

1 Samuel 9:1- 2 There was a man of Benjamin whose name was Kish, the son of Abiel, son of Zeror, son of Becorath, son of Aphiah, a Benjaminite, a man of wealth. ² And he had a son whose name was Saul, a handsome young man. There was not a man among the people of Israel more handsome than he. From his shoulders upwards he was taller than any of the people.

1 Samuel 9: 15-17 When Samuel saw Saul, the LORD told him, "Here is the man of whom I spoke to you! He it is who shall restrain my people." ¹⁸ Then Saul approached Samuel in the gate and said, "Tell me where is the house of the seer?"

¹⁹ Samuel answered Saul, "I am the seer. Go up before me to the high place, for today you shall eat with me, and in the morning I will let you go and will tell you all that is on your mind.

NB see p4 for the full chapter or read it in your Bible.

Our conception of a King might veer between Henry V111 (effectively a powerful dictator who was at the centre of everything) and our current monarch, Queen Elizabeth. Her role is largely ceremonial and advisory, but while Henry did not connect at all with the common people like us and they obeyed him out of fear, the current monarch engages with those under her rule and is known for her ability to put those she meets at their ease.

All of this has an impact on how we think of Jesus when we think of him as our King. Our knowledge of British history means that we either think of him as a set-apart, distant, all-powerful King or we see 'King' as just another title he has that has very little to do with his power.

**We need to see from God's word what it means for Jesus to be our King,
why we can delight in that fact and why he should be reigning in our life.**

We can learn from the blueprint of the first King of Israel. God brought him to that role but why did Israel have a King in the first place? God had said previously that Israel would have a king, so the principle of having a king was right.

However, at this point Israel's motivation for having a king was that they just wanted to be like everyone else and they were rejecting God as their true King. God has told Samuel to do as the people asked although he warns them that this king would not be good.

The king who is going to be installed here is the king that the people want out of wrong motives. Although this sets a blueprint for what it means to be a king of God's people, the man being installed here falls short because he is a king chosen by human standards, not by God's standards. Saul points us to Jesus precisely because he cannot be all that a king of God's people should be. Jesus is the King we can delight in.

- 1. Jesus is the King provided by God.** We are introduced to Saul (whose name means 'asked for'). He is described as tall and handsome (**v2** above). He is the man who fits the description of what Israel have asked for in their king.

We encounter him on a series of quests. Saul is searching for some missing donkeys, but he and his servant cannot find them. Then the servant suggests they find the unnamed 'man of God'. They only manage to find Samuel with the help of some women, and don't even recognise him when they first see him. This all seems a little random and Saul clearly lacks persistence but **vv 15-17** (above) give us God's view of the situation.

God tells Samuel the date, the time and the tribe that the man will come from. When Samuel sees Saul, God gives him a very clear nudge. No matter how random the situation seems, God is the one pulling the strings.

He has heard and answered Israel's cry for help.

The Philistines, Israel's enemy, are on the rise but although the people have rejected God, in his mercy he has not abandoned them. He gives them not just the king they asked for but also deliverance from their enemy.

God's people's rejection of him does not paralyze God's compassion and mercy toward them

However, this provision is not perfect because it is tainted with the sin of their rejection. Saul is not king.

He could not even fulfil the two quests he was on. He failed to shepherd the donkeys and was willing to give up on them. A true King of God's people would not fail in this way.

Nonetheless, this provision for God's people points us to how he will provide a King for his people later.

The King of God's people will come and it will be in response to our greatest need.

Our rejection does not paralyze God's compassion and mercy.

He gives us the greatest King for the greatest need.

Jesus was given to be the King of God's people, the perfect King who does not give up and does not fail at his task.

- He knew exactly where he was going and what he was doing in his time on earth, submitting perfectly to the Father's will.
- As king, he defeated the great enemy, our sin. On our behalf, he fought the battle we cannot face. He declared 'It is finished' on the cross as the power of sin was dealt with.
- Our King defeated death.

He is the greatest King, provided to deal with our greatest need. He is a King worthy of our praise!

2. Jesus is a King joined to his people by God. When there is a wedding, there is generally a wedding feast. In **vv22-24** (see p4), we read of Saul's feast with Samuel. This is pointing us to the form of relationship that a King is to have with God's people. The way that Saul finds Samuel is not random, but is rooted in the history of Israel as far back as Abraham (**Genesis 24** please read in your Bible). Note the parallels:

- Abraham sent his servant to find a wife for his son Isaac. That servant met a woman (Rebekah) at a well.
- Having received the answer to his prayer, the servant goes to Rebekah's family home to have a feast.

