

The Chosen King Revealed

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[0 : 00] We've got another short history lesson for you this evening.

I quite like ancient history, if you hadn't already guessed. So I want to tell you about a year that happened in history. It's called the Year of the Four Emperors, and it happened in AD 69, just one year before the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple.

And it was really the first civil war that gripped the newly founded Roman Empire. The Roman Republic had quite a few civil wars, but this was the first one of the Roman Empire.

And it took place in the aftermath of Nero's death. And if you remember Nero at all, you know what a pretty awful emperor he was. I won't go into too much detail, but if you'd like to look it up yourself, it's a fascinating insight into what Roman imperial politics was like.

And in that one year, in the year 69, four men were proclaimed emperor of the Roman Empire. Different warring factions within the military and the Senate and all these things chose the man that they wanted to be emperor to rule the empire.

[1 : 18] Unfortunately, there can only really be one emperor at the end of it all, no matter what your preference may be. We only need to really look at our own political situation to know that political careers do not last forever.

When a leader's position becomes untenable, you find it difficult to keep a government going. Society starts to break down if it takes too long.

And this time was a tumultuous time for Rome. It threatened the peace and stability of the whole empire. This would not be the only time that something like this would happen.

The empire would go on, enduring its life, to have a year of the five emperors, and then a year of the six emperors in later years. The thing is, though, who is in charge is important.

It matters. This week we have seen how someone can quickly go from the very top of their political career to the very bottom in the space of only a few short hours.

[2 : 31] We can see the uncertainty that it brings, knowing that now, amidst the crisis and cost of living and the war in Ukraine and all these things, we're now going to have to wonder about who's going to be leading the government as well.

It's lots of uncertainty. Wondering who is in charge when things like this happen is important for society. Most world governments have procedures in place to make sure there's always someone to take over, always someone to be in charge in the event of a leader's death or something like that, or he's incapacitated or kidnapped or any of these horrible situations.

There always is a backup plan to make sure that there is someone in charge. Last week we looked at the anointing of Saul as the king of God's people, Israel.

We were told how the people rejected God as their king, how they demanded to have a human leader, and despite the warnings of how this would affect them, they still continued to demand it.

So God permitted it, and God chose from among their number Saul, the son of Kish, to be their king. And Saul's reign would initially be a good one.

[3 : 49] He would successfully defeat the Ammonites. He would fight against the Philistines and the Amalekites, well, pushing them back. For a time he faithfully worshipped God and would teach his people to worship God correctly.

He built altars to God. He kicked out of the nation practitioners of evil spiritual acts, necromancers and such. He started off good.

But then, unfortunately, he erred greatly. Saul took it on himself, not just to play out the role of king, but also to play out the role of priest, making burnt offerings himself rather than waiting for Samuel to come, as he should have done.

He also disobeyed the direct command of God to destroy the Amalekites and all of their livestock, keeping prisoners and the livestock for themselves, which would have repercussions down the line for Israel, which is recounted in the story of Esther.

So because of this disobedience, God rejected him as king. But God doesn't wait around. He moves very quickly to appoint a successor.

[5 : 02] He doesn't like to leave a power vacuum. Saul may have been a loyal worshipper of God on one hand, but he was also disobedient to him on the other.

Saul may have been chosen by God, and yet he was also rejected by him. The beginning of his reign was marked with controversy. With Samuel and God opposed to Israel's request for a king on the one hand, and yet God still granting their request and choosing Saul on the other.

And the end of Saul's reign has him tragically abandoned by God, even at one time resulting to consulting a medium in order to find guidance.

God's king, the people's king, had been rejected. So once more the people were left without proper leadership. Saul was still king, but he was a king that God had rejected, and so they needed a solution.

They needed someone to follow. They needed someone who would lead them well. And so God steps in once more and sends Samuel to do what could possibly be his most important task of all, to anoint Saul's successor king, which of course was David.

