

Series: Shepherd, Poet, Fugitive, King - The Life of David
1 Samuel 9-10:27 – Finding a King for the People / Ryan Patty / 10.29.23

Scripture Reading: 1 Samuel 8:4-9 (CSB)

Have you ever had high expectations for something and it turned out to be a massive disappointment? When I was in the 6th grade I was pretty obsessed with basketball and I saw these shoes that could make you jump higher. They had this big platform on the front half of the shoe and so your heel was constantly off the ground and the idea was that your calves would get stronger and before long you would be able to dunk! At least, that's how my brain thought about it.

I wore them one time and that was enough. After playing ball for 2 hours in a park I literally could not walk for the next week. My calves would cramp, my shins hurt. They were a disappointment, I was disappointed... And for those of you wondering I ended up being a great dunker... in another life.

Another time, I think it was that same year, my buddy got something called a hit-away. He was bragging about it non-stop. It was supposed to improve your hitting in baseball. I didn't even play baseball (some of you that play church-league softball with me clearly know this) This was for him, not me. The ball is connected to two rubber bands, they are tied to a pole, you hit the ball, it wraps around the pole, then comes back around and you can hit it again. You never have to chase a ball! He's excited for it, he wants me to try it out. I kid you not, first swing, I miss the ball, I hit a piece of the rubber band, (I'm still holding the bat mind you), the bat bounces off the rubber, and comes back and hits me directly in the eye. I have a huge black eye at school all week.

His high expectations were a massive disappointment for me. And while those are silly examples, this happens all the time. We have high expectations for a car we buy, only to have to put 2k dollars in it in the first 3 months. We have high expectations for a job, only for it to feel like we aren't appreciated and valued for the work we do. This can happen in interpersonal relationships too. From our interactions with friends, spouses, or kids, we are expecting one thing, and are let down instead. High expectations, followed by disappointment.

As we turn to 1 Samuel 9 and 10 today, I want us to keep God's Words from our Scripture reading in chapter 8, verses 4-9 in the back of our minds.

God says that the people have ultimately rejected him as king, and he warns them what a king will do. Yet, God is merciful. He will provide the king that they want, a king the people desire so they can be like the surrounding nations. They have high expectations for this king, but as we will see in the coming weeks these expectations, that the people have for their king, will end in massive disappointment.

1 Samuel 9 is where we are starting out. I have four things for us to consider this morning from these two chapters, four broad scenes concerning what is happening, and if you're taking notes here they are:

1. The Right Appearance (Introduced one at a time via the slide, not all four at once)
2. An Underlying Providence
3. The Prophesied King
4. A Foretaste of What is to Come

I hope to provide application in each of these points.

1. The Right Appearance

Look with me at chapter 9, starting in v. 1.

There was a prominent man of Benjamin named Kish son of Abiel, son of Zeror, son of Becorath, son of Aphiah, son of a Benjaminite. 2 He had a son named Saul, an impressive young man. There was no one more impressive among the Israelites than he. He stood a head taller than anyone else.

Flip over with me to the end of chapter 10.

23 They ran and got him from there. When he stood among the people, he stood a head taller than anyone else. 24 Samuel said to all the people, "Do you see the one the Lord has chosen? There is no one like him among the entire population."

The people demand a king in chapter 8, and the Lord is going to provide one. But a couple of things to note. At the end of Chapter 8 Samuel directs all the men to return to their cities. And at this point you would be thinking, okay, we

are going to hear about how the man was chosen from all the cities (much like we see in chapter 10), but no, chapter 9 is an excursus, its the backstory of Saul. And it kind of surprises us with how it starts out. All of you go to your cities; now, there was a prominent man of Benjamin named Kish, who had a Son, and he was an impressive young man. There was no one more impressive (the idea is physically) among the Israelites. He was a head taller than anyone else. He would have been voted Mr. Israel! Probably the starting center for the basketball team!

