

SHARE THE BIBLE LESSON

WEEK 15

Israel rejects God as King

1 Samuel 8:1-12:25



DAY 1

Israel rejected God as their king • 1 Samuel 8:1-22

READ

1 Samuel 8:1-22

EXPLAIN

The truth of 1 Samuel 8:1-22

Why was Samuel upset when Israel asked for a king (1 Sam 8:5-6)? After all, God had promised that one day Israel would be blessed with a king (Gen 49:10), and the system of judges seemed broken (1 Sam 8:3; Deut 16:19). So why was Samuel upset? Because Israel's motive was wrong. They didn't want God's choice of a king, a king to lead them in obedience to God's law (Deut 17:14-20). They wanted a king in order to be like everyone else (8:20)—even though God had called them to be different (Lev 20:26). Instead of trusting God to fight their battles (Exod 14:14; Deut 3:22; Josh 10:14), they wanted a human king to fight their battles (1 Sam 8:20). Instead of putting their hope in God, they foolishly put their hope in human kings (Ps 118:8-9; 146:3). Ultimately, they were rejecting God as their King (1 Sam 8:7). God told Samuel to warn Israel of all the king would take from them (8:9-18), but they didn't listen. So how did God choose to punish them? By giving them what they wanted (8:22).

ASK

1. Why did Israel want a king?

They wanted to be like the nations around them. They trusted in human kings instead of in God to fight their battles.

2. Why was Samuel upset?

Israel was called to be different from other nations, and to trust God instead of man.

3. Did they listen to Samuel's warning?

No. They foolishly chose human thinking instead of God's wisdom.

4. Did God give them what they wanted?

Yes. Getting what you want is not always a good thing!

DISCUSS

1. What are some ways you reject God as king over your life?

2. What is peer pressure? How does peer pressure affect your thoughts, attitudes, desires, dress, speech, and behavior?

DAY 2

God gave Israel a human king • 1 Samuel 9:1–10:1

READ

1 Samuel 9:1–10:1

EXPLAIN

The truth of 1 Samuel 9:1–10:1

What kind of person would you choose to be king? Israel wanted a king like the other nations had, so that's what God gave them. Saul was tall, strong, and good-looking (1 Sam 9:2; cf. Deut 1:28; 2:10; 9:2). But he was also very foolish. If he couldn't keep track of two donkeys, how was he to lead a nation? He didn't even know who Samuel was, even though Samuel was famous and lived near Saul's home (1 Sam 9:6–18; 3:20)! So be careful what you pray for! God might give you what you want, but it might not be a good thing! So what does this show you about God? First, God is *just* and *fair* in His discipline. Second, He is still *sovereign* even when we sin. He was *in control* of all the details—the donkeys, the search, and the servant's suggestion—to make Saul king (9:1–16; Prov 16:9; 20:24). Third, God is *merciful*. He is *kind to those who do not deserve it* (Ps 103:11). He would even use foolish Saul to rescue Israel from their enemies (1 Sam 9:16).

ASK

1. What kind of a king did God give Israel?
A tall, handsome, and godless king, just like the other nations.
2. How was God just in this story?
He gave Israel the king they deserved.
3. Israel rejected God as King, but was God still King?
Yes. He controlled all the events to make Saul king.
4. How was God compassionate toward Israel despite their sin?
Through Saul, God would rescue Israel from their enemies.

DISCUSS

1. Do your parents give you everything you ask for? Are you thankful they often say no? What kinds of things should you ask God for, and with what attitude (Matt 6:9–13)?
2. Can you think of some other times God did something good through people's sinful choices (Gen 50:20; Acts 2:23)?

DAY 3

God used Saul as king to rescue Israel • 1 Samuel 10:2–11:15

READ

1 Samuel 10:2–11:15

EXPLAIN

The truth of 1 Samuel 10:2–11:15

Why did Samuel give Saul such strange signs? For two reasons. First, to prove that God was in control when He chose Saul. In fact, the people couldn't even find their king without God's help (1 Sam 10:22)! Second, the signs proved that Samuel was God's true prophet. So even after Saul became king, he needed to keep doing what Samuel said (10:8). Saul still needed to submit to God's rules for a king (10:25), because

human rulers are accountable to God (Col 4:1). After making Saul's position clear, God began to use Saul to rescue Israel. Nahash, whose name means "Snake," was threatening to mutilate the warriors of Jabesh-Gilead (1 Sam 11:1–2). But the Spirit transformed Saul from a foolish farmer into a brilliant military general (11:6). In less than a week, Saul united Israel, assembled an army of over 300,000 men, coordinated an all-night march, and utterly defeated a foreign enemy before morning was over! All this from a man who was so shy he had hidden in the baggage! Clearly it was God, not any human leader, who won the victory.