Saul is the answer to Israel's plea for a king. The women Saul meets direct him to a feast with the leader of God's people. This meal is a wedding feast of sorts, giving a sense of the close bond the King must have with his people – the same bond as between husband and wife.

We see this idea reinforced when the tribes confirm David as their King (2 Samuel 5: see p4) echoing Adam's cry when he meets Eve.

- The relationship between King and people is like that of husband and wife – they are joined together by God. Saul is eating at the top table with the community. He is eating the leg, the portion of the peace offering that would be set apart for the priest, the person who intercedes with God for the people. The peace offering symbolizes the close bond of relationship between God and his people.

The King is the Husband of his bride, the people of God, and draws the people to God.

Saul, however, will fall short on this, just as God has warned the people. Saul will go on to take and take from them. As husband, he will abuse his relationship with God's people. He does not draw them to God but will go on to take it all for himself. The Husband's role is one of self-sacrifice, out of love for his bride, but Saul fell far short.

Nonetheless, in doing so, he points us to Jesus because

Jesus, as King, is perfectly the Husband of his bride, the church

Where Saul takes from God's people, pulling them away from God, Jesus gives (**Eph 5:22-27** see p4). Jesus fulfils everything that the meal represents:

- He is the King who is the perfect husband to his people
- He is the priest pointing people to the fulness of the glory of God
- Jesus is the peace offering – the meal itself

Jesus is the culmination of our closeness with God because of what he did for us by dying on the cross.

When we have this view of Jesus, we can love our King, but we must never forget that our King is also the ruler of all.

3. Jesus is the King who ascends on high with God's anointing. Throughout this chapter, there have been a series of ascents in Saul's journey. (**vv 11,14,19,22** see p4)

Saul is ascending to his role as king. He can survey his kingdom, but he is a king with limited capacity, little might and a limited life span. Like the kings of all the other nations, Saul will die.

Jesus, however, died but rose again and then ascended on high (**Eph 1:20-23** see p4). Just as he did with Saul, God brought Jesus into the ascended place, but unlike Saul's reign, which was limited

Jesus is King of Kings forever!

He is the light of the world and no darkness can overcome his rule and his reign. His purposes will be accomplished.

Every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

We need to have this vision of Jesus as our King

Which idea do you have about Jesus as King?

- The idea of Jesus as husband? Perhaps you like the sound of the intimacy and immanence that suggests. Don't make the mistake of thinking that Jesus is like our Queen, who engages with her people and advises but rules with limited power.

Is Jesus the true ruler in your life? Do you seek to follow his commands, not just on Sunday but every day and in every area of your life? If you don't seek to follow him in this way, then you are not in his kingdom.

- The idea of the all-powerful King Jesus? Perhaps you like the idea of simply obeying an all-powerful King.

Though Jesus is that all-powerful King, he is also our Husband and we are his Bride. He rules from a place of love, so that we obey him because we want to, not out of fear as people obeyed Henry V111.

He has sanctified us, and is making us more like him. None of this is our doing.

- We do not need to fear and prove ourselves to him. He loves us and knows us intimately.
- He is also all-powerful, mighty and fearsome.

Our King is simultaneously the all-ruling King of Kings and the all-loving and self-giving King.

It might appear that we are living in a post-Christian world but we can rest assured that our King sits on the throne and he has already won the great victory.

He won that victory for us on the greatest day, displaying his great love to us. The King of all took our place and our punishment so that we can be his church, his people, his bride. We are going to be a new creation for all eternity with him reigning as Lord of all. That is our future. He is indeed a King worth praising!

When we see Jesus in these terms, it will lead us to delight in our King rather than form our own distorted version.

Delight in our King needs to overflow into every area of our life, and then we will reach people with the gospel out of that delight, which is true evangelism.

Ask yourself the question: Is Jesus my King?

Spend time this week reflecting on what the Kingship of Jesus truly means.

