

Read 1 Sam 10:1 p281

- I wonder if you know the word “**ambivalence**”.
  - Sometimes people say, “I’m feeling very ambivalent about artificial intelligence”.
  - “I’ve got conflicting feelings towards it.”
    - On the one hand: It’s very useful and very clever
    - But on the other: I’m nervous about where it’s going to lead”.
- **There’s** the Cambridge University Press **definition** “*The state of having two opposing feelings at the same time or being uncertain about how you feel*”.
- Last week we **picked up** our studies in 1 Samuel from where we left off in 2019.
  - And we come in particular a section where Israel gets its first **Messiah**: Saul (Messiah means anointed King).
  - But after last week we are feeling **ambivalent**.
- A king **wasn’t wrong** in and of itself.
  - Deuteronomy 17 allows for a King in God’s law.
  - But the King had to fulfil certain conditions, especially to obey God!
  - You could say that a King had to be under God’s Kingship.
    - Or “A ruler must rule under God’s rule”- which is our title today.
- And last week we saw the people’s **motives** for a King.
  - #1) To be like all the other nations
  - #2) because they were dissatisfied with the leadership at the time
  - But ultimately because #3) they wanted to reject God as their King.
- Well as we work through the Saul narrative in 1 Samuel 8-16 we’re going to have this ongoing feeling of **unease** about the King.
  - But stick with it, it’s going to be very instructive in teaching us
    - About ourselves and our wayward hearts
    - About leadership especially through negative example
    - And ultimately about God’s Son Jesus who is THE Messiah.
- We’ve got a long but wonderful story today which we’ll read in **three** parts.
- Here’s the placeholder headings I’ve put in place as we see **God Gives the people their King**:
  - 9:1-24 **Find my Iphone!**
  - 9:25-10:8 **Listen Closely 007!**
  - 10:9-16 **Wonders Never Cease!**
- **So Beth if we can have 9:1-24 read please first.**

## 1) FIND MY IPHONE .... (9:1-24)

- Let's walk through the **story** and then let's learn the **significance**.
  - In **v1-2** we are introduced to **Saul**. He's a funny mix.
    - He's from the **smallest** tribe: Benjamin
    - Yet he's the **tallest** man "a head taller than anyone else".
      - (spoiler alert: in the last chapter I'm afraid his head is going to be **cut off**, like others in this book who lose their head).
    - His name means "asked for". Do you remember, the ppl ask for king!
  - Then we have the **donkeys. (v3-5)**
    - And I just love this don't you.
    - Isn't life so full of ordinary events?
    - But the God of the extraordinary loves to use ordinary events.
    - I'm sure you'll think of some examples for your lifegroup this week.
      - Delayed trains,
      - emergency hospital trips,
      - broken down cars (!)
    - God can use them all.
      - By the way those donkeys likely represent a big chunk of the family wealth, so they needed finding,
  - 3 times we read that they can't be traced.
  - I love **v5** "Come let's go back or my father will stop thinking about the donkeys and start worrying about us".
  - But next we have **the cunning plan. (v6-10)**
    - The servant knows there's a prophet or seer nearby.
    - Someone who knows God's mind and speaks God's word
    - So it turns into an 11<sup>th</sup> century BC equivalent of "Find my Iphone".
  - Well off they trot to Zuph and the timings are perfect.
    - Samuel is coming to bless the sacrifice
    - And then there'll be a feast.
    - They should be able to catch him just in time (well what did you know!)
    - So the quest for donkeys becomes a quest for Samuel.
  - But a bit like an episode of Traitors the viewers (or in our case the readers) are let into **the secret**. And it's two revelations in **v15-17. KEY VERSES**.
    - God has revealed to Samuel that this very day at this very time a Benjaminite will come. Q for donkeys, Q for Samuel, Q for ruler.
    - And as he comes, God tells Samuel, "this is the man".
    - Well, before Saul has a chance to ask for help with the donkeys,
      - Samuel is telling Saul that the donkeys are fine, v20
      - telling him that all the desire of Israel is on him, (namely the desire for a King).
      - and he's invited with his servant as guest of honour at the **feast. (v18-24)**.
      - He must have been flabbergasted.
  - Well that's the story. What's the significance?

