

June 8–14: 1 Samuel 8–10; 13; 15–16 “The Lord Looketh on the Heart”

Israel Desires a King

In our previous lesson, we discussed the wickedness of Eli’s two sons, who were in line to become judges in Israel. Because of the “perverted judgment” they practiced, the elders opposed their succession and used the situation to advocate for a new form of government.

1Sam 8:3-9

3 And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment.

4 Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah,

5 And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.

6 But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the Lord.

7 And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.

8 According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee.

9 Now therefore hearken unto their voice: howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them, and shew them the manner of the king that shall reign over them.

What reasons did the Israelites give for wanting a king?

(thy sons walk not in thy ways [exercise] perverted judgement
now make us a king to judge us like all the nations)

Why does the Israelites’ request show that they did not want God to “reign over them”?

(they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them)

Marion G. Romney

"In the days of Samuel... Israel clamored for a king. 'Make us a king,' they cried, 'to judge us like all the nations.' They thought it was more important to be like the people around them, the heathen nations, than it was to follow the counsel of the Lord...

"Samuel mourned over the obstinacy of his people, for he knew that if in defiance of the counsel of the Lord they persisted in their demand for a king, it would mean their downfall. But the Lord, always respectful of man’s agency, whether he wants to do right or whether he wants to do wrong."

("Seek Not to Counsel the Lord", Ensign, August 1985)

They rejected God as their deliverer despite the fact that He had delivered them from Egypt

1Sam 10:17-19

17 ¶ And Samuel called the people together unto the LORD to Mizpeh;

18 And said unto the children of Israel, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all kingdoms, and of them that oppressed you:

19 And ye have this day rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations; and ye have said unto him, Nay, but set a king over us. Now therefore present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes, and by your thousands.

God gave the people one last chance. He told Samuel, "Howbeit, yet protest solemnly unto them, and show them the manner of the king that shall reign over them." And Samuel did.

1Sam 8:10-20

10 And Samuel told all the words of the Lord unto the people that asked of him a king.

11 And he said, This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: He will take your sons, and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and some shall run before his chariots.

12 And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties; and will set them to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots.

13 And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers.

14 And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants.

15 And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants.

16 And he will take your menservants, and your maidservants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work.

17 He will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants.

18 And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the Lord will not hear you in that day.

19 Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us;

20 That we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles.

Despite Samuel's strong warning and prophecy, what motivated the Israelites to still want a king?

(That we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles)

-They must have forgotten all the times the Lord had fought their battles for them and that His judgments are always just.

Ezra Taft Benson

"The Lord told Samuel to warn the people of the consequences if they had a king. Samuel gave them the warning. But they still insisted on their king. So God gave them a king and let them suffer. They learned the hard way.

"Sometimes in our attempts to mimic the world, and contrary to the prophet's counsel, we run after the world's false educational, political, musical, and dress ideas. New worldly standards take over, a gradual breakdown occurs, and finally, after much suffering, a humble people are ready to be taught once again a higher law." (CR, April 1975)

Saul Chosen To Be King

In chapter 9, we are introduced to Saul and learn how he came to be in the city with Samuel.

1Sam 9:1-6,10

1 Now there was a man of Benjamin, whose name was Kish, the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Bechorath, the son of Aphiah, a Benjamite, a mighty man of power.

2 And he had a son, whose name was Saul, a choice young man, and a goodly: and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people.

3 And the asses of Kish Saul's father were lost. And Kish said to Saul his son, Take now one of the servants with thee, and arise, go seek the asses.

4 And he passed through mount Ephraim, and passed through the land of Shalisha, but they found them not: then they passed through the land of Shalim, and there they were not: and he passed through the land of the Benjamites, but they found them not.

5 And when they were come to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant that was with him, Come, and let us return; lest my father leave caring for the asses, and take thought for us.

6 And he said unto him, Behold now, there is in this city a man of God, and he is an honourable man; all that he saith cometh surely to pass: now let us go thither; peradventure he can shew us our way that we should go.

10 Then said Saul to his servant, Well said; come, let us go. So they went unto the city where the man of God was.

What do Saul's actions in this passage reveal about his character and potential as a leader?

-Diligent, considerate, teachable, faith in the prophet

Samuel seeks the Lord's counsel in choosing a king for Israel.

1Sam 9:15-21

15 ¶ Now the LORD had told Samuel in his ear a day before Saul came, saying,
16 To morrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be captain over my people Israel, that he may save my people out of the hand of the Philistines: for I have looked upon my people, because their cry is come unto me.

17 And when Samuel saw Saul, the LORD said unto him, Behold the man whom I spake to thee of! this same shall reign over my people.

18 Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer's house is.

19 And Samuel answered Saul, and said, I am the seer: go up before me unto the high place; for ye shall eat with me to day, and to morrow I will let thee go, and will tell thee all that is in thine heart.

