

Israel Asks For A King

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[0:00] Well, we have two lessons left in this series on spectacular sins and the glory of Christ. And today's lesson is the sinful origin of the son of David.

And on first hearing, I thought that was going to be about David and Bathsheba. And I suppose that would be a good lesson. But that's not what the lesson is about.

The main point today is that the kingship of Israel, the fact that Israel had kings, a line of kings, even David, the fact that Israel had kings was owing in part to sin, to a spectacular sin, to rebellion. And so turning your Bibles to 1 Samuel 8. 1 Samuel 8. And we're going to read this account of Israel asking for a king.

It is interesting that here we are, eight chapters into the book 1 Samuel. And Samuel is getting ready to leave the stage already.

[1:13] So here we are, 1 Samuel 8, verse 1. And it says, When Samuel grew old, he appointed his sons as judges for Israel.

The name of his firstborn was Joel, and the name of his second was Abijah, and they served at Beersheba. But his sons did not walk in his ways. They turned aside after dishonest gain and accepted bribes and perverted justice.

So all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah. They said to him, You are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways.

Now appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have. But when they said, Give us a king to lead us, this displeased Samuel.

So he prayed to the Lord. And the Lord told him, Listen to all that the people are saying to you. It is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king.

[2:16] As they have done from the day I brought them out of Egypt until this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are doing to you. Now listen to them, but warn them solemnly, and let them know what the king who will reign over them will do.

That's where we'll stop. Now in some senses it seems like the asking for a king, at least apparently, was in reaction to, or it was for a good reason.

Samuel's sons were not like Samuel. And I think here we see the subtlety of sin. Something that can look good can at the bottom of it not be good, and that's what we have here.

They say they're after justice, and they're after righteousness, and maybe they were to a certain extent, but the way they went about pursuing those things was in rebellion to God.

And so what does it say? What was asking for a king? How did God classify that? What does it say there? Rejection of God.

[3:23] Forsaking God. Rejecting God. And Samuel was upset. Why? What was Samuel's deal? What was Samuel's problem with it? How did he classify it?

They were rejecting him. Now so Samuel here is very much like us. When we're confronted with a problem, we often classify it as it concerns us, and we think it's all about us, and Samuel is misunderstanding the scene, and so do we.

And Samuel's upset because it seemed like they're rejecting him and his family, but God says, no, this goes deeper than that. They are rejecting me. I am their king, but they aren't happy with that. So let me ask you, what is at the bottom of this asking for a king? There's an assortment of things, but what is at the bottom?

Roger. They want to be like all their neighbors. They want to be like the world. I see all the nations have their own kids, and they want to be just like them.

[4:32] They want to be just like them. Now the question is, why? I mean, sometimes we want to be like our neighbors, and sometimes we don't. Why do they want to be like a neighbor, like their

neighbor in this situation, in this way?

Dale. I guess if your thoughts and your side is on the temporal, without really putting their faith, whole faith in God, they could feel defenseless.

Yeah. And they could feel like they're not going to be provided for, like all the other nations. Right. So when the other nations look for defense, and look for provision, and look for security, and safety, and glory, and where do they look?

What were they looking to? Their human king. And so I think at the bottom of the heart, or at the bottom of the Israelites' request, is unbelief.

It's unbelief. When they looked at themselves, and the world around them, and their problems, they didn't think having God as their king was really worth anything.

[5:41] Do you see that? It wasn't worth all that much. So in their eyes, he was pretty useless. He seemed pretty unhelpful.

So they were confronted with a situation of they want justice, they need justice, they need security, they know that Samuel's sons aren't doing a good job. And so instead of turning, well, I guess, instead of turning to God, and seeking what God wants, and believing what he has for them, they thought they could do better with a human king.

And so it was unbelief. God was really weightless in their minds, in their hearts. In the face of their difficulties, God just didn't factor in.

His word and his promises were weightless. They didn't bear anything on their lives. And so can we say as Christians that this heart that the Israelites are exhibiting, it looks very much like what we do a lot of times, doesn't it?

