

1 Samuel 9-11 for Growth Groups: **God's kingship over all and for us**

Warm up:

We have a very large section this week! Lots of twists and turns, questions and surprises. To help us as we read, keep your eye on God: what he arranges and does and why.

Read 1 Samuel 9:1-11:15

Initial reactions?

Surveying the whole (in groups?):

Is Saul an obvious choice or a surprising choice as king for God's people? Consider the details of ch 9-10 in your answer.

Is Saul also a prophet? What signs are there in ch 10-11 that Saul is a prophet who receives and speaks God's word to God's people? What signs in ch 10 (eg v14-16) that cast doubt on this?

Is Saul the king for God and his people? What are the obvious positive signs in ch 11 that Saul is the right man for the job? Consider before, during and after the clash with the Ammonites.

Drawing the whole together:

What are the *main* actions in ch 9-11 of the LORD in establishing Saul as king? What is God like?

He shows himself to be sovereignly in control over every detail.

He not only arranges the right people in the right place at the right time,

Through Samuel he prepares Saul for the office, anointing him, giving confirming signs, pouring out his Spirit. Etc.

Even notifying Samuel of reluctant Saul's whereabouts 'among the baggage'.

What are the reasons given/implicit for why the LORD acts in the way he does?

Eg see 9:15-17, 10:1, 10:6-13, 10:18-24, 11:6, 11:12-15. God continues to act according to his covenant pattern and promise. Eg 'their cry has reached me' is the reason God acted to save out of Egypt – Exodus 2:23-25. He will deliver (or rescue) is the same idea as what God did in the exodus and through the period of the judges. God's Spirit comes upon God's judge to save God's people – this is the Judges pattern being repeated here 10:6-8.

What does this passage reveal about God's rule over his people?

The change of leadership can still go well if the people and the king continue to look to God as their Lord. God is able to use a humbled king to 'rescue Israel' 11:13. God continues to keep his covenant promises concerning his people.

Thinking about how this is not just for them then, but also us now:

Ch 9-11 shows that 'God ruling over his people through his messiah-king.' Just like the Lord Jesus rules over his church.

What are some ways that Jesus rules over his church?

Why is His rule something for us to celebrate? (what is the alternative we would otherwise have)?

- Pray in response.

Word Dwell Richly: **Thinking about 1 Samuel 9-11.**

It's a long passage!

3 chapters, 69 verses, ~2,100 words, probably take ~20 minutes to read it.

Could do a chapter a week, but we're trying to cover the whole book in less than 31 weeks. So we're focusing on the units, and this is clearly one unit: Samuel features before & after chs 8, 12.

Could read just sections of it – as we will do on Sunday. But better to read all if possible.

Need help ahead of time!

I found some notes from St. Helen's Bishopsgate in London. Central Focus leaders' notes by Paul Clarke and Jamie Child. <https://www.st-helens.org.uk/resources/study/57/>

Hopefully these should help.

Need help as we undertake it

The key thing in this puzzling/curious account is to keep your eyes on the LORD. And to be listening out for what he does and why. The study questions direct us in this way.

Group work?

One way to cover more of the passage as a group. Better to have smaller groups dig into one chapter, than have the whole group try to dig into the whole lot. But horses for courses.

Some headline main points?

Drawing on the St. Helen's material, the big points they make include God's (sovereign) control over all the details when it comes to anointing a king for his people. He even comes to help at the time of the coronation in finding the reluctant crown prince. 10:22.

So while the people were wrong in asking for a king, God continues to be faithful to his promises and absolutely sovereign in bringing about everything needed.

Renewing the covenant at Gilgal. The notes make a point about the significance of Gilgal. The big thing we're continuing to see in this ceremony and celebration is the importance of having a heart that is for the LORD.

Practical questions?

I've reworked the 'for us now' section. I'm still not sure I'm happy with it. But I can't presently think of something better. I'm trying to pick up the response of all the people then and how this remains the right response for God's people to be making now.

I'm trying to ask something different from 'how do we renew the kingship' / our commitment to God's king and new covenant. I'm attempting to ask something practical and able to answer.

The sort of things I have in mind are often clarified by presenting the negative alternative. So:

He directs us to him and his saving work and away from trusting in our own works/ wisdom.

He enables us not only to find his forgiveness but to extend this to others (a la 1 Sam 11:13), when we would otherwise extend not grace and forgiveness by justice and death.

He reminds us whose we are (a la 1 Sam 10:18) rather than leave us to be kings in our own eyes

He promises our daily bread / provision, causing us to pray, instead of leaving us to despair. Etc

Alternative practical questions (from David Cook):

What is the **necessary** application for all people at all time? Humbly receive the king who God rules through, listen and respond to him.

What is the **impossible** application that could never apply, but is often attempted: Despise God's king and bring him no gifts (1 Sam 10:27). It's impossible for God's people to not love / obey Jesus.

What is the **possible** application (applying in different ways to diff people)?

- Rest in the reality that God is sovereignly saving his people (1 Sam 9:16);
- Don't be surprised that God uses the weak things in this world to do his strong purposes (1 Sam 9:21);
- Expect God's Spirit to be making you new/different (1 Sm 10:6);

- Look to the Lord to save and his people to help; you're not alone / don't face the enemy alone (1 Sm 11:3);
- Forgive as the Lord has forgiven you (1 Sm 11:12-13).
- Renew your heart for Christ in the Lord's Supper (1 Sm 11:15).