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Kingdom Living, Part 1

The Onion

The metaphor might be overused, but it is a good one. Whether it be in sports, government, education, or relationships the tendency is to gravitate toward this metaphor in hopes of conveying an important message.

What is the metaphor?

The metaphor is the onion with its layers.

As we approach our passage we must see that with the onion this text has multiple applications and implications when it comes to the Kingdom of God. In 1 Samuel 8 we witness the germination of the theocratic Kingdom as it would be established in Israel under Saul in 1051 BC.

Recall, that Israel had become weary of God and His rule, and so they sinfully cast Him aside (along with His prophet) in the desire for an earthly king... like the nations! Yet in the sovereignty of God, the Lord used this sinful desire to bring about His own plan whereby He raised up an Israelite who was akin to the nations, the man's name was Saul.

As a king like the nations this man represented the extremes: embodying not only the worst, but the best

that the world had to offer. Thus over the last couple of chapters we've witnessed the unveiling of this man to us, the reader. We have witnessed the choosing of this man in time. And we have seen the informing of Saul of God's plan.

Our passage now records the informal and private commissioning of Saul unto the ministry of God's Kingdom. And yet just like with the onion there are layers here. For this passage not only instructs us as to the initial calling of the first king of Israel as it more generally describes the calling of all kings and queens in the kingdom of God as well as all would-be servants but also the calling that has been placed upon our lives as Christians, ministers in His kingdom, and lower-case kings and queens of His messianic reign and rule (don't ever forget that in 1 Peter 2:9 we are called a "royal priesthood!").

And thus before us is a text which I have titled, *Kingdom Living*, a title which conveys not only the initial standard and commissioning of the first king of Israel but also by application the calling that rests upon our lives as citizens of the messianic rule of Christ and as little kings and queens in the Kingdom of God.

The Setting

With this notice the setting of our passage.

1 Samuel 10:1, "Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not because the LORD hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?"

The context (there is no gap or division in the original; chapters 9 and 10 are one unit) here is that Saul has just enjoyed an evening of fellowship with Samuel in which no doubt the future king was informed of God's plan for his life. We say this because in our text, it is obvious that Saul is not shocked or amazed at what Samuel both said and did here. Now don't misunderstand, it is not that Saul was expecting the prophet to anoint him at this time, yet with the request to send his servant along, it is obvious that Saul was not in the dark as to why. And so having sent his servant away at the command of Samuel, Saul now is standing before the prophet awaiting a private conversation.

At this point Samuel, in a very Hebraistic way, demonstrates what God was about to do with Saul. The prophet took a flask of specially prepared oil¹ and poured it on Saul's head. At this time this action was reserved for the ordination of a priest.² Recall David's description of the importance of unity in the body of Christ and how he compared it to the ordination of a priest:

Psalm 133:2, "It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments."

Now in a religious context, pouring oil on the head of an individual was akin to staking a claim on them! Thus, when the oil was poured upon Saul, the future king became a vessel of the Lord. In this act, Saul was set apart unto God unto a holy end.³ Samuel then kissed Saul as a gesture of affection, respect, and acceptance of this man as God's anointed! And though this act "abridged [Samuel's] power and eclipsed

¹ Anointing oil was a distinctive formula, not to be used for any other purpose (cf. Exodus 30:23-33) hence it was sacred, Psalm 89:20.

² That Samuel did this to Saul indicated that a newly ordained office was being erected. In the words of Keil and Delitzsch, "When Saul, therefore, was consecrated as king by anointing, the monarchy was inaugurated as a divine institution, standing on par with the priesthood." (*Commentary on the Old Testament, I & II Samuel*, page 95).

³ See the Theological Word Book of the Old Testament, page 530

his glory and the glory of his family”⁴ nevertheless through this act the prophet bowed the knee before the king and paid homage to this vessel of God and so bowed his knee to God!

Together the picture that is being portrayed here is the formal setting apart of a man and the acceptance of this man for service in God's Kingdom. Now when this took place in ancient times (an anointing) there always was a charge. Notice the charge that God gave to Saul here:

1 Samuel 10:1, “Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, **Is it not because the LORD hath anointed⁵ thee to be captain over his inheritance?**”⁶

The Hebrew word that is translated anointed is the same word from which we get the word, “Messiah”- the anointed one. Now in the Bible “anointing” has primarily three elements to it.