DAY 3 CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

ASK 

1. What was Saul doing when his name was chosen?

Hiding in the baggage.

2. As king, could Saul do whatever he wanted? Why or why not?

No. The signs proved he was still under God's control and needed to obey God's words.

3. How was Saul able to defeat the Ammonites?

Because the Spirit of God changed him.

DISCUSS 

1. Samuel was God's authority over Saul. Who is the authority over you? When you grow up, even if you become an important ruler, will you be free from authority (John 19:11)?
2. The people in authority over you will never be perfect (and some will be very foolish like Saul). How does Saul's story help you obey and trust that God can still do good through them?

DAY 4

Samuel rebuked Israel for rejecting God • 1 Samuel 12:1-25

READ 

1 Samuel 12:1-25

EXPLAIN 

The truth of 1 Samuel 12:1-25

God is so patient! He gives us many chances to come back to Him. So when Israel officially crowned Saul king, Samuel called them back to God. He reminded Israel that they should listen to him, because he was God's true prophet (1 Sam 12:1-5). Then he reminded Israel that they should trust God, because God was faithful to deliver (12:6-11). That's why they were wrong to cry out for a human king instead of to God (12:12). They had forgotten God's faithfulness and chased after man-made solutions. Then God proved Samuel's words: He sent thunder and rain, which almost never occurred at that time of year (12:16-17). This also proved that no human king could rescue Israel from God's wrath, since rain during harvest could destroy the crops, ruin months of labor in a moment, and cause famine. So whether Israel recognized it or not, God was still in charge. He was still Israel's real King. So when Israel repented (12:18), God gave them another chance. If they would now follow God, God would still be their God and Samuel would still be their prophet (12:20-25).

ASK 

1. How did God show Israel how much He hated their sin?

He sent thunder and rain during wheat harvest.

2. Why was it silly for Israel to choose a human king?

God had already proven that He could rescue them.

Their problems were the result of sin, not lack of a king. A human king could do nothing without God. A human king could not protect against God's wrath.

3. Why doesn't God forsake His people?

For the sake of His own name, and because God had chosen Israel (1 Sam 12:22).

DISCUSS 

1. How has God proven His faithfulness to you, despite your sin (Lam 3:22-23)?

2. How terrible is your sin in God's eyes (Ps 5:4-5)?

How great is His wrath (Ps 7:11)? Who is the only king who can rescue you from God's wrath (Luke 1:32; Rom 8:1)?

DAY 5

God gives good gifts to those who ask • Luke 11:11–13

READ

Luke 11:11–13

EXPLAIN

The truth of Luke 11:11–13

As Israel discovered, you should be careful what you pray for (1 Sam 8:4–21). Israel asked for a human king just like the nations around them, and that's just what they got. Saul was tall and handsome, but he was godless. So be careful to pray with pure motives and a right perspective (Matt 6:9–13). At the same time, don't be afraid to ask. Since God is a loving, kind, all-knowing, and all-powerful heavenly Father, you can confidently ask God to supply all your needs. For, as Luke writes, if sinful, earthly fathers know how to give good gifts to their children, how much more will your sinless heavenly Father whose love, care, concern, knowledge, power, and resources are so much greater? And what is the best gift He can give you? Not new toys or lots of stuff or good grades or a nice vacation. The best gift is the Holy Spirit, who is the source of all goodness, blessing, truth, help, and comfort. So ask God for what you need, and rejoice when His answer is much better than any human solution.

ASK

1. Why should we never fear God's answers to prayer?
Because God is a perfect heavenly Father who is loving, kind, all-knowing, and all-powerful. He will never fail to give good gifts to His children.
2. Is it natural for a sinful earthly father to care for the needs of his children?
Yes.
3. What does God give to those who ask Him?
The Holy Spirit.
4. Why is the Holy Spirit God's good gift to those who ask?
He is the source of all goodness, blessing, truth, help, and comfort.

DISCUSS

1. What good gifts has your father given you? What good gifts has your heavenly Father given you? Or have you not yet received the Holy Spirit?
2. Is there any limit to what God can do in answer to your prayers (Eph 3:20)?

NEXT WEEK

Saul disobeys God

1 Samuel 13:1–15:35

