

Why study God's True King?

The story of his battle with Goliath is the stuff of legends: an unknown, unlikely-looking youth defiantly takes on the ultimate enemy weapon—an enormous and unconquered super-warrior. He sets out unprotected and alone, yet astonishingly, he slaughters the evil giant—the enemy is routed and David wins total victory for his people.

David stands out in the Old Testament history of God's people, Israel. He is a magnetic and inspiring figure.

But then the stories and psalms reveal other 'Davids'—the desperate outlaw and the broken sinner, as well as the magnificent king and 'lover' of God. It's easy to see why the story of David and Goliath is still so popular. We love David the hero, the shepherd boy who became king of Israel, chosen by God as a man 'after His own heart'. But what about David the despised 'worm', the hot-tempered bully, the weak father, the lustful playboy and the coldly calculating murderer? Did God really know what He was doing when He chose David?!

God doesn't speak to us in dry, abstract propositions—He loves to use vivid pictures, and David is a fantastic illustrated lesson for us. We warm to his character, his bold defiance of God's enemies, his humility and tender heart—humans have always wanted someone like this to look up to and be inspired by. But then... he lets everyone down big time; his life becomes mired in selfish greed, callous cruelty and brazen lies. Even this 'man after God's own heart' cannot help us because he cannot help himself.

We need a greater hero.

So the story of David isn't just a lesson in the 'secrets' of David's success or the reasons for his many failures. It uncovers the bigger story of that greater hero—Jesus—giving us glimpses of His complete victory over our greatest enemy, sin and death itself. Jesus' true kingship will never fail and His perfect salvation is what we all need.

In just six sessions, you will learn how this weak king, David, points to the ultimate king, Jesus—despised like the 'worm' of David's psalm and killed, yet finally winning total victory for His people over sin and death.





1 Samuel 16

AN UNEXPECTED CHOICE



talkabout

1. Think about the way in which most people picture 'success'. As a group, come up with a popular description of a 'successful' person. By contrast, how do you think Christians would describe a successful person?

When God chose Samuel to be His prophet to the people of Israel, things were bad. There was a crisis of leadership in Israel, and no one to lead. Yet the books of Samuel teach us that God is the King and He rules His people. He will not leave them to fall into spiritual decay. 1 & 2 Samuel tell the story of Israel's progress from chaos to order—from a land without any leadership to a land ruled by their greatest king, David.

But not only will we learn about God's dealings with David and how David responded, we will also see how David received some amazing promises, which only found their fulfilment in 'great David's greater Son'—Jesus Christ. Despite his greatness, ultimately David was just a weak and sinful human; but he points us forward to the great King Jesus and helps us to see how God is our true King, controlling history and saving His people.

In this chapter, God chooses the king 'after His own heart'.



investigate



Read 1 Samuel 16 v 1-13: God's Choice of David

2. Why had God rejected Saul (v 1)? See 1 Samuel 13 v 7b-14 and 15 v 24-26.



3. Why was Samuel worried (v 2)? See also 1 Samuel 10 v 1.

4. Why was there no need to be worried?

5. What do God's words (1 Samuel 16 v 1-3) show us about His plans (13 v 14)?

6. What did Samuel do in response to God's words?

 **apply**

7. In what situations will this truth—that God is in total control of His plans— be a comfort to us as Christians?

- What can Samuel's actions in verse 4 teach us about trust and obedience?
- What will it mean for us to trust and obey God in the situations we have just discussed?

 **getting personal**

Think of things in your life about which you worry. What difference would it make to trust that God is in total control of that situation? What might you need to do to show obedience to God in that situation, as Samuel did?



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8. On what grounds did Samuel choose Eliab?

9. What did God say was wrong with Samuel's way of choosing the king?

10. Why did God choose David? (See 1 Samuel 13 v 14.)



explore more

Read 1 Corinthians 1 v 20-31. What can we learn from these verses about the way in which God acts and the people He chooses? How can we see this in:

- Jesus?
- the Christian message (the gospel)?
- Christians and the church?



apply

11. In what ways do we make the same error as Samuel; for example, in our attitudes to others or to the gospel?
- Why is Jesus and the message of the cross often rejected by people?
 - Should this worry us? If not, why not?





getting personal

In what ways are you tempted to be ashamed of the gospel because of its apparent 'weakness'? Plan and pray about ways in which you need to change.



investigate

▶ Read 1 Samuel 16 v 14-23: God's Placing of David

12. How did David conduct himself during this time?

13. What does the tragic picture of Saul in these verses teach us about God's character?



apply

14. How does Saul stand as a warning for us today?



pray

Thank God that He uses the foolish things of this world to shame the wise. Thank Him that through the 'folly' of the cross and the 'weakness' of Christ He saves men and women like us!

Confess those times where you have not trusted that God is in total control of His plans, or where you have judged others by outward appearances rather than looking at the heart.

Ask God to help you be like David—someone after His own heart—and not like Saul!