



## RENEWED KINGDOM • God Works Salvation in Israel

### What Do I Need to Know About the Passage?

I Samuel 9:1-12:25

In our last study, we saw that God warned the Israelites about what it would be like to have a king rule over them. Unfortunately, they ignored the warning. In our four chapters this week, God is gracious and merciful, however, to bless Israel instead of destroying them for their rejection of Him. Saul is chosen and anointed as king by Samuel and then he goes right to work and defeats the Ammonites in battle. Finally, now that everything seems to be in order for Israel, Samuel gives a goodbye speech with a bit of advice for God's people. They are distraught that they sinned against God by asking for a king. Samuel encourages them however to not look back at their evil, but look forward and keep following the Lord with all their heart (12:20).

This passage shows that God takes sin and rejection of Him and turns it into redemption for His people. God is gracious and merciful to deal with His people in such a compassionate way. Lead your students to understanding the truth of God's unfailing love for us in his Son Jesus, the ultimate King who has paid the price for our sin and rejection of God.

#### Saul is Chosen and Anointed as King (9:1-10:27)

When you think of a king, you probably think of someone who is tall, dark, and handsome, right? That exactly describes Saul. Verse 2 actually says, "There was not a man among the people of Israel more handsome than he." Good looks don't always translate to good leadership, but after all, this was God's choice. When Samuel sees Saul, God said, "He shall save my people from the hand of the Philistines" (v. 16b). God had heard the cry of the people, even though it was a blatant rejection of His kingship over them. God's choosing Saul as king foreshadows the future day when Jesus will come to "save His people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21). Saul is imperfect (as we will most certainly find out down the road), but Jesus will never disobey God's commands or be unfaithful (see I Sam. 2:35; Heb. 3:5-6).

When Samuel publicly proclaimed Saul as king over Israel, he gave them a summary of their sin: "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and I delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand of all the kingdoms that were oppressing you.' But today you have rejected your God" (10:18-19a). When we are stiff-necked about our sin, sometimes God disciplines us by giving us over to our sin, so that He might graciously provide for our redemption and forgiveness.

### What's the Big Idea?

After the people demand a king, God grants their request by providing them with Saul. Although God chooses to work through Saul to lead the people, He expresses His displeasure to them for rejecting Him as their king, yet still gives grace and calls them to repentance. Here we see God's mercy in continually pursuing His people despite their sin.

### What's the Problem?

Even though we serve a great God who has brought us out of sin, slavery, and misery, we still reject Him and desire other people or things to rule over us.



### Saul Goes to Battle; God Renews Israel (11:1-15)

Saul doesn't waste any time getting acquainted with being a king. During those days, to be a king meant that you were not just a political, economic, and social ruler. It also meant that you were the chief warrior. Israel was being threatened by the Ammonites. Nahash the Ammonite threatened that he would gouge out their right eyes and disgrace Israel. When Saul heard this, he became righteously angry – for Nahash was threatening God's people! Saul gathered together over three hundred thousand men to fight. God was faithful to Israel on the day of battle as Saul and his army "struck down the Ammonites" all day long (v. 11).

After the battle, Saul's heart was clearly directed toward God. "For today the LORD has worked salvation in Israel" (v. 13). Despite the people's sin and displeasure with God alone ruling over them, He provided victory over the Ammonites. Saul gave complete credit to God for the victory. Samuel was excited too, as he directed the people to go to Gilgal and renew the kingdom. Things are starting to look up for the Israelites. Talk with your group about how every event in their lives is directed by God for His glory and our ultimate good in keeping His covenant with His people (see Rom. 8:28).

### Samuel's Farewell (12:1-25)

Now that there seems to be some kind of order restored to Israel, Samuel is ready to ride off into the sunset and finish his days as a prophet. Before he leaves, he wants to be assured that he has been above reproach with the Israelites. The people confessed, "You have not defrauded us or oppressed us or taken anything from any man's hand" (v. 4). After this, Samuel gives the people a run-down of Israel's rich history with the LORD God. The main point of his monologue is that if they will fear the LORD, serve Him, and obey His voice and not rebel, it will be well for them. And if they don't? Well, God won't be happy.