20 And as for thine asses that were lost three days ago, set not thy mind on them; for they are found. And on whom is all the desire of Israel? Is it not on thee, and on all thy father's house?

21 And Saul answered and said, Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? wherefore then speakest thou so to me?

Why is humility an important quality in a leader, and how is it reflected in Saul's response?

Dieter F. Uchtdorf

"When Samuel chose Saul to be king, Saul tried to talk him out of it. Saul was from one of the smallest tribes of the house of Israel. How could he be king? But God saw him as 'a choice young man.'" (CR, Oct. 2015)

Saul spent the day with Samuel, learning from him. The next day, in private, he was anointed king. Afterwards, Samuel prophesied to Saul what would happen that day—what he would do and whom he would meet—including this:

1Sam 10:6-7

6 And the Spirit of the LORD will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man.

7 And let it be, when these signs are come unto thee, that thou do as occasion serve thee; for God is with thee.

What does it mean to have the Spirit of the Lord come upon someone and turn them into "another man"?

-born again

This is confirmed in verse 9, which states that God gave Saul “another heart.”

1Sam 10:9-11

9 ¶ And it was so, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart; and all those signs came to pass that day.

10 And when they came thither to the hill, behold, a company of prophets met him; and the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them.

11 And it came to pass, when all that knew him beforetime saw that, behold, he prophesied among the prophets, then the people said one to another, What is this that is come unto the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?

Saul was accepted by the people as their king

1Sam 10:24-27

24 And Samuel said to all the people, See ye him whom the LORD hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people? And all the people shouted, and said, God save the king.

25 Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the LORD. And Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house.

26 ¶ And Saul also went home to Gibeah; and there went with him a band of men, whose hearts God had touched.

27 But the children of Belial said, How shall this man save us? And they despised him, and brought him no presents. But he held his peace.

How did the people respond to Saul being appointed as king?

Spencer W. Kimball

"Now that the new leader was chosen, called, set apart, and sustained by his people with their votes expressed in their cry: 'God save the king', the superior young man was ready to serve, and was promised the blessings of the Lord so long as he was worthy; but not too many years had elapsed until, through unrighteousness, he had forfeited his blessings and kingdom."
(CR, Oct. 1958)

The Ammonites came against Jabesh-gilead, which was in the territory of the tribe of Gad. The other Israelite tribes were reluctant to help. Saul chopped up an ox and sent a piece to each tribe, warning that the same would be done to their oxen if they did not come to help. This act helped unify Israel and they came together to fight the Ammonites.

1Sam 11:11-15

11 And it was so on the morrow, that Saul put the people in three companies; and they came into the midst of the host in the morning watch, and slew the Ammonites until the heat of the day: and it came to pass, that they which remained were scattered, so that two of them were not left together.

12 ¶ And the people said unto Samuel, Who is he that said, Shall Saul reign over us?

bring the men, that we may put them to death.

13 And Saul said, There shall not a man be put to death this day: for to day the LORD hath wrought salvation in Israel.

14 Then said Samuel to the people, Come, and let us go to Gilgal, and renew the kingdom there.

15 And all the people went to Gilgal; and there they made Saul king before the LORD in Gilgal; and there they sacrificed sacrifices of peace offerings before the LORD; and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.

What does Saul's response after the victory teach us about humility, mercy, and leadership?

(to day the LORD hath wrought salvation in Israel
they made Saul king before the LORD
they sacrificed sacrifices of peace offerings before the LORD
Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly)

As the Israelites fully acknowledged Saul as their king, Samuel told them this about having a king.

1Sam 12:1,14,25

1 And Samuel said unto all Israel, Behold, I have hearkened unto your voice in all that ye said unto me, and have made a king over you.

14 If ye will fear the LORD, and serve him, and obey his voice, and not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall both ye and also the king that reigneth over you continue following the LORD your God:

25 But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king.

What does this passage teach about the relationship between a leader and the people they lead?

(if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king)

Saul Turns From Righteousness

It wasn't long before Saul turned away from righteousness. Two years into his reign, a very large Philistine army came to attack Israel at Gilgal. Saul's army became fearful and began to desert. To reassure the people, Saul asked Samuel to offer sacrifices. But when Samuel was late in arriving, Saul decided to perform the ordinance himself.

1Sam 13:8-14

8 ¶ And he tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel had appointed: but Samuel came not to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him.

9 And Saul said, Bring hither a burnt offering to me, and peace offerings. And he

offered the burnt offering.

10 And it came to pass, that as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might salute him.

11 ¶ And Samuel said, What hast thou done? And Saul said, Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that thou camest not within the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered themselves together at Michmash;

12 Therefore said I, The Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication unto the LORD: I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering.

13 And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever.

14 But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee.

How had Saul sinned against the Lord, and how contrite was his response when Samuel confronted him?

(I have not made supplication unto the LORD
I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering)

What did Saul lose because he failed to obey the Lord?

