

The Bible Jesus Used

A Gospel-Centered Glance at the Old Testament

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1–2 Samuel at a Glance

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Misappropriated Kingship & Saul's Dishonoring of Yahweh (1 Sam 8–14)

❖ The request for a king

❖ What was wrong with Israel's request?

- ❖ 1 Sam 8:5. Now appoint for us a king to judge us like all the nations.
- ❖ Deut 17:14–15. When you come to the land that Yahweh your God is giving you, and you possess it and dwell in it and then say, “I will set a king over me, like all the nations that are around me,”¹⁵ you may indeed set a king over you whom Yahweh your God will choose.

- ❖ **God's perspective on their desire:**
 - ❖ **They have rejected him as their king:**
 - ❖ **1 Sam. 8:7. And Yahweh said to Samuel, "Obey the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them.**
 - ❖ **They have rejected their true protector:**
 - ❖ **1 Sam. 10:19. But today you have rejected your God, who saves you from all your calamities and your distresses, and you have said to him, "Set a king over us."**

❖ **They have rejected their true provider:**

❖ **1 Sam. 12:17–19. “Is it not wheat harvest today? I will call upon Yahweh, that he may send thunder and rain. And you shall know and see that your wickedness is great, which you have done in the sight of Yahweh, in asking for yourselves a king.”**
So Samuel called upon Yahweh, and Yahweh sent thunder and rain that day, and all the people greatly feared Yahweh and Samuel. And all the people said to Samuel, “Pray for your servants to Yahweh your God, that we may not die, for we have added to all our sins this evil, to ask for ourselves a king.”

❖ The prospect of kingship in Israel

- ❖ 1 Sam. 10:25. Then Samuel told the people the rights and duties of the kingship, and he wrote them in a book and laid it up before Yahweh.
- ❖ 1 Sam. 12:14–15. If you will fear Yahweh and serve him and obey his voice and not rebel against the commandment of Yahweh, and if both you and the king who reigns over you will follow Yahweh your God, it will be well. But if you will not obey the voice of Yahweh, but rebel against the commandment of Yahweh, then the hand of Yahweh will be against you and your king.
- ❖ According to Deut 17, the king was to be the model Israelite. At stake in 1 Samuel is what kind of king would Israel have.

❖ **Saul's Demise: Bad Signals in the Text**

- ❖ **The people, not God, “chose” the first king “for themselves” (1 Sam 8:18; 12:13; cf. 8:5; 10:24), where God stressed the he himself had to choose Israel's king (Deut 17:14). In contrast, his replacement is chosen by God for God (13:14; cf. 16:1, 3).**
- ❖ **The one text where Samuel declares Yahweh “chose” Saul is highly polemical (1 Sam 10:24) and given in a context that stresses Israel's rejection of God (10:19). God is giving Israel what they want.**

- ❖ We are told that Saul is a Benjamite (9:1; 10:21), a clear signal of a bad heritage (Judg 20:13).
- ❖ From outward appears, Saul looks like a leader—a head taller than all others (9:2), but from the beginning he can't even find his father's donkeys (9:3; 10:14–16), and he quickly shirks the opportunity to be king (10:22). In contrast, we first find David successfully shepherding his father's sheep (16:11; cf. 2 Sam 5:2), with God stressing, “Yahweh sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but Yahweh looks on the heart” (1 Sam 16:7).

❖ **While Saul is initially successful militarily, he quickly proves to have a rebellious spirit that is unwilling to obey when called upon and unwilling to wait when told. Thus God declares:**

❖ **1 Sam 13:13–14. You have done foolishly. You have not kept the command of Yahweh your God, with which he commanded you. For then Yahweh would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. ¹⁴ But now your kingdom shall not continue. Yahweh has sought for himself a man according to his own heart, and Yahweh has commanded him to be prince over his people, because you have not kept what Yahweh commanded you.**

David's Honoring of Yahweh and the Rise and Establishment of an Ideal Royal Figure

- ❖ **Saul's problem: failure to honor God**
 - ❖ 1 Sam. 15:22–23. And Samuel said, “Has Yahweh as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of Yahweh? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and presumption is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of Yahweh, he has also rejected you from being king.”

❖ David's difference: heart orientation

- ❖ 1 Sam. 15:28. And Samuel said to Saul, “Yahweh has torn the kingdom of Israel from you this day and has given it to a neighbor of yours, who is better than you.”
- ❖ 1 Sam. 16:6–7. When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, “Surely Yahweh’s anointed is before him.”⁷ But Yahweh said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For Yahweh sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but Yahweh looks on the heart.”