

Saul anointed king

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Preacher: Rev Howard Stone

[0 : 00] 1 Samuel chapter 10, I'd like to consider the first eight verses in this chapter. Let's just read at the beginning.

Samuel took a glass of oil and poured it on Saul's head and kissed him, saying, Has not the Lord anointed you neither over his inheritance? When you leave me today, you will meet two men near Rachel's tomb, at Zela on the borders of Benjamin.

They will say to you, the donkeys you set out to look for have been found. There seems to be in our own country an increasing debate and discussion about the future of the monarchy.

With the royal family's troubles and marital difficulties, there's an increasing uneasiness with the royal family and its position in the country.

Should it be removed? Should we just become a republic? It's a thought to many people. Well, it doesn't seem to have much power these days. It doesn't have much role in the government of the country.

[1 : 09] So it's understandable that many people are involved in such a discussion. But as we look at Israel here, they were right at the other end of the monarchy. They were just about to establish it, about to bring it into existence in the old land.

We're considering throwing it out and putting an end to it. But here was Israel, just about to establish the kingship in their own land. So you can imagine perhaps a little of the concern and the sense of inadequacy and weakness that Saul must have felt when he realised that Samuel the prophet was hinting at it, or had been hinting initially, that he was to be the first king.

We have Saul quoted there in verse 20, he was saying, And to whom is all the desire of Israel turned, if not to you and all your father's family?

He was saying to Saul, It's you that Israel wants to have as king. He may well have thought, How can I possibly cope? How can I possibly be the first king of this land?

Well, what am I meant to do? What if the nation at large wouldn't accept me as king? His mind must have been in quite a turmoil, I would imagine, when he had made up with Samuel and had been confronted with this.

[2 : 29] Well, as we read on in chapter 10, we find that in the narrative here, God deals very graciously with Saul. He gives him encouragements and assurances that he will be able to cope with the kingship because God is going to help him.

Because he is not doing this simply in his own strength, but he is God's appointment. He is the one that God himself has chosen. Saul is going to be able to take on his role as king with some degree of confidence.

Let me consider, first of all, then, God's choice. That here Saul was God's choice. Just as we read, Samuel pours the oil on his head and says, Has not the Lord anointed you leader over his inheritance?

Right here at the very beginning, it is made very plain to Saul that he was God's choice. It wasn't simply that the nation had had an election or that someone had suggested the right man or simply because of his physical stature that Saul had been appointed.

But here, right at the outset, Samuel is saying, This is not man's choice. It is the God of Israel who has chosen you to be king. It was Samuel that poured on the oil.

[3 : 55] But he said, The Lord has anointed you. Samuel was just an instrument. It wasn't Samuel's choice. It was God's choice. Now, in Israel up to this time, it was only the priests that had been anointed.

There was a special oil, a fragrant oil, a perfumed oil, that was to be used in anointing the priests and no one else. That was an indication that they were being set aside by God himself for God's

work.

The priests were specially chosen by God. It started off with Aaron and the priests were descended from Aaron's family. They were to be anointed as a special mark on these people that they were God's choosing.

And this pouring on of oil seemed to have been a symbol of the pouring of God's spirits onto these people, into these people to equip them for God's work.

And so we have the same picture here, the same symbol for Saul. By doing this, by pouring his oil on Saul, Samuel is saying, God has picked out you.

[5 : 00] He has set aside you for his work. And he is pouring his spirit on you as well. To equip you for that work. It must have been an assurance for Paul, a great assurance for him to know that God himself had chosen him.

That he had God behind him, so to speak. He'd been anointed, he'd been appointed as king to lead his own inheritance, God's own inheritance. And I think we need to notice there that Saul, Samuel rather, speaks of the Lord's inheritance.

He's speaking here of his people as he lived in his promised land. The people were still God's. They weren't to become Saul's people. They were still God's people and Saul was reigning on God's behalf.

He was God's man. He was God's instrument. God's king. And he had to rule under God's direction and in accordance with God's truth. God was still the supreme ruler.

He was still the king on the throne of the world. But Saul was to be to govern and to lead the people on God's behalf.