And so when we as Christians look at our problems and our sins and get depressed and scared and when we hear the word of God, and so sometimes, does anyone ever come into your life when you're faced with a problem and depression and fear or anxiety or some sin and they bring the word of God to you and the promises of God to you and is it ever like, yeah, but that doesn't really help me.

[7:20] No, I need real help. I need some substantial help. These promises, this word, this encouragement from him, it doesn't help me at all. What good is that? And so we can do the very same thing.

So Israel didn't see and didn't believe that God as their king connected to them in any substantial way. and their problem, it didn't connect to their problem in any real significant way.

And so when we hear the promises of God and say, but I need real help, I need something I can see, I need something tangible, what good is that? We are doing the very same thing that the Israelites did.

We're seeing a picture of ourselves here, aren't we? And so it was rejection and it was forsaking and it was unbelief. And in another way of thinking about it, it was a sinful forgetting.

Forgetting. And a sinful forgetting at that. So please turn over to chapter 12 and look at verse 1 here. So things have gone on here and Saul's been anointed and Saul has been actually confirmed as king.

[8:38] And so Samuel is now, you see it on the NIV, it says Samuel's farewell speech. He is saying goodbye. And of all the things he wants to talk about, this is the thing that he brings up.

Chapter 12, verse 1. And Samuel said to all Israel, I have listened to everything you said to me and I have set a king over you.

So we're talking about them asking for a king. And then look down at verse 6. Then Samuel said to the people, It is the Lord who appointed Moses and Aaron and brought your forefathers out of Egypt.

Now then stand here because I am going to confront you with evidence before the Lord as to all the righteous acts performed by the Lord for you and all your fathers.

After Jacob entered Egypt, they cried to the Lord for help and the Lord sent Moses and Aaron who brought your forefathers out of Egypt and settled them in this place.

[9:43] But they forgot the Lord their God. And so he sold them into the hand of Sisera, the commander of the army of Hazor and into the hands of the Philistines and the king of Moab who fought against them.

They cried out to the Lord and said, We have sinned, we have forsaken the Lord and served the Baals and the Ashtoreths, but now deliver us from the hands of our enemies and we will serve you.

Then the Lord sent Jeroboam, Barak, Jephthah, and Samuel and he delivered you from the hands of your enemies on every side so that you lived securely.

But when you saw that Nahash, king of the Ammonites was moving against you, you said to me, No, we want a king to rule over us even though the Lord your God was king. Now here's the king you have chosen, the one you asked for.

See, the Lord has set a king over you. So, let me ask you, what were some of the, what was, what did Israel forget?

[10:46] What did Israel forget? What were some of the things? Death. They already had a king. That's true. What else?

Okay. We see all that going on here. What else, what are some of the specifics that they're forgetting? He delivered them, yeah, over and over again.

In one little paragraph here, we have the entire book of Judges, summed up. And you remember the book of Judges. It's, it's one deliverance after another, after another, after another, after another.

So, that whole period, oh yes, Mark, go ahead. And in the process, he beat the pants off a bunch of others? Yeah. That's a way to put it.

So, what do we have here? God versus these human kings. And, God wins again, and again, and again, kind of saying, you know what?

[11:59] God is a pretty good king, isn't he? He delivered them out of Egypt, and they forgot about that. He defended them, and rescued them again, and again, and they forgot about that.

They forgot that God really was a good king. He protected them. He loved them. He saved them. He kept working with them. He kept, he gave them a place.

He did great things for them. And that's why I call it sinful forgetting. Because when we don't remember what God has done for us in the past, that's just not a slip of the memory.

that's a sinful forgetting. He did great things for them, and they forgot it all. And so, it was not just a small sin.

It was a spectacular sin for the people of God to say to their maker, their redeemer, and their king, we want to be like the nations. We want a human king.

[13:04] We don't want you to be our king. We want a human king. And Samuel called it an evil thing. A great wickedness. And so, what you have here in chapter 12 is Samuel going as the prosecutor, and he says, now I'm going to bring up evidence against you.

He's saying, you don't understand how evil it was when you asked for a king. So it was a great wickedness.

