

Story 23



A King for the Israelites

1 Samuel 8:1-15:35

The Bridge:

When Samuel became old, he appointed his sons, Joel and Abijah, as judges over Israel. “His sons, however, did not walk in his ways, but turned aside after dishonest gain and took bribes and perverted justice” (1 Samuel 8:3). So the people of Israel demanded a king because all the nations around them had one. Samuel thought their request was rebellion against God, but, “The LORD said to Samuel, ‘Listen to the voice of the people in regard to all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them’” (1 Samuel 8:7).

The Story:

- God chose an impressive, tall, strong warrior named Saul to be the King of the Israelites. Samuel anointed him king, and promised him that the Spirit of the Lord would control him. On that day God changed Saul’s heart (1 Samuel 9:14-17; 10:6-8).
- One day Samuel told Saul to [do whatever was required to bring deliverance to Israel from the Ammonites], and then to meet him seven days later at Gilgal to offer sacrifices (1 Samuel 10:7-8). Saul’s army defeated the Ammonite camp and the people rejoiced he was king (1 Samuel 11:11-15).
- Then, Samuel told Saul that God remembered how the Amalekites opposed Israel when they came out of Egypt [Numbers 14:45], and that he was to attack their camp and destroy them, not sparing anyone or any animal (1 Samuel 15:1-3). (Remember, God will judge sin.)
- However, Saul did not obey. He destroyed the people, but captured King Agag and spared the best of the sheep, cattle, and fattened calves, as well as the young rams (1 Samuel 15:7-9). It seemed he wanted to parade the Amalekite King Agag and the best animals in front of the people claiming yet another victory for himself. He became prideful.
- When Samuel came to Saul, Saul said to him, “Blessed be you to the LORD. I have performed the commandment of the LORD.”¹⁴ And Samuel said, “What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears and the lowing of the oxen that I hear?” (1 Samuel 15:12-14, ESV).
- Saul claimed that he saved those animals for a sacrifice to God (1 Samuel 15:15). Samuel said, “To obey is better than sacrifice. You have rebelled and rebellion is a sin” (1 Samuel 15:22-23).
- Samuel told Saul that God would take the kingdom away from him. Saul reached out to grab Samuel in protest and accidentally ripped his tunic. Samuel said, “Just as you have torn my tunic, God will tear the kingdom away from you and give it to another who will obey Him” (1 Samuel 15:27-29).



What can happen when we don't listen to God?