

How God Uses This Biblical Leader to Speak to Today's Leaders

Have you ever heard of the tabernacle of David? We are going to stare at it for eternity. The Scriptures call King David “a man after God’s own heart.” He established a worship order that was at the center of his kingdom—it is filling the earth now and will fill all the nations before the Son of David returns to Jerusalem and establishes His throne in the midst of that same worship order. It is called the tabernacle of David.

King David is juxtaposed in the Bible with the king that preceded him named Saul. Have you ever heard of that guy? Saul was chosen by the people of Israel because they wanted to be like every other nation and have a king to rule over them. The prophet Samuel, who was presiding as a judge over the land, told the Lord, “they want a king,” and God replied, “why would they want a king when they have Me?” They were not rejecting Samuel as a judge, but they were rejecting Yahweh as their leader. What set apart Israel from all the other nations was the glory of God in their midst. The uncreated God, Yahweh, was in covenant with them. Yet they didn’t want the glory of God to set them apart. Instead, they wanted to be like every other nation that had kings in palaces and rulers over them.

“The Lord said to Samuel, ‘Obey the voice of the people in relation to all that they say to you. For it is not you they have rejected, but Me they have rejected from reigning over them’” (1 Sam. 8:7).

“But the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel. And they said, ‘No! But surely a king will be over us! So that we also will be like all the nations! And so that our king will govern

us, and will go out before us, and will fight our battles.' And after Samuel heard all the words of the people, he spoke them in the hearing of the Lord. And the Lord said to Samuel, 'Obey their voice, and make for them a king.' So Samuel said to Israel's fighting men, 'Go every man to his city'" (1 Sam. 8:19-22).

Who was going to be their first king? There was an obvious choice among them because this man embodied all the qualities the people were looking for in a leader. It says he was handsome; in fact, it says he was handsome twice, so he was double handsome. He came from a wealthy family; he was skilled in combat, and Scripture says he was about head and shoulders taller than all of his peers. From his outward appearance, Saul was the obvious choice. He looked like, sounded like and smelled like a leader.

But the reason the people loved Saul was ultimately the reason God rejected him. The people told him he had what it took to be a great leader, and his heart said, "I got what it takes. I got the skills, I'm double handsome, and I can lead." Saul thought he could expand the kingdom of Israel with his own hand. In his heart, the most important aspect of Israel was the palace, not the priesthood. So much so, the moment he was rejected was the moment when he tried to personally manipulate the priestly ministry in order for his own gain: to win a battle.

Saul said, "Bring here to me the burnt offering and the peace offerings." Then he offered the burnt offering. ... Samuel said, "What have you done?" And Saul said, "Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that you did not come to the appointed assembly days, and the Philistines are gathering themselves together at Mikdash, therefore I said, 'The Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not yet appeased the face of the Lord.' So I forced myself, and offered the burnt offering." Samuel said to Saul, "You have done foolishly. You have not kept the commandment

of the Lord your God, which He commanded you. Truly now, the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. But now your kingdom will not continue. The Lord has sought for Himself a man after His own heart and the Lord has commanded him to be prince over His people, because you have not kept that which the Lord commanded you" (1 Sam. 13:9, 11-14).

God rejected Saul because of his pride and abuse of the priestly ministry. He was using the ministry that made Israel distinct from every other nation for his own gain and ambition. At the moment the kingdom was taken from him, the Bible says, the Lord sought out and already found a man that would rule according to God's own heart. This man God had found was, at the time, probably only 13 or 14 years old. He possessed none of the qualities the people were looking for in a leader. None. In fact, his own father left him out in the field when Samuel the prophet came to town to anoint the next king. Samuel commanded Jesse to get all of his sons and bring them to dinner. So Jesse sent word and gathered them all, and guess where he left David? Out in the field. Why? To his father, he was irrelevant. He had nothing to offer. There is no way in the eyes of his father and brothers God would choose him.

"But the Lord said to Samuel, 'Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees. For man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart'" (1 Sam. 16:7).

David did not possess any of the qualities the nations were looking for in a leader, but he possessed one quality heaven was looking for. Do you know what that quality was?

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