But, are you ready for a big contrast? But, if Israel had no kingship, then Jesus Christ would not have come as the king of Israel, the son of David, and the king of kings, and the lord of lords.

A fundamental part of Jesus' identity as our savior is king. But, humanly speaking, none of this would have happened if it weren't for this spectacular sin.

And so, out of this terrible rebellion, and this unbelief, God, in the fullness of time, made Jesus the king of kings.

[14:27] He made him the king of Israel. And again, we see it, God uses a spectacular sin to further his redemptive purposes. God uses a spectacular sin to display and to magnify his son, to give us an understanding, to bring about Jesus Christ and his glory.

Now, we have a number of lessons here. And the first is this. We kind of want to go back a little bit, and we want to get a big understanding of the fact that Jesus Christ is king and see how this fits in, this particular sin fits in with all of that.

Christ kingship, this is number one. The first lesson is this. Christ kingship has been a part of the plan from the beginning. God is not here cleverly reacting to his people's sin and changing his plan so it fits what he wants to do.

It wasn't an unplanned response to the sin of Israel. It was part of the plan to, in the fullness of time, as things progressed, that Jesus Christ would become the king.

Now, looking back, you can, just, you can see a hint of it in chapter, Genesis chapter 14. So, two chapters after God's promise to Abraham, we're already starting to get a little picture of a king that would come.

[16:02] And so, Abraham meets this strange figure named Melchizedek. We read about him last Sunday in Psalm 110 and he is just this mysterious guy.

You remember the Lord said, you will be a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek. Well, Melchizedek was a priest. Genesis 14, 18 says he was a priest of God Most High. Now, that provides all sorts of tantalizing, interesting, what's going on. Abraham apparently wasn't the only saved person, was he?

There was Melchizedek. He's a priest. But he also was the king of Salem. That's the king of Jerusalem.

And his name, Melchizedek, means king of righteousness. Melech means king, Zedek means righteousness. He's this king of righteousness. And the writer of Hebrews lands on this strange figure and he says, now here's a picture and here's a type of this coming king.

[17 : 08] He would be a priest, a priest of God Most High, and he would be a king of righteousness. But Salem means peace.

And so he's also going to be the king of peace. He's the prince of peace, remember? And then the author of Hebrews says, without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life, like the son of God, he remains a priest forever.

So this Melchizedek, as we find him in scripture, is this picture of this coming king who would be both priest and king and who would live forever. Now, just to clarify and to scratch that itch that you're probably getting about Melchizedek, Melchizedek, it says he's without mother or father, beginning or end of life, but it's only talking about as we find him in the story.

Okay? You know that in the Old Testament especially, when a figure is introduced a lot of times, almost all the time, that figure is grounded and he's the son of this guy and the son of that guy. He's grounded in his genealogy. Well, Melchizedek just sort of floats onto the scene and he, there's no mention of who his dad was or his grandfather was.

[18 : 32] He floats into the story and floats out just as quickly and we would say, well, where did he come from? what's, I want to know more, but he's just shrouded in mystery and his whole description, Melchizedek's whole description as we find him in the scriptures, what's included and what is left out is meant to get us thinking and it's getting us ready to see Christ.

Christ. Now, the point is God was already laying the groundwork for a king already back in Genesis 14.

He's given us a picture of the king and then we get another curious clue, another thing to make us think. 1 Samuel chapter 2. So please turn there. 1 Samuel chapter 2.

And this is Hannah's prayer after Samuel has been dedicated.

1 Samuel chapter 2 and verse 6. Now, as we're reading, I want you to think, is there a connection between a passage that we just memorized in Hannah's prayer?

[19 : 47] So just look for that. Verse 6. The Lord brings death and makes alive. He brings down to the grave and raises up. The Lord sends poverty and wealth.

He humbles and he exalts. He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap. He seats them with princes and has them inherit a throne of honor.

