



# Unlocking the Bible (15)



## ***Failure and Success***

### ***A second look at 1 Samuel***

Last time we dealt with the rejection of God's leadership in the first part of the book: this time we look at the rest and trace what happened following that fateful choice.

God graciously complied with their request and granted them a king, even going to the lengths of guiding them in their choice of a man who met their aspirations; and endorsed it with divine anointing. Later, after Saul had proved his uselessness, God raised David to reign alongside him, showing a better way. So, the rest of this book revolves around these two – Saul the incompetent 'king' and David the Shepherd Boy.

**Saul** was chosen on the basis of obvious credentials: he was bigger, taller, and stronger than anyone else around. He already had the attributes of a potential leader – as far as outward features go. That is the way of the world. The leaders of the other nations were big, strong, men. Why not follow suit?

But, in reality, Saul was weak. For example, when Goliath challenged the armies of Israel, the obvious candidate to face the giant was Saul (who was head and shoulders taller than anyone else) but he looked around for someone else! That is the way of the world – look for the obvious, go for the biggest, put your trust in the apparent. But that way does not work: it is ineffective for God's people.

God "*looks not on the outward appearance but on the heart*". He is concerned with integrity and genuineness. To restore the fortunes of His people, He commissioned the boy David to be their king.

And, in the story of David in the rest of this Book of 1 Samuel, we see two aspects of God at work, showing a "more excellent way".

In the first place, God is redemptive. He seeks a way out, to turn things around. And so, despite the popular rejection and option of a king, God uses that same system to show His power. He raises a king after His own heart. Secondly, this king is a nobody, an unknown, not even considered for the short leet. But, God used him, mightily.

And **David** showed that excellence through two attributes at this stage of his life. Even though he had been anointed and chosen as Saul's replacement, his attitude was never vindictive; indeed the very opposite. He was humble, willing and obedient. His trust was in God: he was there to do God's bidding not serve his own ends. Secondly, he had 'previous', he had already proven God in his own personal life and work out on the hills so that this new role was simply an extension of his walk with God and an opportunity to prove and demonstrate that same power and enabling.

That role was to be put to the test, as we will see next time when we look at 2 Samuel.