[6 : 13] Now why was God choosing a king? Well, as we read a little bit there, Israel wanted a king. They wanted to be like all the other nations who had a king to lead them out to battle.

And in that, they were rejecting God's leading and deliverance in battle. But also, God had his purposes in this. God gave them their request to do them good.

He was establishing the kingship so that the king, by his government of the people, would be used to convey God's blessings to the nation. You only have to read on through scripture to see what a benefit he did was to the nation and Solomon after him.

The territory of the land was greatly extended. Solomon, of course, blessed with such glorious riches and power and peace.

The kings, as they obeyed God, were the source of great blessing and good to the people of Israel. That was at least part of the reason why God had appointed Saul here.

[7 : 18] he was appointed to bring blessings through his government of the land to the rest of God's people. Now, we read last week, back in chapter 9 at verse 16, that part of the reason for the coming of Saul was to deliver his people from the Philistines.

Verse 16, Anoint him, leader over my people Israel. He will deliver my people from the hand of the Philistines. There was one way which Saul was to be used by God to bring blessing, to do good to his own inheritance.

Now, the king, of course, was to reign under God's direction and guidance. And as he did so, he would be instrumental in bringing the blessings of God into the lives and hearts of the people of God.

He was going to be the means by which God defended his people against their enemies. Because through his leadership, through his administration of justice, there would be prosperity in the land. God appointed the king and he appointed it with the good of his own people in mind. I'm sure that here we see a type of the true king, a symbol of the perfect king, the Messiah, the Anointed One.

[8 : 42] The word Messiah comes from the Hebrew which simply means the Anointed One. It's the equivalent of the Greek in the New Testament of Christ. Both of them mean the Anointed One.

Christ, of course, is the perfect king, the perfect Messiah, the one who has been chosen by God, who has been appointed by God, just as Saul was here.

Saul and all the other kings were really just a picture, a symbol of the true king that was to come after them. Now, Jesus Christ was never physically anointed as far as we have the record in the Gospel.

He never had oil poured on him as the kings of the Old Testament did. But remember I said it was a picture of the coming of the Spirit. Well, Don tells us in chapter 3 and the record of John the Baptist's testimony.

He says, the man who has saved, I'll think of it, verse 34, for the one whom God has sent, Christ himself, speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limits.

[9 : 50] The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands. God says, this is the one to whom God has given the Spirit without limits. He has been anointed in a true spiritual sense.

Christ was the King and God has put everything into his hands and made him ruler of the world. The Lord Jesus did not take the honour of kingship on himself.

It wasn't something he chose for himself. He didn't make himself king. He was appointed as King of the world, as King of the Church, just as the kings of the Old Testament had been.

Just as Saul here was appointed. And of course, the King, the Lord Jesus Christ, was appointed to bring blessing to God's people.

You see the parallel? Saul was appointed to bring blessing to Israel and King Jesus has been appointed by God to bring blessing to his young people. You were thinking this morning of how God rules over the events of this world for the furtherance of the Gospel.

[10 : 59] to make the Church grow, to strengthen God's people in their faith. And surely that is true of the Lord Jesus as well. That as Saul brought blessing through his civil government, Christ has been dedicated.

He is dedicated to bring blessing, to bring good to all his people, to bring spiritual benefits to you and to me if we belong to his kingdom.

Christ rules, as we read in Ephesians, all things have been put under his feet for the Church, for the good of the Church of Christ in this world.

That is why Christ rules to bring his own, to bring glory to his own name through his people. And what is true for the Church at large is true of each individual Christian.

Christ has been appointed for your blessing and for mine. God wants to do you good if you are a member of that Church.

[12 : 04] If you are saved tonight, he is going to do you good through the powerful rule of his own son appointed as Lord of the universe. It is no chance that Christ, that Jesus of Nazareth has been appointed King of the universe.

it is God's appointment. God made Jesus, God made this God-man to rule over all the events of your life and mine, to do you good, to build you up in your faith, to make you instrumental in bringing blessing to others and to bring glory to his own name.