Israel wants a king to be like the nations, a king to lead and fight their battles, and the Lord will give them such a person. **The person that looks the part, the person that when the Israelites see him they automatically think: “yes! That’s our king.”** Remember the backdrop here. A rejection of Yahweh’s clear leading and kingship for a King like the nations. And a repeated theme that we have been seeing throughout Judges, Ruth, and 1 Samuel, is that when we reject God, when in our sin we desire something other than him, he warns us, but he also gives us what we want, he gives us over to the desire. And so Yahweh is merciful in these two chapters in his dealings with Israel, but he also teaching them.

This tall king, this physically impressive person that you hope will be your saving grace, this one who has the right appearance and looks the part, watch what happens when you put your hope in him instead of me. Learn Israel! And by extension we must learn as well.

Allow me to remind us of what is coming, a description of David in 1 Samuel 16 when they are seeking another king after Saul. And notice even Samuel the prophet’s temptation here: 1 Samuel 16:6-7

6 When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and said, “Certainly the Lord’s anointed one is here before him.”

7 But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or his stature because I have rejected him. Humans do not see what the Lord sees, for humans see what is visible, but the Lord sees the heart.”

The Lord looks at the heart. Friends, if we are being honest, we at times are often so like Israel here it’s appalling. We are so quick to judge based on looks, so quick to want the right appearance for ourselves and others that we can automatically label someone completely by how they look. Like the Israelites looking at the handsome Saul, we

can desire friends that have a certain look, our leaders to have a certain appearance, we can quickly focus on the outside and fail to get to know the inside. Don't do that.

My sweet daughter Blakely is only 6, but I can already notice some of the trappings that plague women today. A focus on external beauty, on how to dress and make-up (she sometimes gets lip gloss don't worry she ain't wearing make-up anytime soon), but in trying to cultivate this little heart I'm constantly reminding her of Godly beauty. And so I ask her "Blakely, what is beautiful is not just on the outside but where?" And she will answer "on the inside." And so we are trying to teach her, time and time again, beauty is found on the inside, although everything our culture would tell us and advertise to us is that it's found on the outside.

Same thing in providing counseling to young people who are dating. Why do you like him? Why do you like her? Young people, listen to me. If your sole basis of criteria is appearance (and I'm not saying there isn't a place for physical attraction, there definitely is) but if your sole basis is quote, unquote "how hot he or she is." Friend, you are nowhere near ready to be married. Proverbs 31:30 is applicable both ways. "Charm is deceptive, beauty (handsomeness) is fleeting, but a woman (a man) who fears the Lord is to be praised."

Let us guard against judging solely on appearance. I recognize this is like swimming upstream in the west, where appearances are hammered into us via nonstop advertising and everyone has the "right appearance" on social media, but friends Christians should be and are different. Embrace that difference.

Think even of our Lord Jesus Christ. Think of his dealings with others and even the description of him. In his dealings with others He was constantly hanging out with sinners, with those who were clearly not up to the "right appearance" (like the Pharisees wanted). He could eat with a prostitute or a tax collector, and associate with the disciples all the same. He looked at the heart.

But even further think of his own appearance. Jesus did not have a "right appearance." Israel wanted a king with the right appearance, and the Jews in Jesus' day wanted the same, someone to deliver them from Rome. But remember the description of Jesus in Isaiah 53?

2 He grew up before him like a young plant and like a root out of dry ground.

He didn't have an impressive form or majesty that we should look at him, no appearance that we should desire him.
3 He was despised and rejected by men, a man of suffering who knew what sickness was.
He was like someone people turned away from; he was despised, and we didn't value him.

The Lord looks at the heart, may we learn to do the same.

2. An Underlying Providence

Underlying chapters 9-10, and really the entirety of the Scriptures is God's Providence. His meticulous providence. There is nothing outside of his control. Using Jeff's definition from last week, Providence is God's continuous, purposeful control and care over all creation, orchestrating everything (events, people, and circumstances) to ultimately bring the praise of His glory through a redeemed people.

And notice here how this providence shows itself. First it shows itself to Saul and then to Samuel. Starting in v. 3.
3 One day the donkeys of Saul's father Kish wandered off. Kish said to his son Saul, "Take one of the servants with you and go look for the donkeys." 4 Saul and his servant went through the hill country of Ephraim and then through the region of Shalishah, but they didn't find them. They went through the region of Shaalim—nothing. Then they went through the Benjaminite region but still didn't find them.

