

# Royal Lessons from the Kings

By Doug Hamilton

## The Birth of a Kingdom:

### Poor Godly Leadership

1 Samuel 8:1-3 And it came about when Samuel was old that he appointed his sons judges over Israel. <sup>2</sup> Now the name of his firstborn was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; *they* were judging in Beersheba. <sup>3</sup> His sons, however, did not walk in his ways, but turned aside after dishonest gain and took bribes and perverted justice.

- Often there is a call for leadership when the moral torch-bearers fail to keep their commitments to God.
- As often can happen to leaders like Samuel, their time is divided disproportionately with the people rather than the family. The people had a right to fear, for his sons were very corrupt. Perhaps it would have been better had Samuel been less concerned about passing the power and more diligent at passing the faith onto his next generation.

### The Call for a King

1 Sam 8:4-6 Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah; <sup>5</sup> and they said to him, “Behold, you have grown old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint a king for us to judge us like all the nations.” <sup>6</sup> But the thing was displeasing in the sight of Samuel when they said, “Give us a king to judge us.” And Samuel prayed to the LORD.

- They rejected his sons from being judges, but Samuel took it personally. Understandably it hurt Samuel because he had put many good years in for the people. With that thought he took it to God in prayer, something we all should do when hurt inside.

### The true rejection revealed

1 Sam 8:7-9 The LORD said to Samuel, “Listen to the voice of the people in regard to all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them. <sup>8</sup> “Like all the deeds which they have done since the day that I brought them up from Egypt even to this day—in that they have forsaken Me and served other gods—so they are doing to you also. <sup>9</sup> “Now then, listen to their voice; however, you shall solemnly warn them and tell them of the procedure of the king who will reign over them.”

- God reminded Samuel that they were not so much personally rejecting him as a judge, but in reality rejecting God Himself from being their Leader. He could see past all the flesh and peer into the heart of the matter. He knew that the people’s heart was far from Him. He could see all the idolatry and perversities of their souls. If anyone had a right to feel rejected it would have to be God.
- If it was a king that they wanted, then a king they would have. It would be necessary to inform them of some of the drawbacks of a man being their king instead of God. They are as follows:
  - Forced Military Service
  - Forced Labor
  - Forced Taxation
- In light of this they still wanted to go down the path of appointed royalty. They actually further exposed their intentions in *1 Samuel 8:19-20 Nevertheless, the people refused to listen to the voice of Samuel, and they said, “No, but there shall be a king over us, <sup>20</sup> that*

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*we also may be like all the nations, that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles.”* They were more interested in being like the other nations around them instead of being unique apart from them. The church family would do well in celebrating the fact that they are not like the denominations of the world. We should want to be like Christ and the patterned church of the first-century, not like other people from other church groups.

With this as the backdrop, let us learn about the first king of Israel, Saul the son of Kish.

- His name means “asked for” and we are introduced to him in *1 Samuel 9:1-2* *Now there was a man of Benjamin whose name was Kish the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Becorath, the son of Aphiah, the son of a Benjamite, a mighty man of valor. <sup>2</sup> He had a son whose name was Saul, a choice and handsome man, and there was not a more handsome person than he among the sons of Israel; from his shoulders and up he was taller than any of the people.*
- The year was around 1047 BC and the location was in the Southern region of the country of Israel. *1 Samuel 13:1* states that “*Saul was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty two years over Israel.*” This would place his year of death to be 1007 BC at age seventy.
- He was a tall, handsome young man of Benjamite ancestry which meant he came from a long line of a battle-tested military. *1 Samuel 14:47-48* *Now when Saul had taken the kingdom over Israel, he fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab, the sons of Ammon, Edom, the kings of Zobah, and the Philistines; and wherever he turned, he inflicted punishment. <sup>48</sup> He acted valiantly and defeated the Amalekites, and delivered Israel from the hands of those who plundered them.* In fact his first act as the king was to unite the troops and destroy the threatening Ammonites of *1 Samuel* chapter 11.