The first element is to anoint an individual or an object involved an authorized setting apart unto God's service⁷ which brought about an increase in ones responsibility before the Lord.⁸ As intimated earlier, this radically altered ones view of life. The anointed one now understood that his life no longer was his own, but in fact belonged exclusively to God.

Secondly, though the agent for the anointing might be a priest or prophet, it was understood that the anointing was carried out by God Himself.⁹ As such, because God was the authorizing agent it was understood that the anointing was inviolable.¹⁰ In other words, it would never change nor could it ever be revoked. The anointed one now was to be held with special regard.¹¹

Thirdly, accompanying the “anointing” was a special gift which enable the individual to carry out his divine commissioning.¹² Recall Hannah’s prayer:

⁴ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary in One Volume*, page 295

⁵ מָשַׁח mashach

⁶ The RSV and ESV at this point contain quite a bit more verbiage as their translations have been taken from the Septuagint The Hebrew, which is the reading favored by the KJV, NASB, and NIV, is much shorter and most probably the correct one. In Old Testament studies, it generally is agreed that the preferable manuscript from which to study the Old Testament is the Hebrew (the Massoretic Text [MT] as found in the BHS). The primary reason is that while the Septuagint is God's word and so authoritative, nevertheless it is a translation of the Hebrew and so in many places cumbersome (as a note, the Hebrew text from which the Septuagint was translated clearly was a different manuscript from the Majority Text). Accordingly the general approach is to first use the Majority Text. Where the Majority Text is difficult or corrupt, then an appeal is to be made to the Septuagint.

Now for a variety of reasons, the RSV and then the ESV chose to include/use the Septuagint when there was a variance between the Majority Text and the Septuagint. This guiding rule is unfortunate in many places where the Majority Text is quite clear and reads smoothly.

Our passage is an example of this. There is nothing wrong with the Hebrew in 1 Samuel 10:1 in the Majority Text. Yet because, in my opinion, of the RSV/ESV bias against the Majority Text, the translators of these of these versions opted to add the longer and more cumbersome reading of the Septuagint. As I do not share the RSV/ESV bias, in our passage I have opted to address only the material in the Majority Text version of 1 Samuel 10:1 represented in the NASB, KJV, NKJV, and NIV.

⁷ Compare Leviticus 8:12; 1 Chronicles 29:22

⁸ Compare 1 Samuel 15:17; 2 Samuel 12:7

⁹ e.g. 1 Samuel 10:1; 2 Samuel 12:7)

¹⁰ Compare 1 Samuel 24:8

¹¹ Compare 1 Samuel 26:9

¹² Compare 1 Samuel 10:6ff; 16:13ff

1 Samuel 2:10, “The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: the LORD shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed.”

Truly the “anointed of the Lord” was specifically gifted and strengthened to perform God's bidding.¹³ Now taken together and applied to Saul, we understand that by virtue of the oil that was dripping from his clothing, Saul's life would never be the same. Now his life was not his own; it belonged to God. He was a special vessel in God's hands.

And yet “an anointing” never took place without some kind of task. In other words, you simply weren't anointed in Scripture and then left alone. No! You were anointed unto a specific end. And what was that end in Saul's life?

1 Samuel 10:1, “Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not because the LORD hath anointed thee to be captain¹⁴ over his inheritance?”

The word rendered *captain* or *ruler*¹⁵ is not the typical word for king. Rather it comes from the word which goes beyond the office of king. It is a word which epitomizes the work which Christ, THE “Anointed One,” came to do.

Daniel 9:25, “Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince¹⁶ shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.”

From this we note that as Saul had been set apart as a “prince,” he was to function as a type of Christ/Messiah in the context of the Kingdom, and so serve as a king, yes! But he was also to be a

- A servant/leader.
- A care-taker of souls.
- A shepherd.
- A protector.
- An overseer.
- A deliverer.

Now to whom was Saul called to serve as a prince?

1 Samuel 10:1, “Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not because the LORD hath anointed thee to be captain **over his inheritance?**”

This is a most important qualification. Saul was not commissioned simply to care for Israel, a nation, or the people of God. NO! Saul's calling pertained, and he must never forget this, to GOD'S INHERITANCE!

What does this mean?

