

Israel Asks for a King (chapter 8-11)

CHARACTERS: Elders 1 & 2, Voice of God (VOG), Samuel, Jonathan

SETTING: bare stage

RUN TIME: 2 minutes

SCRIPTURE/BASED ON: 1 Samuel 8-11

ELDER 1: Samuel, you are old, and your sons do not follow your ways.

ELDER 2: They turn aside after dishonest gain, accepted bribes and pervert justice.

ELDER 1: Now appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have.

JONATHAN: This displeased Samuel; so he prayed to the Lord.

VOG: It is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king. As they have done from the day, I brought them up out of Egypt until this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are doing to you.

SAMUEL: This is what the king who will reign over you will claim as his rights: He will take your children as servants and soldiers

ELDERS: *(in unison)* Give us a king!

SAMUEL: He will take the best of your fields, vineyards and olive.

ELDERS: *(in unison)* Give us a king!

SAMUEL: He'll take a tenth of everything you own and you yourselves will become his slaves.

ELDERS: *(in unison)* Give us a king!

SAMUEL: When that day comes, you will cry out for relief from the king you have chosen, but the Lord will not answer you in that day.

ELDER 2: We want a king over us.

ELDER 1: Then we will be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us, to go out before us and fight our battles.

JONATHAN: Samuel took a flask of olive oil and poured it on Saul's head.

SAMUEL: *(to Saul)* The Lord anoints you ruler over his inheritance. The Spirit of the Lord will come powerfully upon you, and you will be changed into a different person. *(to all Israel)* Here is your king.

ELDER1: *(upset and worried)* The Ammonites have besieged Jabesh Gilead.

SAUL: I will gather our army and rescue the city of Jabesh Gilead.

Samuel's Farewell Speech (chapter 12)

CHARACTERS: Samuel, Hophni, Elders (all),

SETTING: bare stage

RUN TIME: 4 minutes

SCRIPTURE/BASED ON: 1 Samuel 12

SAMUEL: I have listened to everything you said to me and have set a king over you as your leader. As for me, I am old and gray, and my sons are here with you.

HOPHNI: Our father has been your leader from his youth until this day.

SAMUEL: Here I stand. Testify against me in the presence of the Lord and his anointed. Whose ox have I taken? Whose donkey have I taken?

ELDERS: You have not taken anything from anyone's hand.

SAMUEL: Whom have I cheated? Whom have I oppressed? From whose hand have I accepted a bribe to make me shut my eyes?

ELDERS: You have not cheated or oppressed us

SAMUEL: If I have done any of these things, I will make it right.

ELDERS: You have not.

SAMUEL: The Lord is witness against you, and also his anointed is witness this day, that you have not found anything in my hand.

ELDERS: He is witness.

SAMUEL: Let me remind you of all the righteous acts performed by the Lord for you and your ancestors.

ELDERS: Proceed.

SAMUEL: When they were slaves in Egypt, they cried to the Lord for help,

ALL: And God sent Moses and Aaron, who brought our ancestors out of Egypt.

SAMUEL: But they forgot the Lord their God;

ALL: So Sisera, and the Philistines and the king of Moab, who fought against us.

SAMUEL: You cried out to the Lord

ALL: We have sinned; we have forsaken the Lord and served idols.

SAMUEL: You asked God to deliver you from your enemies, and to serve him.

ALL: Then the Lord sent Gideon, Barak, and Jephthah to save us.

SAMUEL: God delivered you from the hands of your enemies all around you,

ALL: so that we lived in safety until Nahash king of the Ammonites moved against us.

ELDER: So we asked for a king to rule over us.

SAMUEL: Didn't you get it? The Lord your God was your king. Did you forget he saved you before?

ALL: Pray to God for us so that we will not die, for we have added to all our other sins the evil of asking for a king.

SAMUEL: You have done all this evil; yet do not turn away from the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart.

ELDER: we'll stay away from useless idols.

SAMUEL: They can do you no good, nor can they rescue you, because they are useless.

ALL: For the sake of his great name, the Lord will not reject his people,

SAMUEL: because the Lord was pleased to make you his own. As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by failing to pray for you.

ALL: Teach us the way that is good and right.

SAMUEL: Fear the Lord and serve him faithfully with all your heart;

ALL: consider what great things he has done.