5 When they came to the land of Zuph, Saul said to the servant who was with him, "Come on, let's go back, or my father will stop worrying about the donkeys and start worrying about us." 6 "Look," the servant said, "there's a man of God in this city who is highly respected; everything he says is sure to come true. Let's go there now. Maybe he'll tell us which way we should go."

7 "Suppose we do go," Saul said to his servant, "what do we take the man? The food from our packs is gone, and there's no gift to take to the man of God. What do we have?" 8 The servant answered Saul, "Here, I have a little silver. I'll give it to the man of God, and he will tell us which way we should go."

9 Formerly in Israel, a man who was going to inquire of God would say, "Come, let's go to the seer," for the prophet of today was formerly called the seer.

10 “Good,” Saul replied to his servant. “Come on, let’s go.” So they went to the city where the man of God was. 11 As they were climbing the hill to the city, they found some young women coming out to draw water and asked, “Is the seer here?”

12 The women answered, “Yes, he is ahead of you. Hurry, he just now entered the city, because there’s a sacrifice for the people at the high place today. 13 As soon as you enter the city, you will find him before he goes to the high place to eat. The people won’t eat until he comes because he must bless the sacrifice; after that, the guests can eat. Go up immediately—you can find him now.” 14 So they went up toward the city. Saul and his servant were entering the city when they saw Samuel coming toward them on his way to the high place. Let’s pause here at v. 14.

In a wonderful, strange, even mysterious way Saul will be guided by God’s providence to be the first king of Israel. Saul goes looking for some donkeys that have wandered off (we don’t think much of donkeys but they would have been vital to farm life), surely asking people if they have seen them, the servant and him travel throughout the hill country, they decide to ask the seer where the donkeys are and the servant just happens to have the fee to do so. All just ordinary things from Saul’s perspective that bring him to the man of God, Samuel.

And then from Samuel’s perspective, God is very direct and specific. Look at v. 15

15 Now the day before Saul’s arrival, the Lord had informed Samuel, 16 “At this time tomorrow I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin. Anoint him ruler over my people Israel. He will save them from the Philistines because I have seen the affliction of my people, for their cry has come to me.” 17 When Samuel saw Saul, the Lord told him, “Here is the man I told you about; he will govern my people.”

Verses 15-17 show us that all of Saul’s wanderings have a purpose. It is providentially guided. He is leading and directing this man to His prophet so that he can be designated as king. He’s giving the people what they want. Even further, Samuel is directed by God on how to find the king. This is a purposeful sovereignty as God accomplishes his will. Saul thinks he’s just wandering along to his own tune, but all along he is wandering to the Lord’s tune.

If you are ever like me, you can wonder, is God's providence, his sovereignty, just for these people we read about? Is it restricted to the "big people?" Abraham, Moses, David, Mary, Paul and the rest? Does God's providence affect my day to day life? I want to offer you a clear, biblical answer. Yes, yes it does. Everything you have experienced in this life and everything you will experience in this life is under God's providence. It does not mean he is the author of sin or evil in any sense, but from your sufferings and sicknesses, to your moving around and landing here, to all of life, it is under his divine providence and direction. There are so many verses that speak to this but let me provide just a few:

Remember Joseph's revealing himself to his brothers? Notice how he describes it:

Genesis 45:5 – 5 And now don't be grieved or angry with yourselves for selling me here, because God sent me ahead of you to preserve life. (Joseph was sold into slavery, experienced an Egyptian prison for years, yet he can now reflect and see God working)

Daniel 4:4b-5 a praise given from a pagan king who experienced the providence of God firsthand, one of my favorite praises in the Bible. For his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation. 35 All the inhabitants of the earth are counted as nothing, and he does what he wants with the army of heaven and the inhabitants of the earth. There is no one who can block his hand or say to him, "What have you done?"

Wisdom tells us. Proverbs 16:9 – A person's heart plans his way, but the Lord determines his steps.