¹³ Compare 1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6

¹⁴ נָגִיד *nagid*

¹⁵ NASB

¹⁶ נָגִיד *nagid*

An inheritance in Scripture has primarily two parts. First it is that which is permanently owned or possessed by someone. The *Theological Word Book of the Old Testament* put it this way:

“The verb *nahal* basically signifies giving or receiving property which is part of a permanent possession and as a result of succession. Sometimes the idea of succession is absent but the 'possessing' carries with it a connotation of permanence (e.g. Exodus 34:9, and Proverbs 14:18).”¹⁷

Secondly, it is that which belongs to an individual on account of an ancient right. The *Theological Word Book of the Old Testament* continues:

“Our noun basically connotes... that which is ones by virtue of ancient right.”¹⁸

Here Saul was charged with God's inheritance, i.e., that which was God's permanently on account of an ancient right!

Now the question is rightly asked, “What is being referenced when we speak of God's inheritance? What was God's by ancient right with which Saul was specifically charged?”

Deuteronomy 32:9, “For the LORD’S portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.”

Deuteronomy 4:20, “But the LORD hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, even out of Egypt, to be unto him a people of inheritance, as ye are this day.”

Do you see it?

God's inheritance is His people! In Genesis 15 we read of God passing between the halved animals and so forever binding Himself to Abraham's seed.¹⁹ This was where God's right to His inheritance began in time! From this point on, God's inheritance when it came to this world was NOT the physical descendants of Abraham²⁰ BUT Abraham's spiritual descendants- all who have been made his seed through faith in Christ.

Galatians 3:29, “And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”

From this we arrive at this incredible conclusion. When it comes to what the Lord wants at the end of this world, we understand that He could have chosen anything to be His inheritance:

- Land.
- Riches.
- Positions.
- Honor.

And this list could go on and on. Yet do you realize that God has chosen people to be His inheritance?

¹⁷ The *Theological Word Book of the Old Testament*, By Harris, R. Laird; Archer, Gleason Leonard; Waltke, Bruce K., Vol. 2, page 569.

¹⁸ Ibid: Page 569.

¹⁹ Compare Genesis 15:12-21

²⁰ Compare Romans 2:26-29

This means that at the end of the age, when this world is destroyed, the one thing that God will claim as His own will be... YOU... ME... HIS PEOPLE! That is the only thing God plans to take from this life!

From this we see that we are a special people to God. As such, He has willed throughout the ages to anoint and gift men that they might specially care, protect, equip, and disciple His most precious possession! This was the calling of all God's kings. Notice the calling of David in particular:

Psalm 78:70-71, "He chose David also his servant, and took him from the sheepfolds: From following the ewes great with young he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance."

And that brothers and sisters is what is going on in our text. Though Israel wanted "a king like the nations"

1 Samuel 8:20, "That we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles."

God commissioned Saul not to this end, but HIS OWN END: the caring, shepherding, protecting, and growing of the people of God! From this we learn the first element of Kingdom Living is that before Saul could serve as king, he first had to be set apart unto the task.

And what task was that? The task of caring for God's inheritance!

Now do not let this escape our notice! If you are in Christ then with Saul you too have been anointed/"set apart" unto service in the kingdom of God.

1 John 2:20 "But ye have an unction [anointing] from the Holy One, and ye know all things."

1 John 2:27, "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him."

As such we read this:

Leviticus 20:26, "And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the LORD am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine."

In redemption the child of God becomes God's own possession. He is set apart! No longer are we our own- we now are tools in God's hand!

1 Corinthians 6:11, "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

Paul here is endeavoring to encourage the Corinthians unto godly living. And he sought to do so by reminding them of three things.

- Their Cleansing- they were washed in the blood of the Lamb.
- Their Cause for Rejoicing- they were declared not guilty of any violation of the law.

- Their Commissioning- they had been set apart/sanctified unto God's service.

No longer were they their own; now they must view themselves as the property of God.

2 Timothy 2:21, "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work."

Paul was writing to Timothy who was a struggling young pastor suffering persecution on account of the truth. The encouragement Paul gave this young pastor was that he had been set apart unto God's work. Now because of this setting apart strive therefore to be useful in God's kingdom!

Such is the claim that has been placed on our lives!

With Saul our lives no longer are our own. Indeed! Having been set apart by God, we have been chosen by Him to be used for His purpose, glory, and pleasure.

What is the charge associated with this service? What is the calling of every individual set apart unto God?

