

### 3. God provides His people with a King

We read last week about how Israel wanted to be like the nations around them. They wanted to have a man they could look up to, a man who stood out from the rest. Israel stood at the center of the nations, looked around, noticed that the other nations all had kings ruling over them, governing them, guiding them in their various directions, and they wanted that for themselves. While this was rebellious of them, God would still use it to carry out his plan for our salvation. Israel would receive a king. Let's read together about how God gave Israel her first king in 1 Samuel 10 (*read verses 17-25*).

God had Samuel gather Israel together at Mizpah in order to give to them their king. While Samuel had scolded them for rejecting God as king, still he did the will of the Lord. The lots were not to discipline the people, but to select the man who would be king. Just as the Lord had told Samuel and had instructed him to anoint Saul to be king, so he was selected by lot. But he was not there to be found. The man Israel desired had hidden himself among the baggage! He had snuck away when all Israel had assembled and did not go willingly to his duty. Some attribute this to cowardice, others to humility.

But when he came out, he stood taller than any of the people from his shoulders upward. Samuel asked the people, "Do you see him whom the Lord has chosen? There is none like him among all the people." Israel had desired a man with physical attributes to rule over them, and the Lord had provided in kind.

There at Mizpah, Samuel told the people the rights and duties of the kingship, and he wrote them in a book. They were instructed in what the King would take from them, and how he would serve them as a man anointed by God to lead his holy nation. This was a man who could only rule by following the precepts of God, by ruling the people of God by the law of God. So long as Saul followed this law, Israel would prosper. Should he turn away from following the Lord, then he and all the people would suffer, and his dynasty would come to an end.

But Saul was not the ultimate king that Israel needed. He may have been the king they desired, as they chanted, "Long live the King," but he was not the king that could truly save

them from their enemies. He would point ahead to Christ the true King, the one who would deliver his people from sin, who would rule the kingdom of heaven for eternity, the king God provided to the world.

Saul was selected as a mighty man, called out publicly by lot in the midst of the entire assembly of Israel, after having been anointed by Samuel the prophet. Our King was born into a hostile environment, forced to flee the Israelite lands to Egypt to escape being killed. Saul was treated with royalty upon his anointing, provided with choice meat to enjoy at a feast, and given a prepared bed on the rooftop to sleep, while Christ lay in a manger, his family rejected at the inn. Saul prophesied in the midst of the company of prophets, while Christ was alone, having no place to lay his head, and also scorned by the scholars.

The Israelites in Samuel's day saw their King standing before them, and they shouted homage to him, "Long live the King!" Thus, Israel received her king from the Lord. While our Saviour was born humbly, the Lord did not let his coming go unannounced. The angels sang praises before the shepherds at watch by night, and a star rose to alert the Magi from the east to come and worship the King of the Jews. They also offered homage to our King, presenting him with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

For Christ was not selected as a man looking for his donkeys. He willingly came into this world, born humbly in quiet Bethlehem, for our sake. Nor did he did not hide among the baggage when called the king of the Jews, but stood before Pilate as our King, even laying down his life for us on that charge. While his circumstances were different from Saul, in both cases the Lord set a king over his people, to deliver them from their enemies. Saul would deliver Israel from the Philistines and the Amalekites and Ammonites for a time, but his own nature would betray him, and he would fall short in his kingship. But after him the Lord installed David as King, and from his line the Christ was born in Bethlehem!

Do you see him as your King? Do you see him whom the Lord has chosen? There is none like him among all the people! He was given a humble birth, and he was not much to look at, but he is the Son of God, who did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but humbled himself for our sake. There is none like him among all the world, for he alone is

righteous and good, able to complete God's law perfectly. He upheld the law and precepts, he is the king of justice. He was willing to establish and rule the kingdom of heaven even when it meant rejection by his people, and death upon the cross.

Because of this, he is our perfect King, and we can obey and submit to him as citizens of his kingdom. We can worship him and pray, "Long live the King!" He provides us with strength by his Spirit to obey him even in the midst of a country shut down. We can praise our God for his wondrous acts of mercy in Christ, knowing that we have salvation in our king even though churches cannot gather normally. Take time to reflect upon your Saviour humbling himself so that you may be exalted at the last day, and may that give you strength to handle today's circumstances. Let us worship our King!