Prov 20:24 – Even a courageous person's steps are determined by the Lord, so how can anyone understand his own way?

Even our Lord Jesus, in teaching his disciples and us in how to trust God, including with their lives, points to his good providence.

Matthew 10:29 – 29 Aren't two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them falls to the ground without your Father's consent. He argues from the lesser to the greater here. If a sparrow doesn't die without God's consent, how could you?! (and then a personal favorite here) 30 But even the hairs of your head have all been counted. (and all God's bald ones said amen).

All joking aside, friends, our God knows the future, has a plan, is working out that plan, and you and I as a part of His creation and as followers of Christ are a part of that plan. Your entire salvation and your entire story are under His providence. Divine providence is a reassurance (not something to be debated, but an assurance), a balm to the

soul, an encouragement in a world of confusion, it is meant to spur you on in your faith by *making you* trust in God all the more. Saul had no idea in his wanderings what was coming. You friend have no idea what tomorrow holds. God doesn't always let us see the light of his providence during the nights we experience. We don't always know what is happening behind the curtain. But he calls you to have faith. His providence spurs us on by pointing you time and time again to the reality that we don't know everything, we don't have all the answers, but God does. Have faith. Trust in him. Trust that he is working out all things for your good and His glory.

And trust that his providence is good. Notice once more in v. 16 of chapter 9. He will save them from the Philistines because I have seen the affliction of my people, for their cry has come to me. Even in the midst of rejecting him as king, our God is merciful. He pities his people. And friend, do not think that he is not merciful to you. His divine providence is a good thing.

3. The Prophesied King

At the end of chapter 9 and through chapter 10 verse 16 we have the anointing of Saul as King. This is done privately and with a smaller group, and then at the end of chapter 10 we will see the public anointing. So let me summarize these verses for us. Samuel directs Saul to sit at the head of the table, gives him the choice cut of meat and then commissions him before he goes on his way. And Samuel in the first 8 verses of chapter 10 reveals the word of the Lord to Saul. He tells him all the signs that will accompany Saul in order to prove God's selection of Him. Let me summarize the signs.

- When he leaves he will find two men at Rachel's grave that will say the donkeys have been found and now his father is worried about him.
- He will leave there and find three men traveling that will give him two loaves of bread.
- After that he will come to Gibeah and see a group of prophets prophesying, and the Spirit of the Lord will come upon Saul and he will prophesy.

Then we pick up in v. 9 – 9 When Saul turned to leave Samuel, God changed his heart (better translation is a changed man, I don't think this is salvation here, it is not the same language that is used of circumcision of the heart, so he was a changed man as he's coming to embrace the kingship), and all the signs came about that day. 10 When Saul and his servant arrived at Gibeah, a group of prophets met him. Then the Spirit of God came powerfully

on him, and he prophesied along with them. 11 Everyone who knew him previously and saw him prophesy with the prophets asked each other, “What has happened to the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?” 12 Then a man who was from there asked, “And who is their father?” As a result, “Is Saul also among the prophets?” became a popular saying. 13 Then Saul finished prophesying and went to the high place.

Saul is anointed as King of the people. And this comes about with the Spirit coming upon Him and then he prophesies. So briefly here, we see clearly what is happening with his kingship, being anointed by God as king, but I want to discuss what we see in terms of prophecy.

1. Nature of Prophecy

a. Notice the specific nature of the prophecy. Notice how descriptive it is. Two men, father worried, three men traveling, two loaves of bread, prophets prophesying. When the Lord speaks it is clear and ordered and specific. This is the nature of prophecy in the Bible. God is not a God of confusion. So Biblical prophecy is not like the bland generalizations of a fortune cookie, but instead divine revelation that points to God’s providence. It is God given. IT is to show clearly to Saul that the Lord is at work in his anointing. The prophecy serves to prove the anointing and God’s selection. We must see that in the text, but,

b. Today there are many who claim to have revelations or prophecies from the Lord, and it is never like this.