Samuel Rebukes Saul

CHARACTERS: Michal, Merab, Saul, Samuel, Jonathan

SETTING: bare stage

RUN TIME: 2 minutes

SCRIPTURE/BASED ON: 1 Samuel 13

MICHAL: Saul was thirty years old when he became king,

MERAB: He reigned over Israel 42 years.

MICHAL: Saul's sons were Jonathan, Ishvi and Malki-Shua.

MERAB: I was his older daughter Merab.

MICHAL: I was the younger daughter Michal.

JONATHAN: The commander of Saul's army was Abner son of Ner.

MERAB: Ner was Saul's uncle.

SAUL: I chose 2000 men to fight with me and 1000 for my son, Jonathan.

JONATHAN: The Philistines assembled to fight us with three thousand chariots, six thousand charioteers, and soldiers as numerous as the sand on the seashore.

MERAB: When the Israelites saw that their situation was critical and that their army was hard pressed,

MICHAL: they hid in caves and thickets, among the rocks, and in pits and cisterns.

SAUL: All my troops were quaking with fear.

JONATHAN: We must wait for Samuel to offer the sacrifice.

SAUL: No. We've waited 7 days and my men are leaving. Bring me the offerings.

MERAB: Just as he finished making the offering, Samuel arrived.

SAMUEL: What have you done?

SAUL: When I saw that the men were scattering, and that you did not come at the set time, and that the Philistines were assembling to fight, I felt compelled to offer the sacrifices.

SAMUEL: You have done a foolish thing. You have not kept the command the Lord. Now your kingdom will not endure; the Lord has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him ruler of his people, because you have not kept the Lord's command.

JONATHAN: Then Samuel left, and Saul counted the men who were with him.

MICHAL: They numbered only six hundred.

Jonathan Attacks the Philistines

CHARACTERS: Philistine 1 & 2, Saul, Armor bearer, Jonathan, Abner, Priest, All

SETTING: bare stage

RUN TIME: 4 minutes

SCRIPTURE/BASED ON: 1 Samuel 13-14

PHILISTINE: Make sure not a blacksmith can be found in the whole land of Israel.

PHILISTINE 2: Otherwise, the Hebrews will make swords or spears!

SAUL: Thus on the day of the battle only I and my son Jonathan had a sword or spear in his hand.

ABNER: Saul and 600 soldiers were on one side while a detachment of Philistines were in an outpost on a cliff.

JONATHAN: *(to armor bearer)* Let's go fight the outpost of those uncircumcised men. Perhaps the Lord will act in our behalf. Nothing can hinder the Lord from saving, whether by many or by few.

ARMOR-BEARER: Go ahead; I am with you heart and soul.

JONATHAN: If they say to us, 'Wait there until we come to you,' we will stay where we are and not go up to them.

ARMOR-BEARER: What if they say, 'Come up to us'?

JONATHAN: We will climb up, because that will be our sign that the Lord has given them into our hands.

PHILISTINE 1: *(mocking)* Look! The Hebrews are crawling out of the holes they were hiding in

PHILISTINE 2: Come up to us and we'll teach you a lesson.

JONATHAN: Climb up after me; the Lord has given them into the hand of Israel.

ABNER: In that first attack, Jonathan and his armor-bearer killed some twenty men.

ARMOR BEARER: Then panic sent by God struck the whole Philistine army and the ground shook.

ABNER: The Philistine army is running away in all directions!

JONATHAN: They are in total confusion, striking each other with their swords.

ARMOR BEARER: On that day, the Lord saved Israel.

SAUL: Cursed be anyone who eats food before evening comes, before I have avenged myself on my enemies!

ARMOR BEARER: So none of the troops tasted food, even when they found honey in the woods.

JONATHAN: But I didn't hear that command and ate some honey.

ABNER: Your father bound the army under a strict oath, cursing anyone who eats food today! That is why the men are faint.

JONATHAN: My father has made trouble for the country. See how my eyes brightened when I tasted a little of this honey.

ABNER: I do.

JONATHAN: How much better it would have been if the men had eaten today some of the plunder they took from their enemies. Would not the slaughter of the Philistines have been even greater?

ARMOR BEARER: After the battle, Saul built an altar to the Lord.