For the foundations of the earth are the Lord's. Upon them he has set the world. He will guard the feet of his saints, but the wicked will be silenced in darkness. It is not by strength that one prevails. Those who oppose the Lord will be shattered. He will thunder against them from heaven. The Lord will judge the ends of the earth. He will give strength to his king and exalt the horn of his anointed. Well, first of all, just as a side note, can you think of a psalm that picks up on Hannah's prayer? Roger. 1.13.

[20 : 48] We just memorized it. So obviously the psalmist had been thinking about this passage and he came up with this psalm. He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap.

He beseeches them with princes and makes them inherit a throne of honor. Now, secondly, did you notice something curious in verse 10? What sort of is out of place in verse 10?

Is that the end? What does he say God will do? He'll give strength to the king. Question. Is there a king? When Hannah's praying?

There's no king yet. There's no king yet. But Hannah here is saying there's a king coming. A king is coming.

And so, let's pause here and think about this. God is going to take someone who is poor and make them inherit a throne of honor.

[21:54] Can you think of anyone who started out as a nobody and then became king? Can you think of anyone who, though he was rich, for our sake became poor and who humbled himself, but then God exalted him to the highest place?

this whole business is pointing again to Jesus Christ. And it's not just here or there, it's everywhere, again and again.

And so, do you see why Jesus could say to those disciples on the road to Emmaus how he can open the scriptures and explain to them everything the scripture said about himself?

I think we have the tendency to think he only had three or four places to go where there was this direct, prophetic, messianic prophecy. But, that's not true.

The whole thing is pointing to Jesus. And he could say to the Pharisees, you diligently study the scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life.

[23:03] These are the scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life. So, it's not just the obvious passages here that are talking about Jesus, about the coming Messiah.

It's the whole thing. It's the details. It's the thought patterns. It's not the obvious. It's just not the obvious parts. It's the whole warp and woof, the whole structure of the Old Testament is preparing us to see and understand who Jesus Christ is.

And it can, it's almost so much, it's so obvious, or it's so much in front of us that we have a hard time seeing it. And so people easily miss it.

But the king is coming. The king is coming. Hannah says, Hannah, the housewife, prophesies, there's this king coming. Of course, Moses in Deuteronomy 17, he gives directions for when the king comes.

Now, that's the first point. It was going to happen. God had planned it. It was in the plan from the very beginning. And so this spectacular sin of Israel rejecting God, it doesn't come as a surprise.

[24:14] This is the means that he uses. Now, that's the first point. Now, here's the real question, the screaming question, if you think about it.

And this is the, where we're really forced to think. Why didn't God make it right from the beginning to be a human king?

You know, when he was setting up Israel as a nation, why not just right then install a king? Why wasn't Moses a king? Why didn't Joseph become a king right from the beginning?

Why not, why, why plan this direct kingship from God over his people from the beginning and then bring a human king into the story later?

especially after a spectacular sin? You get what I'm saying? Why not just start with a human king? Why not more of a direct route to Jesus?

[25:13] That's what we like, don't we? We like direct routes. We like, if you're going to do this, then just do it. You know, if you're going to, you know, I think about this. If you're going to make me holy, God, why don't you just make me holy, snap your fingers, and make it happen?

If I'm going to heaven, why can't I just skip this and get there? You see what I'm saying? That's the way we think. We want it to make sense.

A leads to B, and B leads to C, direct correlation, direct. And so the question is, is why did he do it this way? Well, there's a number of answers.

The second is, God is again teaching us something. He's again teaching us what man meant for evil, God meant for good.

That's not just a truth that's true about Joseph. That's a truth that's true about almost every situation where there's sin involved. It's true about your lives.

[26:15] And we don't want to miss that what God is doing, he's doing a holy work through the unholiness of men. And so Paul in Acts 13 explicitly says, God gave Israel their king.

God gave them judges until Samuel the prophet. Then they asked for a king and God gave them Saul, the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin for 40 years. And when he had removed him, he raised up David to be their king.

Yes, they did a wicked thing in asking for a king. They were rejecting God. There was total unbelief, but God in grace gave them what they asked for and treated them better than what they deserved.

So again, we're brought to this lesson that we need to learn in our lives. That what men mean for evil, God means, can mean for good.