I think we see that **GOD GIVES THE PEOPLE THEIR KING**

## 1) WITH **COMPLETE CONTROL**

- Do you see how God is in control of all the events?
- He's appointing a ruler, the ruler that the people want,
  - But actually HE is the ruler.
  - He is the one that organises.
- Now I know that there's an ambivalence about this ruler, as we'll see as we go on, but
  - God is very gracious (he hears the cries of his people v16)
  - God is very merciful (for all Saul's flaws he does act as a Saviour up to a point)
  - And above all God is completely sovereign.
    - That means he's in complete control.
- He's the God of the details.
  - Sometimes we see that.
  - Sometimes we're let into the secret so we can see what he's doing.
  - A lot of the time we just have to trust him through all the mess and the uncertainty.
    - Lord why did I have to get ill
    - Lord why did I lose my job
    - Lord why did you put me through all that?
  - ▲ One of you was telling me that recently you got moved out of one team and into another team at work, and you were a bit disappointed.
    - But then that whole team got made redundant.
- Sometimes we don't see what's going on behind the scenes. And so...
- We've got to **trust God's HAND. His perfect control of the details.**
  - And that's the application of this section I think.
    - Seeming chance events. Scholars call it **meticulous providence**<sup>1</sup>.
    - Next time you lose your Iphone or leave your coat on a train
    - First you can call on God to help find it
    - Don't just treat him as a cosmic butler there to fix your problems
  - But trust him deeply with your life and eternity, And whether you find it or not, trust his absolute sovereignty in working out his purposes.
    - Look for opportunities to bless the person in lost property office.
    - Perhaps the Lord is leading you to share the gospel with them.
- What are you going through at the moment?
  - **He's completely in control in**
    - Donkey searches, job searches, health check ups, disappointments,
      - **In choosing a King.**
      - And he organised everything for the arrival of King Jesus.
        - From centuries of prophecy
        - To a Roman Census
        - To a virgin birth

---

<sup>1</sup> See a great talk on this from Warboys Baptist by Matthew Bingham. Search "meticulous" [here](#).

Well let's move to part 2 of the story.

## **2) LISTEN CLOSELY 007! (9:25-10:8)**

- Let's look at the **story** as before, before the **significance** and the application.
- There's a strong emphasis all the way through on **Samuel's directions**.
- We don't know exactly what they talked about on the **rooftop (v25-27)**, which in that climate would have been a nice place to chat after the day's events, but it looks like Saul has to wait for the next day for a message from God that will explain everything.
- 10:1 is really important as we see **the Anointing (v1)**.
  - **V1.**
  - This must have come as a big surprise to Saul.
  - The oily goodness of Extra Virgin Olive Oil poured all over his head.
  - He must have wondered what was going on.
  - This had happened before to priests set apart for serving God
  - But not Mr Tall from Tribe small.
- But the Message from God was going to explain it all.
  - V1 "Has not the Lord anointed you ruler (or prince- the word King isn't actually mentioned yet) over his inheritance".
- (I got a bit geeky with the history of the Coronation when I did a talk on it for the men's breakfast<sup>2</sup> a couple of years ago. It's still on our website).
  - And although Charles became King **when his mother died**.
  - And perhaps the **placing of the crown** or coronation is the "crowning moment" certainly visibly and publicly.
  - There's a point where the individual **goes behind screens** (because it's considered sacred) and is anointed with oil
  - That's the point before God where someone is set apart for his service.
- A random donkey chase that leads to Mr tall being made RULER!
  - What's clear is that (even though Saul is a flawed leader) it's GOD who has made him the leader. And he needs to listen to GOD'S DIRECTIONS.
    - That's the case all through Scripture.
    - The King in Deuteronomy 17 is to write a copy of the Law and he's to *"read it all the days of his life so that he may learn to revere the Lord his God and follow carefully all the words of this law"*
    - And in the Psalms: the Psalm 2 King needs to be a Psalm 1 man who obeys the law of the Lord.
    - A RULER MUST RULE UNDER GOD'S RULE!
- Samuel goes on in the rest of the section to give some more **directions** from the Word of God **(v2-8)**. Listen closely Saul.

---

<sup>2</sup>[https://christchurchhuntingdon.co.uk/Media/Player.aspx?show\\_popout=true&show\\_media=305223&show\\_file=335896](https://christchurchhuntingdon.co.uk/Media/Player.aspx?show_popout=true&show_media=305223&show_file=335896)

- I won't go into all the details here,
  - But there are **3 signs**, very specific, including:
    - specific numbers of people and goats and loaves of bread
    - all of which come true,
    - and a prophetic empowerment (which we'll come onto)
  - 3 signs But there are also **2 commands**.
    - V7: "Do whatever your hand finds you to do".  
(that's a bit cryptic but likely refers to the fact that Saul was due to deliver the people from their marauding enemies the Philistines, so it's likely a reference for Saul to engage in battle against them. That's also what the phrase meant in Judges 9)
    - THEN command 2 v8: More clearly go to Gilgal and wait 7 days.
  - Tragically we are going to see that the signs happen but the commands aren't obeyed, or not fully.
- For now, let's think about the lesson.