(now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man
after his own heart)

Robert L. Simpson

"We can also look to Saul, the promising young ruler of Israel who had every requirement of a great leader. Yet Saul disobeyed priesthood principles. He was given specific instructions by a prophet of God.... But Saul rationalized and compromised those instructions. He acted on his own volition. He did that which he reasoned should be done rather than that which the prophet Samuel had instructed him to do.

"On subsequent occasions Saul further violated priesthood principles but just as with Cain, these misdeeds brought only tragedy and sorrow." (CR, Oct. 1968)

Samuel told Saul to go against the Amalekites and utterly destroy them and all that they had. But Saul disobeyed and kept some of the livestock.

1Sam 15:10-11

10 ¶ Then came the word of the LORD unto Samuel, saying,

11 It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel;

and he cried unto the LORD all night.

What do you think troubled Samuel most about Saul's disobedience?

JST 1Sam 15:10-11

10 ¶ Then came the word of the LORD unto Samuel, saying,
11 I have set up Saul to be a king, and he repenteth not that he hath sinned;
for he is turned back from following me and hath not performed my
commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the LORD all
night.

-Not only had he turned away, but he also did not repent.

Samuel discovers Saul's disobedience.

1Sam 15:13-19

13 And Samuel came to Saul: and Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou of the LORD:
I have performed the commandment of the LORD.

14 And Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and
the lowing of the oxen which I hear?

15 And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites: for the people
spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God;
and the rest we have utterly destroyed.

16 Then Samuel said unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what the LORD hath said to
me this night. And he said unto him, Say on.

17 And Samuel said, When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made
the head of the tribes of Israel, and the LORD anointed thee king over Israel?

18 And the LORD sent thee on a journey, and said, Go and utterly destroy the
sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed.

19 Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the LORD, but didst fly upon the
spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the LORD?

How had Saul changed from when he was "little in his own sight"?

(then didst thou not obey the voice of the LORD
and didst evil in the sight of the LORD)

Neal A. Maxwell

"Saul, when chosen, was 'A choice young man,... and there was not among
the children of Israel a goodlier person than he' (1 Sam 9:2). Later, he
became encrusted with ego and puffed by power. Samuel then recalled a
time when Saul 'wast little in [his] own sight.' In contrast, true
submissiveness greatly enlarges the soul, but without hypocrisy and guile."
(CR, April 1985)

1Sam 15:21-23

21 But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which

should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God in Gilgal.
22 And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

What does this passage teach us about the difference between true obedience and merely outward acts of worship?

Milton R. Hunter

"Saul received this commandment, went in pursuit of the Amalekites but did not fully keep the commandment. He brought back the fattest and best of the sheep and cattle as spoils of war.

"God was very displeased with Saul's disobedience...

"I would that every Church member from this time forward would repeat every few days: 'Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams'; and obedience is even better than the wealth of this world or than any position or honor that mortal man can bestow upon us. Best of all our attainments, therefore is to obey the voice of God in all things and at all times." (CR, April 1952)

David Is Anointed King

Samuel is told where to go to find Israel's next king.

1Sam 16:1,7

1 And the LORD said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Beth-lehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons.

7 But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.

What does this passage teach us about how the Lord judges people differently than we do?

(man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart)

Marvin J. Ashton

"We also tend to evaluate others on the basis of physical, outward appearance: their 'good looks,' their social status, their family pedigrees, their degrees, or their economic situations.

"The Lord, however, has a different standard by which he measures a

person. When it came time to choose a king to replace King Saul, the Lord gave this criteria to his prophet Samuel: '... for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.'

"When the Lord measures an individual, He... measures the heart as an indicator of the person's capacity and potential to bless others." (CR, Oct. 1988)

Samuel visited Jesse the Bethlehemite and was introduced to seven of his sons, but none of them were the one the Lord had in mind.

1Sam 16:11-13

11 And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither.

12 And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the LORD said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he.

13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.

Note that Saul was still the king.

What does this teach us about being anointed to *become* a king?

David became part of Saul's court because he was able to relieve Saul of the troubling spirit through music.

1Sam 16:15-16,21-23

15 And Saul's servants said unto him, Behold now, an evil spirit from God troubleth thee.

16 Let our lord now command thy servants, which are before thee, to seek out a man, who is a cunning player on an harp: and it shall come to pass, when the evil spirit from God is upon thee, that he shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well.

21 And David came to Saul, and stood before him: and he loved him greatly; and he became his armourbearer.

22 And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, Let David, I pray thee, stand before me; for he hath found favour in my sight.

23 And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.

Ezra Taft Benson

"Inspiring music may fill the soul with heavenly thoughts, move one to righteous action, or speak peace to the soul. When Saul was troubled with

an evil spirit, David played for him with his harp and Saul was refreshed and the evil spirit departed." (CR, Oct. 1974)