

**Episode:** Kings and Prophets Series No. 2

**Narrator:** Samuel and King Saul

**Primary Scriptures:** 1 Samuel, 1 Chronicles 1-10

**Story Summary:** Stories of the first prophet and first king of Israel

**Location:** Twelve tribes of Israel, Kingdom of Israel

**Time:** Circa 1100-1010 BC

**Suggested Memory Scriptures:** 1 Samuel 7:3, 12; 8:7; 12:20-21; 15:22-23; 16:7

Samuel was the first influential prophet in the era after the judges. Although Samuel was blameless and honest in his leadership, his sons were dishonest and took bribes. To avoid having them as leaders, the elders of Israel demanded that Samuel appoint a king to lead them, like all the surrounding nations had.

God told Samuel that the people had rejected God, not Samuel. He instructed them to warn the people of all the horrible disadvantages of having a king other than God, but the people continued to insist on having a king, especially one who would lead them into battles.

God eventually had Samuel appoint Saul as king, even though his only obvious good qualities were being handsome and tall. Saul did become powerful when the Spirit of God came upon him, and he started leading the Israelites in a powerful way when he rescued the city of Jabesh from the Ammonites.

Over his forty years of rule, Saul proved to be a good king in many ways. At the time he became king, all the surrounding nations harassed and controlled the Israelites. Saul fought them off and moved Israel toward being a military power. This was a challenging task because he had to take a bunch of disorganized farmers and shepherds from twelve independent tribes and turn them into a military force capable of fighting the powerful and organized Philistines.

Although Saul had his spiritual issues, he kept the Israelites faithful to serving God, and did not lead the people into idolatry. Following the requirements of Moses, it appears Saul had one wife, did not collect much gold, and did not rely on chariots and horses. In many ways, Saul was a very good king.

However, Saul had two serious lapses in his obedience to God. Perhaps that could have been predicted since Samuel did not teach Saul how to lead his people. God regretted having made Saul the king of the Israelites.<sup>1</sup> Eventually, Saul's actions caused God to prohibit Saul from having a dynasty. God chose David to become the eventual replacement for Saul. Every time Saul fought against David, he fought against God. That is never a good idea.

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Samuel 15:35

### Discussion Questions:

1. Why do you think God kept Hannah from having children for so long (1 Sam. 1:6)? Does he still do such things today?
  2. What do you think 1 Samuel 3:1 and 3:21 mean? Does God send visions in today's times? How does God reveal himself in today's times?
  3. 1 Samuel 7:3-4 says the Israelites were worshiping other gods, but turned back to God. They went through that cycle many times in the book of *Judges*. When will be the next time they turn to other gods?
  4. 1 Samuel 13:12-13 and 18:7-9 show that Saul was disobedient in his worship and his actions. How can you keep from doing the same?
  5. What do you think about 1 Samuel 16:14? How could Saul resist the Lord's will?
3. About a century later when Solomon leads them into idolatry. 4. Be very sure of how God wants to be worshiped, and then follow that completely. Be careful not to worship in a way that makes sense to you, but is not Biblical.

### Application Questions:

1. Hannah vowed to dedicate her child to God before she got pregnant. When he was weaned, she took him to Samuel to be raised by the priests. How hard was that for her to do? Have you ever made a difficult vow to God? Did you keep it?
2. 1 Samuel 8:7 reveals that the people were rejecting God when they asked to have a king like the countries around them. Have you ever rejected God by trying to be like the people around you? Did you realize what you were doing?
3. 1 Samuel 13:3-5 is an indication of how righteous Samuel was in his behavior. Would you like to have that kind of a reputation when you are old? How do you get that kind of a reputation?
4. 1 Samuel 15:7 says God does not judge by appearances. Do you?

### Application Questions for Teens:

1. Read 1 Samuel 6:19. Was God being too harsh? If you knew you were going to get similarly punished when you misbehaved, would you be less likely to misbehave? How do you square this with the gift of grace through Christ?
2. 1 Samuel 8 is the story of the Israelites wanting a king so they could be like the nations around them. God warned them about the results of getting what they wanted, but they refused to listen to God's wise advice. Do you remember a time when you wanted to be like everybody else? How did that turn out?
3. Read 1 Samuel 15:22-23. How do those verses apply to you?