as king whereby the people then began chanting that now familiar phrase long live the king the people had their leader at last the thing they'd been desperate for for so long what does

Samuel say to them he says do you see him who the lord has chosen there is none like him among all the people his words are important here the people chose to demand a king they chose a human

ruler over a divine one but the choice for who this king was was not theirs but it was god's choice the lord had chosen this man there is none like him they are told saul had no choice he was now king it was public knowledge he couldn't hide from it anymore so he had to act accordingly we go on to read in saul's life how he would go to lead the people of israel into great victories but ultimately he would fail in the task that god had given to him he would decide to take matters into his own hands he would sin against god saul was anointed but he didn't fulfill the conditions of his anointing so samuel would go on later to anoint another king a king a man after god's own heart a man who would succeed saul as king and who would lead god's people into a golden age and that man of course was david but even the great king david would have moments of failure moments of disobedience moments of great sin but there is another there is a great king who is god's anointed one there is a man whom the lord has chosen and there really is none like him there is a man who never failed a man who never disobeyed a man who never sinned a man although he died like saul and like david did not stay dead but rather rose from the grave on the third day and is now in heaven at god's right hand god's anointed the messiah our savior the course the lord jesus christ jesus who died for the sins of the many who gave his life as a great atoning sacrifice that we may know god as father and experience fellowship with him jesus who built his church and we're told the gates of hell will not prevail against it jesus who loves you who wants you to love him jesus who never failed saul failed in his kingship jesus never has nor will he ever fail he cannot fail because he is god and god wants you to know him today he wants you to say those words long live the king but not look to our own thrones not look to kings who come and go and who die but look to the great king who is in heaven and is rooting for you so put your trust in him in the true king the king of kings the lord of lords the one who will never fail let's pray heavenly father we thank you for this wonderful story of the anointing of saul which points us towards the anointing of your great king of your only begotten son jesus christ who this story that reminds us that saul although he was king failed and fell away but jesus did not fail

[36 : 54] that he did his task and he is now at your hand that although he died he now lives and he loves us and wants us to follow him so help us to do that today lord to follow jesus to follow the great king of kings to praise him and give glory to him and serve him all the days of our life be with us lord and bless us in jesus name we pray amen