After Samuel's speech, the people finally realize their sin to ask for a king and are afraid. They even begged Samuel to pray for God to spare their lives. But Samuel compassionately said, "Do not be afraid; you have done all this evil. Yet do not turn aside from following the Lord, but serve the LORD with all your heart" (v. 20). Samuel doesn't want God's people to sin, but when they do, God forgives if they confess and turn to Him. God never forsakes His people and He is even pleased to make us a people for Himself (v. 22-23; see 1 Pet. 2:9-10). We can heed Samuel's encouragement today because we have a greater promise in God's Son. When we do sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous one, who is the atonement for our sin (1 John 2:1-2). For whoever is in Christ there is no longer any condemnation (Rom. 8:1)

## What's Our Response?

By faith, we must turn to God in repentance, fear, trust, and service after we reject Him as our one true King.

## What Are the Questions?

I Samuel 9:1-12:25

### LAUNCH

Has there ever been a time in your life when you did something wrong and expected to be punished for it, but received grace instead?

### EXPLORE

Read I Samuel 9:1-2; 9:15-10:27

1. How would you describe Saul based on I Samuel 9:1-2?
2. What does God do through Samuel to affirm Saul as king in 9:15-10:21?
3. In spite of these affirmations of his leadership, Saul's hides himself by the baggage when it's time for him to become Israel's king (10:22). What does this say about his suitability for leadership?
4. What does this passage reveal about God's heart in giving Israel this king?
5. How do the people respond to Saul's kingship?

Read I Samuel 11:1-15

6. How would you describe Saul's first test as king?
7. How does Saul respond to this test?
8. How does God show grace to His people through Saul's leadership, even though they sinned against God by asking for a king?

Read I Samuel 12:1-25

9. What is Samuel's point in verses 1-5?
10. How does God work through Samuel to underline the evil they have committed by asking for a king?
11. How do the people respond when they realize the gravity of their sin?
12. How does Samuel tell the people to respond in the face of their sin?
13. How does Samuel encourage the people regarding God's character in the face of their sin?
14. Read I Peter 2:9-10. How does the people's experience with God in Samuel's day look forward to our experience with God through faith in Jesus Christ?

### APPLY

15. What does it mean for you and your life that God extends His grace to us on the basis of His commitment to His great name and His commitment to making people who trust in Jesus a people for Himself?
16. In what ways do you need to heed Samuel's call to "fear the LORD and serve Him in truth with all your heart, for consider what great things He has done for you" (I Samuel 12:24)?
17. What do we learn about God's heart for His people through these chapters?

What Are the Answers?

1. He's tall, choice, and handsome.
2. He tells him that he is favored of all the people in Israel (9:20). He anoints him as a ruler (10:1). He predicts certain circumstances that will come to pass as confirmation of his kingship, and they all happen (10:2-13). He identifies him as king in front of the people (10:17-21).
3. He may have good physical features, but he seems to be fearful, which doesn't inspire confidence in a leader.
4. It shows that He recognizes their rejection of Him but also shows them grace by providing a king who would deliver them from their enemies.
5. They're excited, but some people despise him.
6. An enemy ruler tries to press Israel into service at the cost of each Israelite's right eye.
7. He assembles the men of Israel to fight this enemy and defeat it.
8. He uses this king to deliver them from oppression and slavery.
9. He's establishing that he has conducted himself before the people with utmost integrity.
10. He sends a thunder storm at a time of the year when rain is infrequent.
11. They cry out for mercy, asking Samuel to pray for them so that they won't die.
12. He tells them not to fear in spite of their sin. He tells them to fear the LORD and serve Him, considering the great things He has done for them.
13. He assures them that God won't abandon them on account of His great name. He assures them that God has good intentions to make them a people for Himself in spite of their sin.
14. Just as the people didn't deserve God loving them or making them a people for Himself, so neither do we. But God makes us a people for His own possession in spite of our sin through faith in Jesus.
15. Allow the group to discuss.
16. Allow the group to discuss.
17. We learn that even though God lets us experience the consequences of rejecting Him, He still relates to us with grace and even works through our rejection to make us the people He wants us to be.

Memorize

For the LORD will not forsake His people, for His great name's sake, because it has pleased the LORD to make you a people for Himself. Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by ceasing to pray for you, and I will instruct you in the good and the right way.

I Samuel 12:22-23