- i. Now I admit some of this can be a semantics issue, What one person means by they heard something from the Lord someone else can take a whole host of ways. That’s why we need to be specific in how we talk about the Spirit and understand what prophecy is. But these people who call themselves prophet so and so, or apostle so and so, and who do these fortune cookie “prophecies..” That’s not biblical prophecy. That’s not how we see prophecy taking place in the Scriptures.
- ii. And so when they do it, notice how it is Never specific, always vague. “The Spirit is telling me someone has back pain in here...” Friends I would venture to say most of us wake up with back pain. “The Spirit is telling me someone is hurt deeply in their heart.” The Christian life doesn’t absolve us from suffering, of course we will have hurts we are working through. I’m not trying to

downplay the Spirit but instead to teach us according to God's Word. Be wary of everything being called prophecy today and it isn't. The office of prophet has ceased, the act of prophecy in the church I understand to be picked up in the task of preaching. And so of course the Lord through His Spirit can give impressions, can guide us, directs us even in our evangelism, but that is not prophecy like we see here in 1 Samuel 10. That's just simply the Spirit at work in the life of a Christian. That's normal stuff.

- c. So be wary of everything being called prophecy today. This side of the cross, the preaching of God's Word is the closest correlation to prophecy. Notice even the closeness of prophecy and the Word here in 1 Samuel. The Spirit and the Word always go together in Scripture. After the prophecy, Samuel even tells Saul **in v. 8 to wait on Him and he will still tell him what to do. Saul the King**, who is promised Yahweh's power, is told to submit to Samuel the Prophet, who brings Yahweh's Word. Here we see the Spirit and the Word going together, never divorced. Be very wary of those who want the Spirit, but no Word. Who want the power of the Spirit, the signs of the spirit, but have little enthusiasm for common obedience to God's Word. And the opposite can be true. Those so puffed up in their head knowledge that the power of the Gospel is not at work in their heart, the fruit of the Spirit is not evident in their lives. Word and Spirit together, we must see this in the prophecy surrounding Saul's anointing.

So Saul here is the anointed king, the one set apart to lead God's people, the one that the Lord provides for them in the midst of their rejection of him. In Saul I think we see in various ways both mercy and judgment, and we will see that in the coming chapters. This brings us to our last point, number 4.

4. A Foretaste of What is to Come

In the story, we have hints to how Saul will really be as a king. We have a foretaste of what is to come. And so what I'm going to do here is just slightly different, but I want to draw your attention to some things in the text. Let me just draw out some of the biblical imagery for you, some of the biblical theology that is present here. At the end of chapter 8 as I said, we have everyone sent to their own towns after asking for a king. One would think we would see chapter 10:17 next and the Lord selecting Saul through lots, but no. We are introduced to Saul as he is searching for some donkeys.

And then he can never find those donkeys... as one theologian titled this section: "lost asses, found kingdom." Here we are introduced to a man just searching for donkeys and can't ever find them (notice all the places he's wandering around). Yes under the providence of God, but still just a man who will be king, yet can't find donkeys. Further, he is unprepared and has no money to give to the prophet, having to rely on his servant. These are clues the writer of 1 Samuel wants us to pick up on.

Another is that he is from the tribe of Benjamin. If you know your bible, two things stand out. First, in Joseph's prophecy over his sons at the end of Genesis, Benjamin is not spoken that kindly of, while of Judah it is said that the "scepter shall never depart from Judah." The astute biblical reader would be wondering, why a king from Benjamin, not Judah? Second, when we left Benjamin we were left with a horrible taste in our mouth. At the end of Judges, it is the tribe of Benjamin in Gibeah that rapes the concubine all night. Eventually the rest of Israel makes war against Benjamin and almost wipes them out completely. This is who Saul comes from.

Then in the middle of chapter 10, in verse 16, we have Saul not telling his uncle everything. Yes the donkeys were found, but no mention of the kingship. He withholds information. Then notice his public selection and coronation (again details to notice in the Biblical text): 1 Samuel 10:20-24

20 Samuel had all the tribes of Israel come forward, and the tribe of Benjamin was selected. 21 Then he had the tribe of Benjamin come forward by its clans, and the Matrite clan was selected. Finally, Saul son of Kish was selected. But when they searched for him, they could not find him. 22 They again inquired of the Lord, "Has the man come here yet?"