Chapters 9-11 of *1 Samuel* describe his unusual ascent to the throne.

- 9:3-4 Saul and his servant sent out to find his father’s donkeys.
- 9:5-14 When their search fails, they seek out the wise man Samuel for guidance.
- 9:15-27 Samuel reveals to Saul that he will be king while at a meal. *1 Sam 10:1* *Then Samuel took the flask of oil, poured it on his head, kissed him and said, “Has not the LORD anointed you a ruler over His inheritance?”*
- 10:2-16 It was confirmed to Saul through various signs.
- 10:17-24 Saul was publicly declared to the people as king.

Saul suffered from low self-esteem.

It is in this passage that we have revealed to us the nature of our discussion on Saul. He suffered from a low self-esteem, for when it was time to reveal him to the nation, he was hiding in the luggage.

*1 Sam 10:21-24* “...And Saul the son of Kish was taken; but when they looked for him, he could not be found. <sup>22</sup> Therefore they inquired further of the LORD, “Has the man come here yet?” So the LORD said, “Behold, he is hiding himself by the baggage.” <sup>23</sup> So they ran and took him from there, and when he stood among the people, he was taller than any of the people from his

## Royal Lessons from the Kings

By Doug Hamilton

shoulders upward. <sup>24</sup> Samuel said to all the people, “Do you see him whom the LORD has chosen? Surely there is no one like him among all the people.” So all the people shouted and said, “*Long live the king!*”

- They were looking for their king, but he was trying to avoid being seen. Their desire was to cry out “Long live the king”, but his view of it was rather passive. He just simply struggled in this area.
- When Samuel first revealed to Saul about being king, the lack of self-esteem was revealed. *1 Samuel 9:21 Saul replied, “Am I not a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel, and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? Why then do you speak to me in this way?”* The Benjamite tribe was so small that it was eventually absorbed into Judah; therefore to expect great people to come for it would be a bit odd.
- This low self-esteem led God to intervene in 10:9 concerning Saul’s acceptance of the kingship. “...*God changed his heart; and all those signs came about on that day.*”

He was a head taller than everyone else, but yet he was lacking esteem in a big way. We don’t know why he had an esteem problem. Perhaps it was because he came from the least of all the tribes? Perhaps it was because everyone thrust him toward leadership because he was a big man? Perhaps he was a victim of school bullies? We don’t know for sure, but he did have a low self-esteem and it manifested itself in ugly ways throughout Saul’s life.

- It was low self-esteem that led him to become jealous of David. *1 Samuel 18:7-9 The women sang as they played, and said, “Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands.”* <sup>8</sup> *Then Saul became very angry, for this saying displeased him; and he said, “They have ascribed to David ten thousands, but to me they have ascribed thousands. Now what more can he have but the kingdom?”* <sup>9</sup> *Saul looked at David with suspicion from that day on.*
- Most of the second half of 1 Samuel is dedicated to an insanely jealous Saul trying to hunt down and kill David. His envy was huge and it had a huge base of insecurity to go with it.

### His Low Self-Esteem was quite Evident.

- I am persuaded it was a lack of self esteem that led Saul to a lack of confidence in his leadership on the battlefield in 1 Sam 15. It was in that chapter that Saul was commanded to destroy the Amalekites and all that was contained therein. Saul decided he was going to offer the Lord some of the sacrifices of spoil that was supposed to be destroyed, thus disobeying the direct command of God.
- When pressed for the reason, it is revealed to us in *1 Samuel 15:24 Then Saul said to Samuel, “I have sinned; I have indeed transgressed the command of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people and listened to their voice.*
- He was afraid that he would lose the respect of the people and henceforth caved into the changing the rules to fit the situation. When a man cannot hold to his principles, he is lacking self-esteem and will stop at nothing to stay in control.