1 Samuel 9:1-10:1 There was a man of Benjamin whose name was Kish, the son of Abiel, son of Zeror, son of Becorath, son of Aphiah, a Benjaminite, a man of wealth. ² And he had a son whose name was Saul, a handsome young man. There was not a man among the people of Israel more handsome than he. From his shoulders upwards he was taller than any of the people. ³ Now the donkeys of Kish, Saul's father, were lost. So Kish said to Saul his son, "Take one of the young men with you, and arise, go and look for the donkeys." ⁴ And he passed through the hill country of Ephraim and passed through the land of Shalishah, but they did not find them. And they passed through the land of Shaalim, but they were not there. Then they passed through the land of Benjamin, but did not find them.

⁵ When they came to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant^[a] who was with him, "Come, let us go back, lest my father cease to care about the donkeys and become anxious about us." ⁶ But he said to him, "Behold, there is a man of God in this city, and he is a man who is held in honour; all that he says comes true. So now let us go there. Perhaps he can tell us the way we should go." ⁷ Then Saul said to his servant, "But if we go, what can we bring the man? For the bread in our sacks is gone, and there is no present to bring to the man of God. What do we have?" ⁸ The servant answered Saul again, "Here, I have with me a quarter of a shekel^[b] of silver, and I will give it to the man of God to tell us our way."

⁹ (Formerly in Israel, when a man went to enquire of God, he said, "Come, let us go to the seer", for today's "prophet" was formerly called a seer.) ¹⁰ And Saul said to his servant, "Well said; come, let us go." So they went to the city where the man of God was. ¹¹ As they went up the hill to the city, they met young women coming out to draw water and said to them, "Is the seer here?" ¹² They answered, "He is; behold, he is just ahead of you. Hurry. He has come just now to the city, because the people have a sacrifice today on the high place. ¹³ As soon as you enter the city you will find him, before he goes up to the high place to eat. For the people will not eat till he comes, since he must bless the sacrifice; afterwards those who are invited will eat. Now go up, for you will meet him immediately." ¹⁴ So they went up to the city. As they were entering the city, they saw Samuel coming out towards them on his way up to the high place. ¹⁵ Now the day before Saul came, the LORD had revealed to Samuel: ¹⁶ "Tomorrow about this time I will send to you a man from the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him to be prince over my people Israel. He shall save my people from the hand of the Philistines. For I have seen^[c] my people, because their cry has come to me." ¹⁷ When Samuel saw Saul, the LORD told him, "Here is the man of whom I spoke to you! He it is who shall restrain my people." ¹⁸ Then Saul approached Samuel in the gate and said, "Tell me where is the house of the seer?" ¹⁹ Samuel answered Saul, "I am the seer. Go up before me to the high place, for today you shall eat with me, and in the morning I will let you go and will tell you all that is on your mind. ²⁰ As for your donkeys that were lost three days ago, do not set your mind on them, for they have been found. And for whom is all that is desirable in Israel? Is it not for you and for all your father's house?" ²¹ Saul answered, "Am I not a Benjaminite, from the least of the tribes of Israel? And is not my clan the humblest of all the clans of the tribe of Benjamin? Why then have you spoken to me in this way?" ²² Then Samuel took Saul and his young man and brought them into the hall and gave them a place at the head of those who had been invited, who were about thirty persons. ²³ And Samuel said to the cook, "Bring the portion I gave you, of which I said to you, 'Put it aside.'" ²⁴ So the cook took up the leg and what was on it and set them before Saul. And Samuel said, "See, what was kept is set before you. Eat, because it was kept for you until the hour appointed, that you might eat with the guests." ^[d] So Saul ate with Samuel that day. ²⁵ And when they came down from the high place into the city, a bed was spread for Saul^[e] on the roof, and he lay down to sleep. ²⁶ Then at the break of dawn^[f] Samuel called to Saul on the roof, "Get up, that I may send you on your way." So Saul arose, and both he and Samuel went out into the street. ²⁷ As they were going down to the outskirts of the city, Samuel said to Saul, "Tell the servant to pass on before us, and when he has passed on, stop here yourself for a while, that I may make known to you the word of God." **10** Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on his head and kissed him and said, "Has not the LORD anointed you to be prince over his people Israel? And you shall reign over the people of the LORD and you will save them from the hand of their surrounding enemies.

Eph 1:20-23 he (God) raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. ²² And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, ²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Eph 5:22-27 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Saviour. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. ²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, ²⁶ that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ so that he might present the church to himself in splendour, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.