## GOD GIVES THE PEOPLE THEIR KING

### 2) **WITH CLEAR COMMANDS**

- A King is under the command of God.
- Ever since the garden of Eden where Adam and Eve were to be God's viceroys ruling over the world, us humans are to rule **God's way**.
  - And he tell us his way in HIS Word.
  - That word is found for us in the Bible.
- Samuel is a book about leadership.
  - Wouldn't it be great if all the leaders of the world prioritised God's word?
  - And for us whether people follow us as a
    - A parent
    - A friend
    - An elder
    - Or on Social media
  - We need to represent God well by living under his Word, speaking of Jesus. Speaking graciously, with the Fruit of the Spirit we learn about in God's word.
- The application is we need to **PRIORITISE GOD'S WORD**.
  - We're going to see this again and again in 1 Samuel.
- We are looking for a new Assistant minister to join the staff team.
  - He must be a man who loves and lives God's word.

- We are looking for an army of people to help rule over the Tech and the refreshments and the
  - We need to do it with obedience to God's ways.
  - If God's word says we serve the body, we do it.
  - If God's word says we do it humbly, then no task is too lowly.
  - If God's word says we keep our word, then we turn up when we've agreed.
- This book is your life! Read it, mark it, inwardly digest it.  
Above all put it into practice.

The last section please Beth, which I've called Wonders Never Cease!

### **3) WONDERS NEVER CEASE! (v9-16)**

- The procession. V9-13
- Well all these signs happen v9, especially the one about Saul becoming a prophet.
- A prophet is someone who speaks the Word of God
- And empowered by the Holy Spirit of God, it seems Saul was given miraculous insight (perhaps in the way that Samuel had 2 days before to know the future).
  - Not all the details are clear, but the eyewitnesses are bowled over.
- In fact it becomes a bit of a proverb or saying from that day forwards (v12) "Is Saul among the prophets".
  - I guess if something extraordinarily unexpected happens we might use the saying "Wonders never cease"
- But they used "Is Saul among the prophets". It kind of went down in history as a saying!  
What's happened to Saul!
- But the Spirit isn't just given for miraculous utterance and displays of impressive power.
  - The Sword of the spirit is the Word of Truth.
  - The Word and Spirit go hand in hand.
- And how did Saul get on with those commands?
  - A ruler must rule under God's rule?
  - It seems to be there's a deafening silence on his obedience.
- We'll see more next time. Tragically Saul doesn't seem to be the King after God's heart. And the book of 1 Samuel will point us to another 2 Kings. David and ultimately THE ANOINTED ONE. THE MESSIAH. Jesus.
- But can I point out another thing as we see the last paragraph. The
  - There's a little question in v14-16.
    - **Where have you been?**
    - It's understandable all this time.
    - Here's a volleyball set- setting up ready for
      - the truth,
      - the whole truth and nothing but the truth.
    - But Samuel only tells half the story.

- It's surprising isn't it.
- You'd think he'd spill the beans about being made King.
- Could it just be shyness or humility?
- It's all going to come out anyway in next week's passage.
  - Or is there a hint here not all is well.
- Well as we leave our passage, still only 2 people (as well as we the readers) know what's going on.
  - We've had a search for donkeys which turned into a search for a prophet which turned into a search for the King.
  - And most of Israel including his own family are none the wiser.
- There's a kind of secrecy about the Kingdom.
  - It's not seen or recognised by all yet.
  - That theme will come back again later in the book, particularly after David is anointed.

## GOD GIVES THE PEOPLE THEIR KING

### 3) WITH SURPRISING SECRECY

- The section reminds me of some of the people who meet Jesus in the gospels.
- How many of them recognise him as the Messiah?
  - Pharisees don't want him.
  - Some just see him as a prophet.
  - Many reject him. How could he be the one all history has been waiting for!?
- Let's not make the same mistake when it comes to THE KING.
  - Do you remember those parables from Matthew 13.
    - "The SECRET of the kingdom has been given to you".
- We need to RECOGNISE GOD'S KING.
  - God has anointed a King over our world.
    - He is so much better than Saul.
  - Yes Saul was going to be a help, but ultimately Saul was a failure.
    - Ambivalent!
  - But we aren't going to have mixed feelings about Jesus!
    - We have in Christ God's King.
      - The One King who did obey God's word.
      - The king we need.
      - A King who (as we are going to remember in communion shortly) paid for all our sins with his blood.
        - He died in our place.
          - The Servant King.
          - The truthful King.

- If you ask around **Huntingdon** very few people recognises him as their King, even though he is “THE ANOINTED ONE” that’s what CHRIST means.
  - Most of the world sees **him** as a swear word
  - Some **come to church** because it’s part of their culture
    - or because it gives them a warm feeling
- But the **online influencers, the celebrities, the people around us**, they are the ones who we actually let rule our lives and form our opinions practically.
- Do you?
  - Do you recognise him as YOUR king?
  - Do you submit to him as Lord?
  - Do you trust him as your rescuer.
- Let’s take a moment of quiet to look over those **3 lessons in red** and think about which one we most need to take away with us this week for the situations we are in.
  - TRUST GOD’S Sovereign HAND
  - PRIORITISE GOD’s WONDERFUL WORD
  - RECOGNISE GOD’S PERFECT KING.
- A moment of quiet prayer