

## Beginning of the Monarchy

### Scripture Reading — 1 Samuel 9:14-17

*The Lord said to [Samuel], “This is the man I spoke to you about; he will govern my people.” — 1 Samuel 9:17*

After more than three hundred years of intermittent leadership by judges, the people of Israel longed for a change. They were tired of the cycle of having different leaders rise up and troubleshoot what seemed like an endless series of crises. They wanted a king such as the other nations had (1 Samuel 8:4-5).

So God, though he knew the people were rejecting him as their true King, told the prophet Samuel to appoint a king over Israel. Following God's instructions, Samuel anointed Saul to be Israel's first king. But, with a few exceptions, Israel learned that having a king to rule over them was as much of a disaster as the rule of the judges.

What can we learn from Israel's monarchy? Perhaps that tears can also be shed over -answered prayers? Perhaps that no flawed human being can ever rule over us perfectly?

More than these sad lessons, we can learn the good news: the backdrop to the story of Israel's kings is that God remains faithful despite his people's unfaithfulness. God provides for them, even out of their bad choices. And through the line of the flawed kings of Israel, God eventually brings forth the perfect king. He is the King of kings and Lord of lords, and on Christmas we celebrate the birth of that king, Jesus, the Christ.

### Prayer

*Jesus, our King, rule our hearts with your love and compassion today and always. We pray in your name. Amen.*

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