

## *Promised Land 1 Study and Discussion Questions*

### *Lesson Nine: Monarchy: Saul and Samuel – 1 Samuel 8 – 12*

#### Read 1 Samuel 8.

- 1) List the reasons Israel wanted Samuel to appoint a king over them (include verse numbers). **Israel wanted a king because Samuel had no qualified successor (8:1-5). They wanted to have a government more like that of their neighbors (8:5 [the system of Judges did not normally pass from father to son, whereas a monarchy would provide a succession of leaders]). They wanted a king to lead them in their battles (8:20). Most significantly, Israel wanted a king because they had rejected the Lord's theocratic rule (8:7).**
- 2) According to God's warning, how would Israel's kings negatively impact the people? **Under their kings, the Israelites' sons would serve the king by running in front of his chariots (8:11) and as military leaders, farmers, and makers of weapons and equipment (8:12). Their daughters would be his perfumers, cooks, and bakers (8:13). The king would take the best of the Israelites' fields, vineyards and groves, a tenth of their produce (8:14-15). Their servants and animals would also be taken for the king's use (a tenth of their flocks would belong to the him), and they themselves would become his slaves (8:16-17). The Israelites would cry out for relief from the king's oppression, but the Lord would not answer them in that day (8:18).**
- 3) Re-read 1 Samuel 8:6-8. Samuel experienced a sense of rejection, but ultimately, it was God Himself the Israelites were rejecting. Read John 15:20 and 2 Corinthians 2:14-16. How do these passages challenge or comfort you? Be as specific as possible to your own personal circumstances. **Personal sharing**

#### Read 1 Samuel 9.

- 4) Record all you learn about Saul and his family and about Samuel and his duties from 1 Samuel 9. **Saul's father Kish was a Benjamite of standing (9:1). He was "impressive...without equal...a head taller than [the other Israelites]" (9:2). His father owned donkeys (he was a farmer) and servants (9:3). Saul did not seem to have ever met Samuel personally before this (9:18). Finally, Saul is depicted as spiritually obtuse. Samuel was highly respected (9:6) and known as a "seer" (the old name for a prophet, 9:9). Because he was a prophet, he was sometimes asked to help ascertain personal information (such as the location of lost animals; 9:6, 20). He was able to reveal all that was in a man's heart (9:19) and everything he said came true (he was a true prophet of God; 9:6, also 3:19). As a Levitical priest (1 Chronicles 6:26), he blessed sacrifices (9:13). Samuel had authority among the people (9:22-24) and is depicted as spiritually mature and patient, awaiting and responding to God's instructions.**
- 5) Read Deuteronomy 18:21-22 with 1 Samuel 3:19 and 9:6. What proved a person was a true prophet of God? **A true prophet of the Lord had to have one hundred percent accuracy in their predictions. Everything they said came to pass.**
- 6) Reread 1 Samuel 9:14-17 with Proverbs 16:9. When Saul set out to find "the seer," he had no idea that his encounter with Samuel had been providentially arranged. Is there a person you have recently encountered, or even someone you have known awhile, who might be in your life by divine orchestration? Will you ask the Lord to put a name in your mind and begin revealing His intended purpose in the intersection of your lives? (Perhaps there is something He wants you to learn from this person or some way He wants to use you in their lives.) **Personal sharing**

Read 1 Samuel 10.

- 7) Re-read 1 Samuel 8:22 as a reminder that Israel was waiting for Samuel to appoint a king. What indications does chapter 10 give that Saul was in no way positioning himself to become Israel's king and perhaps, was even hesitant to take the role? **Even after Samuel anointed Saul king (10:1), Saul was inexplicably absent at his own coronation, hiding in the baggage while his identity as the new king was being revealed (apparently, by the casting of lots [10:22-23]). 1 Samuel 10 portrays Saul as genuinely humble (at best) or unwise and unwilling (at worst).**
- 8) In addition to its use for fuel, cosmetic, and medicinal purposes, the Bible also speaks of oil as being used for anointing (setting apart for a special purpose). 1 Samuel 10:1 says that Samuel anointed Saul with oil.
- Record what you learn about anointing from the following passages: Exodus 30:23-33; 1 Samuel 10:1, 6 and 16:13; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22; 1 John 2:20, 27. **An aromatic blend of oil (“the work of a perfumer” [Exodus 30:25]) was used to anoint the Tent of Meeting and all its furnishings, including the Ark of the Covenant. The purpose of anointing them was to “consecrate them so they would be holy and whatever touched them would be holy” (Exodus 30:29). The priests (Aaron and his sons) were also anointed with this special oil as a means of consecration for the priesthood (Exodus 30:30). Samuel poured oil from a flask on Saul's head to anoint him as the leader of God's “inheritance” (1 Samuel 10:1). Following his anointing, the Spirit of the Lord came upon Saul in power and he was changed into a different person (1 Samuel 10:6). Later, Samuel anointed David with oil and “from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came upon David in power” (1 Samuel 16:13). 2 Corinthians 1:21-22 says God has anointed believers, setting His seal of ownership on them, and putting His Spirit in their hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. 1 John 2:20 says that believers are anointed “from the Holy One” and know the truth. 1 John 2:27 refers to the fact that a believer's anointing cannot be undone and that it “teaches you about all things.” These New Testament passages clearly portray a connection between anointing and the presence of the Holy Spirit. To be anointed (or consecrated) is to be set apart for a unique purpose of God. (“Messiah” means Anointed One.)**
  - Describe your present attitude toward a particular circumstance and explain how these reminders that *you* have been set apart and equipped for God's special purpose can change it. **Personal sharing**

Read 1 Samuel 11.