Friends, that rule is going on at this moment, isn't it? at this moment in time, Christ reigns. He is on the throne in heaven and every event in this universe is under his control.

I think it was one of a great pre-churchmen of the last century who said, the dust of the earth is on the throne of the universe. a man, the God-man, the glorified God-man, reigns over every event in this world.

Can you and I not then have great confidence in whatever circumstance we may have? We can have absolute confidence in even the most terrible circumstances we may face because we are assured of the character of our Savior.

[13 : 40] He is the good and wise and loving and gracious and tender Savior and he is working out his purposes for your goodness and for mine.

Saul was meant to bring blessing to the people of God as the physical king. He didn't do a very good job as you'll get the impression as you read on through Samuel.

The friend of Christ is a perfect God of bringing blessing to you and to me. So, we've thought about God's choice.

What about God's presence next? You see, the assurance of God's presence was solved in verse 7. Samuel says to him, once these signs are fulfilled, do whatever your hand finds to do, for God is with you.

God is with you, the promise of God's presence. Here the Lord is graciously giving Saul further confirmation that he is not going to be trying to be king all in his own strength.

[14 : 50] It's not something that he's just going to have to cope with himself. God is assuring him, I will be with you in the work you do for me.

So, God has given him, through Samuel, these three signs. First of all, in verse 2, that he would meet two men who would tell him about the donkeys, the donkeys you set out for if you find.

That was the first sign. When Samuel and Saul heard that message, his anxiety would have been removed. You don't have to worry about the donkeys.

That was the purpose he set out for in the first place to go and find them. But also, you remember what Samuel had said to Saul the previous day.

When Saul had met Samuel, Samuel said, don't worry about the donkeys, they've been found. Saul had nothing else to go on apart from Samuel's words.

[15:49] And surely when he met up with this man, or these two men, and they said this to him, this man would have gone back to what Samuel said. What he said was true. And if what Samuel said about the donkeys was true, surely what he also said about the kingship, that that was going to be true as well.

It may have been hard for Saul to take in these thoughts about him becoming king, but that sign, that fulfillment of that sign, would have reassured him that what Samuel had said would be perfectly true.

Then there's a second sign. As Saul was to go on from there, he would meet three men who were going up to Bethel to a place of worship. They were carrying three goats, three loaves of bread, and a skin of wine.

Now these seem to have been sacrificial gifts. They were things that were going to give up, going up to Bethel, they were going to worship God there, and these would be given in sacrifice to God himself or to the priests there.

But two of these lobes that were designed or intended for God's worship, for the people of God, the priests of God, perhaps they were to be given to Saul. And Saul was being instructed to accept them.

[17:05] It was a sign here of homage being paid to God's anointed one. Saul was to interpret this as a further evidence that what Samuel was saying was true.

He really was God's 90s. He was going to receive this homage, this respect and honour from these people who had been going up to worship. And then there's the third longest, the third sign, the longest of the three.

Saul, as he went up to Gibeah, he was to be met by this party, this band of prophets, and he himself would be involved in the prophesying.

The spirit was to come upon him, now I don't think we can understand the coming of the spirit in this way as a work of regeneration, and as the work that the spirit does when a man or a woman or a boy or girl becomes a Christian.

He changes them, makes them new, gets rid of the old stony heart, and gives them a heart of flesh, takes away sin, makes them a child of God, that's the work of regeneration, making all things new.

[18:21] That's not what happened to Saul here. Rather, it seems to have been a more outward effect. It certainly had a dramatic effect on Saul, he was to become a different man.

God changed his heart. But I think it's to be understood as his outward disposition being changed. He was now to be filled with kingly thoughts.

he was now equipped to be a king. He was being equipped for the formidable responsibility of looking after the people of God. Now, it seems very likely that the prophesying that's described here was some sort of ecstatic state.

He may have been in some sort of trance along with the other prophets here. some perhaps energetic expression of religious feelings, maybe in song or just in speech.

There was music along with it as well. And music is once or twice associated with prophesying as a means of almost building people up into this ecstatic state.

[19:38] Certainly it came here, came about through the work of the spirits. prophets. But it's not what we would understand prophesying normally.