JONATHAN: It was the first time he had done this.

SAUL: Let us go down and pursue the Philistines by night and plunder them until dawn, and let us not leave one of them alive.

PRIEST: Let us inquire of God here.

SAUL: OK.

PRIEST: God does not answer.

SAUL: (*praying to God*) Why have you not answered your servant today? If the fault is in me or my son Jonathan, respond with Urim, but if the men of Israel are at fault, respond with Thummim.

PRIEST: Jonathan and Saul were taken by lot, and the men were cleared.

SAUL: Cast the lot between me and Jonathan, my son.

PRIEST: Jonathan was taken.

SAUL: Tell me what you have done.

JONATHAN: I tasted a little honey with the end of my staff. Now I must die!

SAUL: May God deal with me, be it ever so severely, if you do not die, Jonathan.

ABNER: Should Jonathan die—he who has brought about this great deliverance in Israel? Never!

ALL: As surely as the Lord lives, not a hair of his head will fall to the ground, for he did this today with God's help.

ARMOR BEARER: (*relieved*) So the men rescued Jonathan, and he was not put to death.

JONATHAN: After Saul had assumed rule over Israel, he fought against their enemies on every side.

ARMOR BEARER: All the days of Saul there was bitter war with the Philistines,
JONATHAN: Whenever Saul saw a mighty or brave man, he took him into his service.

The Lord Rejects Saul as King (chapter 15)

CHARACTERS: Saul, Samuel, Michael, Jonathan, Merab, Michal

SETTING: bare stage

RUN TIME: 2 minutes

SCRIPTURE/BASED ON: 1 Samuel 15

SAMUEL: This is what the Lord Almighty says: 'Attack the Amalekites and totally destroy all that belongs to them. Do not spare them; put to death men and women, children and infants, cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys.'

JONATHAN: (*sadly*) But Saul and the army spared King Agag and the best of the sheep and cattle, the fat calves and lambs—everything that was good.

MICHAL: These they were unwilling to destroy completely, but everything that was despised and weak they totally destroyed.

VOG: I regret that I have made Saul king, because he has turned away from me and has not carried out my instructions.

MERAB: Early in the morning, Samuel got up and went to meet Saul.

SAUL: The Lord bless you! I have carried out the Lord's instructions.

SAMUEL: What then is this bleating of sheep in my ears? What is this lowing of cattle that I hear?

SAUL: (*uncomfortable. Making excuses*) The soldiers brought them from the Amalekites; they spared the best of the sheep and cattle to sacrifice to the Lord your God, but we totally destroyed the rest.

SAMUEL: Let me tell you what the Lord said to me last night. Although you were once small in your own eyes, did you not become the head of the tribes of Israel?

SAUL: Yes.

SAMUEL: The Lord anointed you king over Israel. God sent you on a mission, saying,

VOICE of GOD: Go and completely destroy those wicked people, the Amalekites; wage war against them until you have wiped them out.

SAMUEL: Why did you not obey the Lord?

SAUL: I did obey the Lord. The soldiers took sheep and cattle in order to sacrifice them to the Lord.

SAMUEL: Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the Lord?

ALL: To obey is better than sacrifice. Rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry.

SAMUEL: Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has rejected you as king.

SAUL: I have sinned. I violated the Lord's command and your instructions. I was afraid of the men and so I gave in to them. (*begging*) Forgive my sin and come back with me, so that I may worship the Lord.

SAMUEL: No. You have rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord has rejected you as king. He who is the *Glory* of Israel does not lie or change his mind; for he is not a human being, that he should change his mind.

MICHAL: Samuel put Agag to death before the Lord at Gilgal.

MERAB: Until the day Samuel died, he did not go to see Saul again, though Samuel mourned for him.

MICHAL: And the Lord regretted that he had made Saul king over Israel.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

After all the other times God saved Israel without them having a king, why do you think they didn't trust God when the Ammonites attacked? What would that be like in modern times?

Make a list of all the things God has done to help you. What does this list tell you about your future?

Should Jonathan have been out to death? Why or why not?

How did Saul's lack of patience and the people's fear factor in to Saul's actions?

Would Jonathan have been a better king than Saul?

If Saul had given up the kingship, could he have saved his soul?