- 9) Describe the events in 1 Samuel 11 and their relationship to Saul's confirmation as king at the end of the chapter. **The Ammonites had been a threat to Israel (see 1 Samuel 12:12 with 11:1). The Ammonite leader, Nahash, besieged Jabesh Gilead. The elders of this Israelite town sent a messenger throughout Israel asking to be rescued. (They did not directly contact Saul, an indication that Saul's leadership had not been widely accepted. The facts that one town was free to make a treaty on its own with a foreign invader [11:1] and that the people of Jabesh had no assurance that other tribes would come to their rescue [11:3] are also evidence of the lack of unity among the tribes and towns of Israel.) Saul was in his field behind his oxen when the message came (11:5). “The Spirit of God came upon him in power” (11:6). He cut his oxen into pieces and sent the pieces with messengers throughout the land (a means of mustered troops, 11:7-8). Following Saul's victory over the Ammonites, Samuel gathered the people in Gilgal to reaffirm the kingship (11:14). Saul's military victory seems to have been the final evidence the Israelites needed to fully rally behind him as their king.**
- 10) According to 1 Samuel 11:7, what was behind the Israelites' motivation to unite and defend Jabesh Gilead? Was it fear of either Saul or Samuel? **Although Saul challenged the Israelites in a threatening manner, the verse says that the reason they united to defend Jabesh Gilead was because “the terror of the Lord fell on the people.”**

- 11) The uniting of Israel's disconnected tribes to defend one town seemed unlikely at this period in their history. For whom will you ask the Lord to bring about an otherwise unlikely or impossible change of heart/thinking? **Personal sharing**

Read 1 Samuel 12.

- 12) Samuel began his farewell speech by reminding the Israelites that he had proved himself trustworthy (1 Samuel 12:1-5). After considering the remainder of his speech, tell why it was important for him to begin as he did. **Samuel accused the Israelites of rejecting the Lord in asking for a king (12:6-17). Before he confronted them with evidence (12:7), he established his credibility as their Judge.**
- 13) Was it God's will for Israel to have a king or not? What was God's *purpose* with regard to kingship in Israel? Refer to Genesis 17:6 (God's promise to Abraham), Deuteronomy 17:14-20 (Moses' instructions to the Israelites just before they entered the Promised Land), and 1 Samuel 8:5-7, 10:1, 11:1 with 12:12, and 12:14, 17, 19 for your answers. **God told Abraham that kings would come from his body. He also gave instructions about kingship to the Israelites who first entered Canaan. God intended that the kings in Israel would be under his theocratic kingship. They would lead *His* people, under *His* supervision. David was a king who (mostly) did this well. Saul, on the other hand, did not meet this expectation at all. In 1 Samuel 10:1, Samuel reminded Saul that the people belonged to the Lord. All of these facts indicate that having a king was not, in and of itself, an evil thing. However, the Israelites' motivation and timing was wrong. As Samuel reminded them (1 Samuel 12), God had faithfully provided deliverance for them every time they repented and sought his favor. Perhaps the Israelites' demand for a king was motivated by a desire for permanent leadership, without any responsibility to maintain humble dependence on God. Samuel saw their unwillingness to depend on the Lord as rebellion and a rejection of Him. Nevertheless, the Lord allowed Israel the kingship she sought and faithfully used her kings, sometimes to bless Israel and sometimes to discipline her. God blessed the kings who understood they served under His ultimate authority and made them a blessing to the Israelites. The kings who sought personal gain and independence from God did not have His blessing and oppressed Israel.**
- 14) Based upon what you have discovered thus far in *Promised Land I*, what needs in Israel did God meet by giving them their first king? **Through Saul, the Lord met Israel's needs for military leadership and political unification.**
- 15) Examine each phrase at the close of Samuel's speech (1 Samuel 12:20-25) and list the elements of spiritual leadership Samuel modeled. Which example will you follow or which instruction will you share with someone this week? **Samuel's exhortation was well balanced: encouragement with warning, accountability with instruction, and perspective with prayer. He gave *encouragement* ("Do not be afraid"), even in the context of *confronting them* ("You have done evil; yet do not turn away from the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart"). He gave clear *warnings* to them ("Do not turn away after useless idols;" "yet if you persist in doing evil, both you and your king will be swept away"). He honestly *assessed* the things they valued ("[your idols] can do you no good, nor can they rescue you, because they are useless"). Samuel *pointed the Israelites to God* ("for the sake of His great name the Lord will not reject His people, because the Lord was pleased to make you His own;" "be sure to fear the Lord and serve him faithfully with all you heart;" "consider what great things he has done for you"), *prayed on their behalf* ("far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by failing to pray for you"), and *instructed* the Israelites ("and I will teach you the way that is good and right"). **Personal sharing****