It was the work of the spirit, but it wasn't simply bringing a message from God to man. It was a much more outward, much more physical thing. And clearly that's what brought surprise to people later on.

When they saw Saul, they said, is Saul really among the prophets? It was such a change for Saul. perhaps he was rather an irreligious person before this. So these three signs then, the meeting of two men who explained about the donkeys, the bread that was given by the three men, and his being joining in with the prophesying of these prophets.

Here was God giving further signs to Saul, saying, you are really going to be king, and I'm going to equip you to be that king. And having been equipped, having been encouraged by these signs, he is told in verse 7 there, do whatever your hand finds to do.

Decide for yourself how to go from there, how you are to govern, what leadership you are to take, with the assurance that you're not on your own. These signs were being given to him to say, you're not on your own.

[21 : 05] This isn't a work that you're to do on your own. God is with you. Those signs will confirm that God is with you. Now that must have been a wonderful comfort for Saul here.

It must have been a great promise for Saul to think, I'm not doing this on my own. The God of Israel is going to help me with it as well. He will give me wisdom, he will guide and direct me as I seek to rule over his heritage.

It must have been a great comfort and blessing to him. But Christian friends, do you and I not have something far better? Something far better with regard to the Holy Spirits.

Because here it would seem that the Holy Spirit was given to Saul simply for this particular service that he had of God. He was called to be king, God gave him the spirit to enable him to be king.

It was given so that Saul could fulfill his responsibility and so bring blessing to the people. But Saul was later to lose the help of the Holy Spirit because of his own disobedience.

[22 : 24] God rejects him and the spirit leaves him. Go to chapter 16 and at verse 14 verse 13 first of all.

1 Samuel 16 verse 13 so Samuel has been told to go and anoint someone else in Saul's place. So Saul took the horn of oil and anointed him, that's David, in the presence of his brothers.

And from that day on the spirit of the Lord came upon David in power. See the connection there again with the anointing and the coming of the spirit. Samuel went, then went to Ramah. Now the spirit of the Lord had departed from Saul and an evil spirit from the Lord tormented him.

See the contrast there, the spirit coming on to David to equip him for the work that Saul had lost.

The spirit had left Saul because of his own disobedience, because he hadn't submitted as we'll see to God's instructions.

So Saul it was a wonderful blessing to have the spirit equipping him in this way. But friends, if you are in Christ tonight, if you know Christ for yourself as your saviour, if you're united to him by faith, you have something far more wonderful than that.

[23 : 46] You have the spirit of God within you. You have the eternal God indwelling you, not just in a temporary fashion, not just there for a while, not just for one particular service, as it was with Saul, but you always have God with you.

The ultimate promise of God's presence for Saul, God is with you. You'll see the signs fulfilled, and that will be evidence that God is with you. But Christian friends, we always have God with us.

There's never a time, never a moment, never a fraction of a second, when God will ever lead you.

Never a moment when that's not true, that God is with you and with me.

The writing of the Hebrews reminds us of the promise, never will I lead you, never will I forsake you.

Now Saul, as I've said, he must have been greatly encouraged by this message of God's presence. God is with us.

[25 : 02] God is with us, that the Spirit always lives within us. Whatever difficulty you may face tonight, whatever may happen to you in the week ahead, your spirit will see it, whatever burden or concern you may carry, God is with you, and he will never leave you.

You may have hard decisions to take, but God is with you. You may have very heavy responsibilities to fulfill, just as Saul here, and a heavy duty, but God is with you.

Whatever fears you may have for the future, no need to worry. God is with you, and God will always be with you, by the Spirit who indwells you.

The Christian can say with confidence, I have nothing to fear, God is with me, he will always undertake for me. By his Spirit who lives within me, I can cope with anything.

Easy to say, perhaps, more difficult to put into practice. But should we have any place, is there any place for fear, or for concern, or worry, in a Christian's life, when he has the promise of having God with him continually.

[26 : 24] Remember what the prophecy that Matthew recalls when he speaks of the birth of Christ. He says, he speaks of the child who shall be called Emmanuel.