Now why did God do it this way? Well, to show his sovereignty over sin. That's what we're saying. Third lesson, why did he do it this way?

[27:15] To give us a picture of our own hearts. These things are written for us. For our example, for our teaching, for our correcting, for our rebuking.

The whole situation is an open window into our hearts. You know what I find interesting about this? When we read about this, we can easily see, oh yeah, that was bad.

But we have a harder time seeing that we do the same thing. You remember David? Nathan comes to David in the story of Bathsheba, that whole sin.

And David is angry and furious. He clearly sees the sin of this evil neighbor who would steal his neighbor's pet lamb. But David didn't see himself in that story until Nathan said, you're the man. I'm talking about you. And so, this story tells us about us, what we are like. We are stiff-necked. We are rebellious.

[28:26] And we are unthankful. That's how we are naturally. Thank the Lord he's working on us and changing us. And so, it's not just the story of Israel. This is the story of humanity.

But even as Christians, we can be like this, can't we? Or am I the only one who, when a new trial comes, it's like, how am I ever going to make it?

But don't we forget that, you know, it's not Israel that just has a history of the judges where it's sin and rescue and redemption and salvation. I have that history in my life, don't you?

where I sinned and I asked for forgiveness and he forgave me and I cried out for mercy and he helped me and I was in trial and difficulty and I was in over my head and he rescued me.

See, it's not just Israel that has this propensity to forget. It's me. So we get this open view of our own heart. Now, are we different than when we were before?

[29:31] Are we learning to trust him? I hope you are. You know, there are things in your lives, I sincerely believe this, that God takes us through and it's so devastating, so trying, that it's like in one instant, it changes us.

So we go through something, a trial so deep and God shows himself faithful and good in it and from that point on, it's hard for us to not trust him when another trial like that comes up.

There are things like that. Do you ever find that? Where I went through this, through this devastating financial problem and God provided the whole way and now when financial problems come up, I'm learning, you know what, this is okay.

He brought me through that one time. We are learning that. Now, are we learning it as quickly as we ought? No. Do we still stumble and fall? No, but by the grace of God, we are learning it, aren't we? We're not where we used to be. But still, this story shows us ourselves. Yes, God is our king. He promised to provide for us. Jesus is our great savior who's going to rule over us and defend us.

[30:48] But do we always trust him? No. Well, Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever, but so often I say, I want what everyone else has.

They have money. I want money. They have this enjoyment. I want that. So we're getting a picture of ourselves. Now, fourth, this shows us that the kingship of God's people only belongs to God.

Okay? Now, remember, why not a more direct route? Why not just install Moses as king right from the very beginning? Why did God start with kingship only in his hands?

So no other king, no other country was like them. You know, Roger said that we wanted to be like all the other nations. They weren't like the other nations, were they?

There was no other country like them, no other nation like them. Everywhere they looked, they had nations and they had cities and all their nations and all the cities had kings. And so, the people around them could say, well, where's your king?

[32:04] Where's your king? Where's his throne? Don't you need a king to rule over you and protect you and secure you and defend you? And so, there's this obvious gaping hole in their politics.

Right? They have no king. But it was a hole that was saying to them, God is the real king. We don't need a human king. God is our real king.

God is the only king of God's people. Now, there's been, there's been throughout history and throughout Christendom, people in the past who thought it was a good idea for a king to rule over a nation of so-called Christians in the name of God.

And what I mean is, so there was the Holy Roman Empire and Charlemagne had the crown put on his head by the Pope and so Charlemagne was ruling for God over God's people on God's behalf.

So he was God's man to rule this great Christian empire, God's people. But is that the way God thinks about his people? Do we need a human king like that?

[33:13] No, the kingship belongs to God. And so when Israel asked for a king, they were rejecting this whole truth. So if God would have started Israel with Moses and Joshua as the first kings, it would not have been clear that God is the only true king.

It wouldn't have been so clear that God is the only rightful king of Israel, that he won't have any human competitors. So God will not share his throne with any mere human.

But that brings us to our fifth lesson. And that is, a God-man must be king. A God-man must be king. God won't have any mere human competitors.