[6 : 23] So three things we're going to look at tonight from 1 Samuel 16. You're really going to be focusing on the first half of the chapter there. We're going to look at a provided king, an unassuming king, and a spirit-filled king.

Let's read together, if you have your Bibles there, from the first verse 1 of chapter 16. The Lord said to Samuel, How long will you grieve over Saul, since I have rejected him from being king over Israel?

Fill your horn with oil and go. I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king amongst his sons. And Samuel said, How can I go?

If Saul hears of it, he will kill me. And the Lord said, Take a heifer with you and say, I have come to sacrifice to the Lord, and invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do.

And you shall anoint for me him whom I declare to you. I once heard it said, I can't remember where, that if you have two different people in a room together, you'll end up with four different opinions.

[7 : 31] Because that's how human beings are, isn't it? We are very quickly able to disagree with one another. We don't like to get on sometimes.

We like to disagree. You know, we like these reality TV shows that have people fighting against each other, you know, arguing, because we like conflict, don't we?

We might not like to say it, but we do. We like conflict. We like to compete against one another. We like people to think that, you know, our side is the right one. That we are superior.

That we are the ones that have the right answer. That your answers are wrong. Your choices are wrong. And ours are right. That word choice.

It's a word that's possibly one of the most influential in our society today. Sometimes a person's choices are regarded as almost law. If someone chooses to change themselves into whatever they want, then you can't question it.

[8 : 32] It's as if it's the law. If a person chooses to join a political party, again, you can't question that choice because it's almost like it is law. It is their right. Choosing is, in a sense, the new gospel in our society.

And no one has the right to question your choices because they're yours and you can choose whatever you like. What then happens in Israel is that we end up with two factions.

We end up with two groups of people. Two groups who disagree with one another. Israel has become a polarized state.

On one side you have team Saul, the people who are loyal to the king. He was the king after all they had asked for. He was the king after all that God had given them.

Samuel himself had anointed him and he was our leader. He was the man God had chosen for the task. Yes, he made mistakes. I'm sure he was very sorry about it.

[9 : 38] Can't we just move on and carry on as if nothing had happened? Who hasn't made mistakes? We should just stick with Saul. And on the other team you have the prophet Samuel and

his followers.

You have God's chosen prophet. The man who God used to return the word to his people after a prolonged drought. A man who restored the priesthood to a place of honor.

A man who judged the people and judged them well. A man who himself had anointed King Saul. These two groups, they were now not friends.

Samuel was grieved though. He didn't like the fact that they were now in conflict. In 1 Samuel 15 verse 35 we hear, Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death.

But Samuel grieved over Saul. And the Lord regretted that he had made Saul king over Israel. Samuel was against the idea of a king all along.

[10:48] And yet God had commanded him to anoint one. The one he had chosen for the people. Remember that from 1 Samuel chapter 8 verse 22. And the Lord said to Samuel, Obey their voice and make them a king.

Samuel had done what the Lord had asked of him always. He had obeyed. So you can imagine his great disappointment when Saul's kingship turned out the way it did.

This was the man God had chosen. This was the man I anointed in private on that day. This is the man I told of the signs that would confirm his calling.

I had poured the oil on his head. I had kissed him in loyalty. And yet he has defied God. And he has defied me. Samuel was a great prophet of God.

And yet he was still affected by the failure he had presided over. Israel would come to suffer because of Saul's disobedience.

[11:55] And remember how Samuel cared for the people. Remember how he promised to continue to pray for them always. He said, you know, if I don't pray for you, I'm sitting against God. I'll never do that. I'll always pray for you.

This feeling isn't unique to Samuel. Jeremiah felt the same way. You know, he just could not bring himself to rejoice when so much evil was happening to God's people.

The apostle Paul felt the same way at the beginning of Romans 9 when he laments for his people, the Jewish people who are not saved. He suffers unceasing anguish for them.