With Saul it is the protection of the people of God and the building up of the body of Christ. Christianity is at its best when these things occur:

James 1:27, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

The word *visit* here doesn't mean to show up on their door step, but to engage in the ministry of refreshing and disciplining. This is the call that rests upon all God's children! We have been set apart to "the work of service unto the building up of the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12).

Hebrews 10:24-25, "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."

Do you see it?

We have been charged with the care of the body of Christ such that to arrive at church and NOT strive to stimulate another on to love and good deeds is to be guilty of forsaking the body! And that is why when it comes to every "gifting" from the Lord, notice the end.

1 Corinthians 12:7 (NASB), "But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good."

We are at our best, when we are on our knees serving God and the saints! This is the end claim that has been placed on our lives! Thus Peter exhorted the body of Christ this way:

1 Peter 4:10, "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."

Why did God save you? Why did He set you apart unto Himself?

In order that you might do the work of serving the saints! We see this exhortation also in Paul's writing:

Romans 15:1-2, "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification."

This is not to say that God does not today have specially gifted and called individuals. — Men who have been formally charged with the care of the body²¹ and who will be held accountable on the Day of Judgment for Christ's inheritance²² — rather it is to say that the work of these men is not confined solely unto them.

And that only makes sense! In any or every task, not everyone can be an overseer. Yet if we are to be effective in any task, everyone involved must work toward the common end. And that "common end" is the building up of the body of Christ!

In light of this we see both Saul and our "undoing" here. If Saul failed as a king it would NOT be because he did wrong i.e., he disobeyed God. (David and numerous overseers did this many times and were not disqualified. And we do this all the time.) RATHER it would be because Saul neglected the good of God's people for his own! And instead of serving Israel, he served himself!

Recall the exhortation that God gave to the shepherds of Israel.

Ezekiel 34:2-4, "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them."

And this will be our "undoing" as well.

1 Corinthians 3:11-13, "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is."

What is the work that will remain beyond the grave- that will not be burned at the last day?

Brothers and sisters it is clear from Scripture- that work is people! It is NOT

- Church buildings.
- Lavished retirements.
- Rich vacations.
- Cars, boats, swimming pools and the like.

²¹ Compare 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9

²² Compare Hebrews 13:17

These are all things that will burn up in the end. RATHER it is people, and only people, who will live beyond this age. In light of this, Paul continues:

1 Corinthians 3:14-15, "If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."

Now don't misunderstand this verse. The text is not teaching that if we waste our salvation on ourselves that in the end we will be lost. Clearly the text indicates here that the issue up for grabs is NOT our salvation,²³ rather Paul is saying that if we give ourselves to wanton pleasure while we live,²⁴ use people to further our purpose, and live out our redemption in the pursuit of self and not the benefit of others²⁵ then while God will ever and always approve of you, from the context of eternity our lives will have been a wash and we will have run in vain!

Hear this please, and allow it to sober you and so encourage you today!

Truly, kingdom living revolves around serving the body of Christ to the praise of God's glory and grace. As such, in Christ we, with Saul, have become a chosen vessel to be poured out as a "drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of [each other's] faith" (Philippians 2:17). And yet let us be encouraged and emboldened by the good news found in this text. No matter how much we might give ourselves to God's people... unto their growth in grace, in the end we are going to fail because we are earthen vessels!

Yet regardless of our failure, don't miss it, at the end of all life in this world, when the fights begin as to whom is going to get what for their inheritance, the only thing that God will desire and claim... will be YOU, His inheritance.

May this enable us to cast aside our selfish wants, and live our lives not for ourselves, but for Him who gave Himself for us.

²³ Compare 1 Corinthians 3:15

²⁴ Compare 1 Timothy 5:6

²⁵ Compare Romans 15:1-2

About Bethel Presbyterian Church

The Bethel Presbyterian Church Ministry of the Word is published regularly.

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Feel free to visit Bethel Presbyterian Church when in Broomfield, Colorado. Bethel Presbyterian Church meets at Broomfield High School, Eagle (10th Street) and Main, Broomfield, Colorado. The telephone number of the church is 303-469-6912. The worship services are at 9:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. each Sunday. Bethel Presbyterian Church is a member of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

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About the Preacher

Greg Thurston preached this sermon on April 15, 2007. Greg is the preacher at Bethel Presbyterian Church.