But we saw again and again already that there is going to be a king. A coming king. Hannah said it. Moses said it.

Melchizedek was showing it. Jacob prophesied about it. Remember in Genesis 49, Judah, you're going to have, the scepter won't depart between your feet.

[34:24] You see, right from the beginning of kingship, there was a fundamental tension, a fundamental problem. God is the one rightful king of his people. And yet, it was definitely promised right from the beginning that there would be a human king who would rule for God.

So who's going to be the king? God or man? And what about the fact that all these ordinary human kings fail? They fail in moral ways.

They sin. They fail and they die. They sin. They die. They can't really represent God and be God's king.

And so something had to happen. Someone new and altogether different had to come that could bridge the gap, could close this tension.

And you remember Matthew 22, the Pharisees are grilling Jesus. They're testing him again and again. And so finally, Jesus, who if you think about it, is the smartest man who ever lived.

[35:39] He asked them a question. What do you think about the Christ? What do you think about this Messiah, this coming king? Whose son is he?

This is our big question. Whose son is he? And they said, he's the son of David. He'll be a human king like David.

Isn't that what the Pharisees had in mind? Isn't that what the Jews had in mind? What's this king going to be? He's going to be a great human king. He's going to be the son of David. And, you know, in part, they're right.

But they missed a lot of it, too, didn't they? Well, Jesus says, well, how is it then that David, when he was talking about him, calls him Lord? For he says, the Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet.

Now, it's interesting. In the Hebrew, in Psalm 110, it's, it's two different Lords. It's Yahweh and Adonai, and they're noticeably different.

[36:45] But when Jesus quotes it, he uses the Greek Old Testament, which is the same word, Kyrios, Kyrios. So he brings these two Lords together, and he says they're one and the same, and yet they're different.

So if David calls him Lord, how can he be his son? And there it is. If David calls his son the same name as he calls his God, then what is going on there, Pharisees?

And the Pharisees can't say a word, they don't know how to solve the riddle, and that was the fundamental tension all along. Who's the rightful king? Is it God, or is it man?

But what's the answer? It's Jesus, the Messiah, the God man, the Christ. He's David's son, and yet David's Lord, David's God.

And so the king to come would be the son of David, but he would also be the ancient of days. And he'd be more than just the son of David, he would be more than a merely human king.

[37:55] It would be God come in the flesh to rule over his people. And so in the son of God, it was joining the promise that there will be a king to come, but that promise of a human king to come is joined to the prerogative that only God has the right to rule over his people.

And so those two things come together in Jesus Christ. And so God has the right to rule over us. He's our only king. That's the way it begins, and that's the way it ends.

But David was promised a human son who would rule over forever and ever. And yet, Jesus comes as the son of David. Now, so who is on the throne now for us?

He is God, and yet he is not ashamed to call you brothers. Not ashamed to call you brothers. Infinitely exalted, and yet so wonderful and humble and close.

Now, how did God bring this gracious situation about? Where now, when we pray to our God, we are praying to the son of God who is God and man who can relate to us and sympathize with us in our weakness.

[39 : 15] Now, how did God bring this gracious arrangement about? Well, it was through the spectacular sin of Israel.

Of Israel saying, we don't want you to be king, and yet through that, God installs him as the king. Sounds familiar, doesn't it? We don't want this man to be king, and yet God installed him as king. And so, now, here's the practical upside. This is what you take away from this. when evil times come, and when you are sinned against, and when the sins of this world seem to be piling up higher and higher, and the water gets dirtier, and muckier, and nastier, and this world is just getting too much, you need to remember that God knows how to deal with sin.

He doesn't not, it's not only just reacting to it, he knows how to use it to glorify his son. He knows how to use it to bring grace to his people. So, when you're looking around and you're looking at your life and you're looking at the world and you're listening to the news, turn your eyes on Jesus. God has done something amazing, and he was able to do it through the spectacular sin of asking for a human king. So, God knows how to deal with sin. God knows how to use sin to glorify himself, and even to bless his people forever and ever.

[40 : 49] We're in good hands. We're dismissed. ..!