Emmanuel is simply a word from the Hebrew, God with us. Christ. That is Christ, God with us. God with us by his Spirit.

Christ is with you by his Spirit every step of your Christian life. You can have the confidence of God's presence now and tomorrow and the next day.

You can be assured of his protection. You know that he will give you strength to bear whatever trials may come your way. He will provide for the future. You can enjoy his fellowship. He will never leave you. And people, you have, you're spared, you have more life ahead of you than the rest of us.

[27 : 26] It's great to have God with you in the years that lie ahead. It's a wonderful promise that God is saying to you as to the older ones here, that if you put your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, if you follow Christ, he will be with you every step of the way.

It's well worth having a friend like that. Now Saul had the Spirit with him, the promise of God with him, but it seems only to be short-lived, to be temporary.

But in Christ we have the Spirit living within us, assuring us of his presence, that he never will leave or forsake us. God's God's instruction.

God's instruction through Samuel in verse 8, Go down ahead of me to Gilgal. I will surely come down to you to sacrifice burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, but you must wait seven days until I come to you and tell you what you are to do.

Now Saul was told in the previous verse, do whatever your hand finds to do. God will equip you with wisdom and strength and direction. You're to get on with the work of being king.

[28 : 40] But it didn't mean he was simply free to do what he pleased. He was still under God's authority. He still had to submit to God's direction. He was still to obey the laws that God gave him.

And they were to come through Samuel the prophets. They came through the written word as well, what God had written down already. But they were to come through Samuel. Samuel says at the end there, I will tell you what to do.

Samuel as prophet was to bring a message from God to the king. And Saul was to respond to that message from God. Now when Samuel says to him go down to Gilgal, it seems to be meaning after the confirmation of his kingship.

If you read on in the next chapter, after he was chosen by Lot, then there was the attack of the Ammonites on Jabesh Gilead, and Saul shows his qualities as king by going out to defeat them. And then he is confirmed once more as being king of Israel. But it seems after that Samuel is speaking of him going to Gilgal.

[29 : 57] That is when he is about to take on his primary work as king, to relieve the Israelites of the oppression of the Philistines. Remember that is what he was called to, as we read in verse 16 of chapter 9.

And so Samuel says to Saul, go down to Gilgal and wait for seven days. Then Samuel said he would come, would offer gifts and sacrifices, they had to seek God's favour, God's blessing, before he set out to undertake this work of freeing them from the Philistines.

That was what God required of Saul. That was God's instruction for Saul. Even as king he was not above the law of God. He was not free to live as he pleased.

He was not above the law. He had a duty to obey just like any other man. Sadly though as we read on in 1 Samuel we find that this was to be the beginning of the end for Saul.

He doesn't seem to have been very far on in his kingship. In chapter 13 and verse 7 Saul remained at Gilgal. He had come down to Gilgal as Samuel said and all the troops with him were quaking with fear.

[31 : 13] The Philistines were gathering their army around them. He waited for seven days, the time set by Samuel, in the fulfilment of what Samuel said. But Samuel did not come to Gilgal.

Saul's men began to scatter. So he said, bring me the burnt offering and fellowship offerings. And Saul offered up the burnt offerings. That was the beginning of the end because he began to take authority to himself by the offering of sacrifices which he had no business doing.

That was the work of Samuel the priest. Saul here had been given the greatest blessing that God could have bestowed on any Israelite to be made the leader of his people.

The very first king of Israel. Was there any other honour that could have been bestowed greater than this on Saul? So Saul's obedience, Saul's response should surely have been one of obedience.

That he should have shown his thankfulness to God by submitting to this instruction. By keeping the law, by keeping the direction that God had given. He should have been the first to recognise his dependence on God and his duty to obey.

[32 : 28] I think there's a lesson for us here that no one is above God's law. Even God's king, even the one that God had appointed to be king over Israel was not above the law.

He was not afraid to do as he pleased, to live as he pleased. He still had to obey God's instruction. He was still under the law of God. And friends, none less than the perfect king, the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, he had to submit to God's laws as well.