He even says he wishes he could exchange places with them. Jesus too felt this way. And he lamented over the lost. In Jerusalem, in Matthew 23, verse 37, when he cried, O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it, how often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing.

These are the consequences of sin. The consequences of sin grieve the servants of God. Any involved in Christian work and in leadership will undoubtedly find themselves in situations where you just feel like crying, where you just feel like weeping, where you just can't contain any more the anguish or the terribleness of sin and its consequences.

[13:31] And that's okay. Grieving is okay. But too much grieving can distract us. So God rebukes Samuel. He says, how long will you grieve?

Don't you know it was I that chose Saul? Don't you know it was I that have rejected him? It is I who has been in complete control over the situation. It is I who was slighted by his disobedience.

The soul's failure tragedy, of course it was, but it's not the end of the world. God needs Samuel to remember that he is the one in complete control.

Remember, Samuel, I chose him, I rejected him, and now I will replace him. God will provide a new king for his people. I say that.

Have you noticed that a subtle difference between both statements of God's provision of a king? Previously, God said to Samuel, make them a king.

[14:32] Now he says, I have provided myself a king. This king is going to be different. Saul was for them, but David is for me, God says.

Saul was the king the people wanted. The people had chosen him for themselves. He was their king. David would be God's king.

Not the king of God, but rather a king after God's own heart. God ultimately chose Saul for the people. They rejected God. Their king rejected God, and now God had rejected him.

David was the king that God chose for himself. And how much more beneficial he would turn out to be for the people. And not just for the people of ancient Israel, but for all the people of the world in all of history.

Just as God had promised Abraham all the way back in Genesis 12, I will make you a great nation. I will bless you and make your name great so that you will be a blessing.

[15 : 42] I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed. God had not forgotten that promise.

Neither had he forgotten another promise made in Genesis 17. I will make you exceedingly fruitful. I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you.

And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant to be God to you and to your offspring after you.

Remember, friends, God keeps his promises. And through his choice of a king for himself, the greater king would come.

The greater king who would save the people of the world from their sins. The son of David, the son of God, Jesus Christ. A king that God himself provided.

[16 : 44] So we have a provided king. Secondly, then we have an unassuming king. 1 Samuel chapter 16 verse 4 reads, Samuel did what the Lord commanded and came to Bethlehem.

The elders of the city came to meet him trembling and said, Do you come peaceably? And he said, Peaceably, I have come to sacrifice to the Lord. Consecrate yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice.

And he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice. When they came, he looked upon Eliab and thought, Surely the Lord's anointed is before me. But the Lord said to Samuel, Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as a man sees. The Lord looks on the outward appearance. Sorry, man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.

See, we have these two groups coming together. Samuel is initially afraid to go to Bethlehem because he thinks if Saul hears where he's gone, he may think, What's he going to do?

[17 : 51] Is he going to try and replace me? He fears for his wife. The people in Bethlehem were frightened too. They thought, Oh no, here comes Samuel.

What's he wanting? They maybe knew that he had anointed Saul. They probably knew. They should have known. Maybe they thought, Oh, he's the judge. Maybe we've done something wrong. Maybe he's come to prophesy against us.

There's fear in Israel at this time. Samuel did what the Lord asked him to do. Despite this fear, Saul probably would have feared Samuel if he knew what he was going to Bethlehem to do.

But God gives Samuel instructions. God reassures him, tells him he'll not be harmed. Simply follow my commands. Just do what I say and you will be well.

1 Samuel 16, verse 11. Then Samuel said to Jesse, Are all your sons here? And he said, They yet remain the youngest. But behold, he is keeping the sheep.

[19 : 04] And Samuel said to Jesse, Send and get him. We will not sit down till he comes here. And he sent and brought him in. And now he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome.

And the Lord said, Arise, anoint him, for this is he. And Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers. And the spirit of the Lord rushed upon David from that day forward. And Samuel rose up and went to Ramah. One by one, Samuel goes through all of Jesse's sons. And one by one, God rejects them all.