The Lord replied, "There he is, hidden among the supplies."

23 They ran and got him from there. When he stood among the people, he stood a head taller than anyone else. 24 Samuel said to all the people, "Do you see the one the Lord has chosen? There is no one like him among the entire population." And all the people shouted, "Long live the king!"

What is this new king doing? He's hiding. Although God has shown him all these signs through Samuel's words he's hiding when his time has come, such that it is the Lord who has to find him. "There he is, hidden among the

supplies.” He’s the tallest man around, the text says, yet here he is crouched among the supplies. The author of 1 Samuel is given us hint after hint of what is to come.

Even Samuel’s parting words here to the people, “Do you see the one the Lord has chosen?” Well they couldn’t see him at first! He was hiding! But now they see him, head and shoulders above everyone else, yet what will happen when Goliath comes? Will Israel’s giant king go out to face him? Not at all. He will be hiding in his tent once more.

I titled the sermon this morning “Finding a king for the people” for a very particular reason. 13 times in these two chapters the word find or found is used. There is a search taking place. Saul was looking for donkeys, he was looking for the prophet, yet as the people were looking for him he was nowhere to be found. And it culminates with the Lord finding him. Saul is a king for the people that the Lord provides, but he will still be found lacking in his kingship as time goes on. Even in how chapter ten ends, it hints that not all in Israel supported him. Division amongst the people is coming.

Those are the negative aspects, but there is one positive one that is subtle. In chapter 9, verses 22-24 Samuel sits Saul down at the head of the table and he gives him the thigh and what is attached to it. He gives him the portion reserved for the priest. The narrator is telling us, God in His divine providence is forecasting to Israel and to us, what we are to look forward to. A prophet, a priest, a king, one who can fulfill all three roles.

No, in this one grand storyline, it is pointing forward to the coming messiah who can. All of Scripture is pointing forward to the Lord Jesus Christ, Who as our prophet is the greater Moses who mediates for God’s people and is truly the Word of God made flesh. As our priest, he offers a sacrifice once and for all time, a sacrifice not to be repeated, the perfect sacrifice of himself and to this day and everyday he intercedes for us.

And as our king, he calls us to trust him, obey him, and follow him.

The people here reject God as king, and want a king like the nations. They reject God, and at the end of chapter 10 we see that some of them reject his king. And so the question is being begged throughout this book, what kind of king will the people get? Will they ever have a perfect one?

Friends, this side of the cross, you and I know who that perfect king is. If you are here and you don't know Jesus Christ, our Messiah, this prophet, priest, king, that this story and all of the OT is pointing forward to, I invite you to consider Him today. **You need a King.** God through His Word tells that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Naturally, we love ourselves and we love our sin more than we love our King. **And that is true of you, whether you know it or not.** In Hebrews chapter 3 we are told to consider Jesus. Consider who he is and what he has done. I invite you to do that this morning.

- He calls us to follow him. He is our King. Not one who hides like Saul, but one who leads by dying for you. He is worthy of your devotion, your allegiance, your trust. And so he calls on you and all of us to repent of our sins, to turn from them and in faith turn to Him. To trust in him. May God by His Spirit allow you to do so. I invite you to consider the true king this morning.

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Let's pray.

As the worship team is up here and I invite the ushers to go ahead and come up and start distributing, in a moment we are going to take communion as Christ's Church. And I cannot think of a better act that points to a foretaste of what is to come. This is an act of remembrance, and a tangible reminder of God's grace to us in Christ. And so I want to be clear, this communion is for believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Those who are Christians and have repented and trusted in Christ alone. If that's not you friend, then we would love to talk to you after the service about what that looks like, but we would kindly ask that you hold off from taking the elements.

But friends, this is a foretaste of what is to come, a looking forward to that heavenly meal that we will one day share with Christ. Let us remind ourselves of our king. Let us remember what he did for us, and let us praise him now that He has given us a righteousness that is not our own. Let us dwell on our King this morning.