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## Causes of Low Self Esteem

When someone is suffering from a low self esteem it can be for a number of reasons. According to the experts, it can be the result of many events in a person's life. Causes of low self-esteem can include but are not limited to the following:

- The death of a loved one
- Overbearing parents who go to extreme lengths to 'protect' a child
- Loss of personal property or an object of sentimental value
- Underlying psychological conditions such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder
- Being bullied at school or at work
- Long periods of unemployment
- An ugly divorce
- Health problems

Some things are out of our control and simply call for us to submit it unto God. To the person who is sinning against God, they should not have a great self-esteem in their standing with God, *"...but a terrifying expectation of judgment and THE FURY OF A FIRE WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES."* (Hebrews 10:27)

- It was this reason that Saul's low self-esteem problem grew worse. For example would be when he had the priests of the Lord executed. David was fleeing for his life from Saul and the priests gave him some help. *1 Samuel 22:13 Saul then said to him, "Why have you and the son of Jesse conspired against me, in that you have given him bread and a sword and have inquired of God for him, so that he would rise up against me by lying in ambush as it is this day?"*
- He was so perturbed that the priests took sides. Paranoia seems to feed off of low self-esteem. I am sure following such a heinous act he felt more like the loser he had become.

It was this low self-esteem that would finally do him in. He had been rejected from being a king in chapter 15. Towards the end of his life in chapter 28 he was ultimately rejected as a person by God for going the way of witchcraft and psychics.

- *1 Samuel 28:6-8 When Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD did not answer him, either by dreams or by Urim or by prophets. <sup>7</sup> Then Saul said to his servants, "Seek for me a woman who is a medium, that I may go to her and inquire of her." And his servants said to him, "Behold, there is a woman who is a medium at En-dor." <sup>8</sup> Then Saul disguised himself by putting on other clothes, and went, he and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night; and he said, "Conjure up for me, please, and bring up for me whom I shall name to you."*
- God had rejected him because he chose a path of sin. The result was panic that set in because he was about to go into battle with the Philistines and God had shut the door of communication. He actually sought out a medium of spirits, something that was against the Law of God as reinforced by Saul's own words.
- God sent a message back from the grave of Samuel confirming that he and his sons would be killed by the Philistines the next day (1 Sam 28:19). His standing with God was pitiful and his self-esteem hit an all-time low.

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## The End of King Saul

- 1 Samuel 31:1-4 Now the Philistines were fighting against Israel, and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines and fell slain on Mount Gilboa. <sup>2</sup> The Philistines overtook Saul and his sons; and the Philistines killed Jonathan and Abinadab and Malchi-shua the sons of Saul. <sup>3</sup> The battle went heavily against Saul, and the archers hit him; and he was badly wounded by the archers. <sup>4</sup> Then Saul said to his armor bearer, “Draw your sword and pierce me through with it, otherwise these uncircumcised will come and pierce me through and make sport of me.” But his armor bearer would not, for he was greatly afraid. So Saul took his sword and fell on it.
- 1 Samuel 31:8-10 informs us that when the Philistines found his body the next day, they cut off his head and displayed his armor of the pagan temple of Ashtaroth and fastened his body on a public wall for all to see. It was a fitting end for a man whom was big on stature, but low in esteem.

Lesson Learned: Make sure that your self-esteem is healthy and anchored in God. Three points to carry this out.

### 1) Obey the Gospel.

- 1 Peter 3:21-22 Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, <sup>22</sup> who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him.
- 1 Peter 4:17 For *it is* time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if *it begins* with us first, what *will be* the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?

### 2) Live the Gospel.

- Romans 1:28 (KJV) And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;
- Hebrews 13:18 Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a good conscience, desiring to conduct ourselves honorably in all things.
- Philippians 1:27-28 Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; <sup>28</sup> in no way alarmed by *your* opponents—which is a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for you, and that *too*, from God.

### 3) Share the Gospel.

- 1 Cor 2:2 For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.
- 1 Corinthians 9:16 For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for I am under compulsion; for woe is me if I do not preach the gospel.
- 1 Cor 9:23 I do all things for the sake of the gospel, so that I may become a fellow partaker of it.