Firstly, he comes across Eliab, a man who must have been a man of great stature, a strong man, a handsome man. So Samuel thinks to himself, This must be him. He must be the man that God has chosen.

After all, Saul was such a man. He was big. He was strong. If you look at royal portraits throughout history, they all portray kings as being men of great stature, men of great strength.

[20 : 07] You know, they had good looks. They'd often be dressed as a warrior, you know, in armor, with a sword. These kind of things. These are the men who the world sees as being fit to lead.

They look the part. But God says no. Do not look upon these things as qualifications alone. They may be how men judge, but it's not how I judge.

I care about the inside, what is on the heart. This is something that you need to consider right now as you look for a minister to call.

You need to make sure that whoever you choose has the right heart. Don't just look for someone who looks the part. Saul looks the part and push came to shove.

He just wasn't made of the right stuff. So make sure that you pay attention to the right thing. David, of course, was a handsome boy, but he was young.

[21 : 10] He was small. He probably wasn't very physically, you know, scary looking. Of course, he would grow into a great warrior, and his skill as a warrior is mentioned later on in the chapter.

But at this point, he was still small. He was still young. Probably not very strong, but very skilled. Why David was not in the house is a matter of some debate.

Perhaps he was just being a moody teenager and didn't want to be in the house, or maybe because he was the youngest, he got all the rubbish jobs. We just don't really know.

But like Saul, who hid in the baggage, the Lord brings him out into the open and reveals him. And who is the Lord's king?

Who is the man of his choosing? Not the tall or oppressive, not the strong and the mighty, but the smallest and the youngest of the sons of Jesse.

[22 : 11] Way back when, we looked back at Hannah's prayer. Seems such a long time ago now, but can you remember what she said about the might of man? Hannah said in 1 Samuel 2, verse 9, she said, He will guard the feet of his faithful ones, but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness.

For not by might shall a man prevail. Not by might. Rather, when the heart is right, even the unassuming can be used for great things by God.

There are many great, famous ministers and preachers out there. The ones that sell books, the ones that have podcasts, the ones that go to conferences and do all these things that are really great.

But there are also many great, unassuming ministers and preachers out there. The ones that aren't famous, the ones that quietly get on with their day job, the ones that serve God faithfully without writing books or, you know, teaching or any of these things.

They may seem insignificant compared to some of these, you know, great men, but they're really not. From the outside, David may have seemed insignificant. Many would have discounted him probably without a second thought.

[23 : 32] Oh, he's just the wee boy watching the sheep. But not God. God, of course, knows him better than anyone. God sees in him something special.

God sees great potential in him. He sees a good heart in him. So he is the man God chooses for his king. So make sure you do the same in your search for a minister.

So we have a provided king, an unassuming king, and finally we have a spirit-filled king. Read in verse 13, Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers.

And the spirit of the Lord rushed upon David from that day forward. And Samuel rose up and went to Ramah. Remember last week when Saul was anointed, his anointing was done in private.

His public reveal didn't come until later on. But here, David, the youngest brother, in the presence of his family, is anointed king over all Israel.

[24 : 47] Of course, he wouldn't become actual king until later on, but you can imagine the atmosphere in that house at that time about what was going on. It's really reminiscent of Joseph, isn't it?

One of the younger brothers who would go on to become the leader of all his brothers. But you remember how his brothers felt about this. They weren't too keen. They weren't too happy with the situation.

And here, David is anointed king by the great prophet Samuel in front of all his older brothers. And it would seem from the way the text reads that almost instantly the Spirit of God rushed upon David.

God had chosen him. He had now been anointed. And now he was being equipped for the great struggles he would face in the coming years.

God equips his servants for the tasks for the tasks he sets them. Remember, God did the same for Saul. But as verse 14 reminds us, the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul.