You might have thought, well, Jesus, as the son of God, he could do as he pleased. No, friends, he couldn't. He was a man and he had to live in perfect obedience to the commands that God had given.

And he was willing to do so. He was willing to be under the law, to submit to the laws of God, to fulfill all his duties and everything. Young people, there's an example for you there in Jesus of Nazareth.

Remember what he did after he went up to, remember the occasion when Joseph and Mary lost him, that he was up at the temple. And after they found him, he went back with his mum and with Joseph and Luke tells us he was obedient to them, he submitted to them.

[33 : 50] He obeyed his parents. Now, of course, Jesus is God. Jesus was created, Jesus had created Joseph and Mary as God, he had created them and yet he was willing to do what he was told at home.

he was willing to submit to go under the laws that God had made. God had said, honour your father and mother. And Jesus, the king whom God had appointed was willing to do that.

It was true of Saul that he had a duty to obey the law. It was true of the perfect king, Jesus Christ, that he had a duty to obey the law.

God, how much more then is it true of you and me that we have a duty to obey the laws of God. We're not free just to live as we please.

We have a continuous duty, moment by moment, to do what God says. God has made us. God made this world. He has every right then to tell you what to do, how you should live, how you should speak and think and act.

[35 : 00] friends, even if you have been given the greatest blessing that God can bestow on any person, that is the privilege of belonging to God, you still have this duty to obey.

Here with Saul, he has been given the most wonderful privilege. Your privilege is greater, friends, if you're in Christ tonight. You've been forgiven, you've been filled with the Holy Spirit, and you've been made a child of God, you belong to God's family.

Is there anything more wonderful than that? But that doesn't put you above the law. It doesn't mean that you can live the way you please. It doesn't matter anyway, even if I sin, God's going to forgive me.

We don't think that way. We are not liberated from God's law, we're not free to ignore God's law, but we're free to obey it. God's love.

You and I, without God's help, however hard we may work, we will never keep the law of God. Because basically we don't want to.

[36 : 11] But when we're saved, when we're changed, when we're converted by the Spirit of God, then we are set free to obey God's truth. We have the power to obey that we never had before.

because we have a love for God's truth that we never had before. And our obedience is a measure of our love. Jesus said, if you love me, you will keep my commandments.

If you love me, you will keep my commandments. Well, here was Saul, he was given so much, and he chose to throw it all away, by his disobedience and his rejection of God's truth.

He didn't obey. He didn't keep the instructions that God had given him. God had much blessing in store for Saul. And he has much blessing in store for you and me, as we obey.

If we are willing to submit to his truth, to admit in the first place that we are sinners, to admit that we need to be saved, that we can't work our own ways to heaven, if we submit to him in repentance and faith and enjoy his blessing and forgiveness, then he's giving us, he's promising us many benefits and good things in this world, and far more wonderful things in the world to come.

[37 : 35] And he says that you live in obedience now, you keep God's laws. It's not a grind, it doesn't make life miserable, but it makes life full fully, and full of joy, peace and God's prosperity and blessing.

Had Saul lived in obedience to his God, if he'd listened to the instructions God had given him, he would have known much happiness. As it was, he rejected it, and God in church rejected Saul.

Then we are being called to live lives of obedience for our own blessing, blessing, and also for the glory of our God. Samuel was used by God to bring the instructions from God to Saul.

We have Samuel's words, we have the prophets, all the prophets' words, we have the Lord Jesus Christ and his words, we have the apostles' words. They are all from God's, they are all for us to listen to, and to obey, for our own blessing.

Amen. Let's pray together. Lord, we thank you for what you've told us of that first King of Israel.

[38 : 57] Thank you that there are principles in these things that do not change. We thank you for the marvelous blessings of being a child of God, that for all those who know Jesus Christ through faith in him, there is a promise of your nearness and presence through all of this life and the assurance of a world, a glorious world yet to come.

May each one of us know your blessing through obedience to your commands. May the young folk here grow up to serve you and to know the work of your spirit in their own hearts.

And may each one of us be able to look forward with confidence to the day when we'll be gathered with all your people in the presence of Jesus our Savior. Amen.