[26 : 03] It didn't last forever. His rejection was complete. But David is different. David, we are told, had the Spirit of God on him from that day forward.

It didn't leave him like it left Saul. It stuck with him. It shaped him all his life. Although, of course, as David's story unfolds, we'll see he is not perfect.

He had his sins and his failures, some of them great and terrible things. Unlike the son of David who would come, he was not sinless. He was just like you and me. Just a human being.

He had his flaws. But David had a heart for God. He had the Spirit of the Lord powerfully working within him from that day forward. I want you to consider something here tonight.

The same Spirit of God who equipped David for his work. The same Spirit of God who rushed down upon David's son and David's Lord, Jesus Christ, at his baptism in the form of a dove.

[27 : 10] That same Spirit that equipped Jesus for his ministry that equipped David to go through all the troubles he would go through. That same Spirit who helped Jesus go through horrendous troubles, horrendous torture, horrendous death.

The same Spirit that helped him through it all is the same Spirit that we have. The same Spirit that descends upon us when we become followers of Jesus, when we become Christians.

The same Spirit that gives us new life, that gives us new birth, is the same Spirit that comforted the saints of all and the Son of God himself.

How comforting is that to you? It should be greatly comforting. To know that when our own troubles come, that the same Spirit of God that comforted David and Jesus himself also is there to comfort us.

We use the word comfort a lot in our modern world. You see it on furniture adverts, these fancy blanket hoodie things you can buy. I don't know if you have one or not.

[28 : 24] We don't. But we like comfort. We like big cozy chairs or comfy cars, all these things. But if you actually look at what the word comfort means, where the original word comes from, it comes from the Latin, the Latin *comfortis*, which means to strengthen much.

When we talk about the Holy Spirit comforting us, that is what we mean. We mean the Holy Spirit is strengthening us much, helping us through our life, strengthening us.

Samuel's job is now really complete. He crops up again a couple of times, but his major task has been complete. Samuel was a great servant of God.

He came from humble beginnings, and yet he was the man who would anoint the chosen king of God from whom would eventually come the Messiah himself, the Savior of mankind.

That is the Savior, friends, that you should look to tonight. David was a great king. He had his great failings.

[29 : 37] And of course, he died. Don't look to him. Look to the king that came through his line. Look to the king who was David's lord.

Trust in Jesus Christ. Give your lives to him and be comforted, be strengthened much by the knowledge he will never leave you nor forsake you.

God chose a great king in David. We have an even greater king in Jesus. So look to him.

Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you for the story of Samuel that we have skimmed through in these last few weeks.

I'm really sorry we don't have time to discuss every chapter, but what we have looked at has been really encouraging to know and to look on how you've worked through your servants throughout history to bring the coming of your son.

[30 : 43] We're thankful how you use people from humble beginnings, from simple origins to do great things. We're thankful how you take ordinary situations of life and use them to do great things.

We thank you how you have worked throughout history, how you have guided events, how you have ordained what would come to pass so that your son will be born into this world through the line of David, fulfilling all prophecy as the Messiah, as the Savior of us all.

We're so thankful for him, for his goodness, for his life, for his death, for his resurrection, for his ascension, and for his return when it comes.

Help us, Lord, tonight to depend on him, to rest in him, to trust in him, and to be strengthened by your spirit, to be comforted by him, knowing that he is the same spirit who comforted and strengthened David.

He is the same spirit who equipped and comforted Jesus during his ministry. He is the same spirit who equipped and comforts us for the work you have for us.

[32 : 12] Lord, be with us, encourage us in Christ, and bless us all tonight. And if we do not yet know Jesus as Lord, if we've been sitting on the fence for a long time, if we've never made any profession, then Lord, may tonight be the night where you awaken our hearts by that same spirit who comforts your children.

May you bring new life to those who need it. May you bring reassurance and hope to those who have it. Thank you.

Thank you so much. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen. Amen.