



10

Israel Rejects God as King

Key Theme

- God alone is to be worshipped.

Key Passages

- 1 Samuel 8:6–20, 9:27–10:27; 1 John 2:15; Romans 12:2

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Describe God’s warning to Israel against having a king.
- Identify the first king of Israel.



Lesson Overview



Come On In

Students will place a bookmark at 1 Samuel 8, 9; 1 John 2; and Romans 12
Students will practice the memory verse using the Memory Verse Strips.

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|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cut paper into strips for each student to mark today’s study passages. | <input type="checkbox"/> Print and cut out the Memory Verse Strips from the Resource DVD–ROM for each student. Put complete sets into envelopes or small plastic bags. |
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Studying God’s Word

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God was the only King over His people in Israel. However, the people wanted to be like all the other nations and have a man-king to rule them. God agreed to honor their request but warned them that these kings would be demanding of the people. The first king chosen by God was Saul.

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|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Study the Prepare to Share section. | <input type="checkbox"/> Read through 1 Samuel 8–10; Romans 12:1–2; 1 John 2:15–17 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Go Before the Throne. | |



Activity: Not of This World

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The students will analyze the motives of the Israelites in seeking a king for themselves and compare those motives to passages of Scripture that talk about the believer’s relationship to the things of this world.

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|---|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student Guides | <input type="checkbox"/> Pencils |
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Prepare to Share

SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND

Before you begin to prepare for your lesson this week, please prepare your heart and mind by reading 1 Samuel 8–10; 2 Samuel 7:1–16; and John 18:33–38.

Samuel's allegiance to God during his leadership in Israel established a time of peace between Israel and the Amorites (1 Samuel 7:13–14). Samuel appointed his sons as judges after him. Unfortunately, they did not follow Samuel's example. They became greedy, taking bribes and perverting justice (1 Samuel 8:3). This was when the elders of Israel gathered to ask Samuel to appoint a king who would rule them like all the other nations (1 Samuel 8:5).

In order to appreciate what the people were asking, it will be helpful to consider the difference between a judge and a king. A judge was called by God for one main purpose—deliverance from enemies. A king, in that culture, was a sovereign over all of the affairs of the tribe or nation. A judge led by persuasion—the people followed him or disregarded him as they thought best. (The book of Judges repeats the phrase “everyone did what was right in his own eyes.”) A king ruled by right—the people owed unconditional allegiance to the king. A judge's rule was limited to accomplish a particular purpose of deliverance. A king's rule was unlimited and included succession from generation to generation. The judges, we have seen, were led by God to deliver Israel in a way that would specifically show its dependence on God alone.

The Israelites' desire for a king—a permanent

ruler who would be responsible for the well-being of the nation in a comprehensive way and who would therefore have comprehensive authority—revealed their desire to switch their loyalty to a man rather than depending on and obeying God. It was this inclination that God addressed when He said to Samuel, “They have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them” (1 Samuel 8:7). Samuel warned the people that the king would tax them and take their children and possessions, but in the face of all the warnings, the people reaffirmed that they wanted an earthly king to lead them and fight their battles; they wanted to be like all the other nations. God declared that He would grant their desire; Samuel was to appoint a king (1 Samuel 8:10–22).

1 Samuel 9 and 10 give the details of Samuel choosing and anointing Israel's first king, Saul. Saul was looking for his father's lost donkeys (1 Samuel 9:3). When he was ready to give up on finding them, it was suggested that he solicit help from the well-known man of God, the prophet Samuel (1 Samuel 9:6). God had revealed this meeting to Samuel the day before Saul came (1 Samuel 9:15–16). God indicated to Samuel that this Saul was to be anointed as the king of Israel. And in God's providence, they met and Samuel anointed Saul according to God's perfect plan and will (1 Samuel 10:1). God's message to Saul through Samuel was that the Spirit of God would come upon him and he would become another man (1 Samuel 10:6). In this way, God transformed Saul and prepared him to be king. The chapter culminates

in the public acclamation of Saul as king (1 Samuel 10:24). But there were rebels who despised him (1 Samuel 10:27).

HISTORICAL/APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND

Saul's anointing as Israel's king begs the question: why would God grant this desire of Israel's people for a king, when we know that the desire constituted a rejection of God? Consider that King David succeeded Saul after Saul failed. Now consider the details of God's covenant made to David—that his throne would be established forever (2 Samuel 7:16). That throne would one day be occupied by Jesus Christ who is the King of kings and the Lord of lords (Revelation 19:16). Jesus is not only man, but God. He is the Word of God who became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14).

The inescapable conclusion is that God turned the sinful desire of Israel to His own purposes. The people rejected God's reign in favor of a man (Saul) to be king. But that rejection of God led to the fulfillment of God's precious plan of redemption through the God-man, Jesus Christ—the final and everlasting King. How often God works in this way! Man's sins are not excused at all, but regardless of man's failures, God works out His perfect will. Joseph was sold cruelly into slavery by his brothers, but that act was meant by God for good, to save the brothers later (Genesis 50:20). Peter and John were beaten for teaching about Jesus, but their faithful,

courageous endurance of the suffering was used to bring great boldness to the church (Acts 4:18–31). And most importantly, Jesus, the Christ, was delivered to be tortured and crucified; but that very act, the worst murder ever committed, was carried out by God's "determined purpose and foreknowledge" (Acts 2:22–23) to be the atoning sacrifice that saves God's people from their sins and brings them God's righteousness (see 2 Corinthians 5:21).

Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!

For more information on this topic, see the Online Resource Page.



BEFORE THE THRONE

Dear holy and sovereign Lord, I am in awe of the perfect and just way you have always dealt with man. So often we sin against you, yet you constantly work your perfect will in the world and call your people to you. Transform my mind that I may not be conformed to this world. And transform the minds and lives of the students in my class that they will long to glorify and honor you by renewing their own minds with your holy Word and the beautiful truth of the gospel. Help them to set aside the temporary things of the world for the eternal things yet to be seen. Bless my students and their families, Lord. Bless this class.



COME ON IN

As students arrive . . .

- They will mark their Bibles at 1 Samuel 8, 9; 1 John 2; and Romans 12 with strips of paper.
- They will put the Memory Verse Strips in order and recite the verse together and/or to each other. They may work individually or in teams.

This time at the beginning of class should be used to review the memory verse. We have provided a template on the Resource DVD-ROM you can use to make Memory Verse Strips to be put in order each week. You may have other ideas and ways to encourage your students to memorize the verse.



Review

In our last lesson, we saw the call of Samuel to be a prophet, priest, and judge of Israel.

- ? Who can remember some of the main ideas from our lesson on Samuel last week? *God uses people to bring about His perfect plans. In answer to Hannah's faith and vow, God gave her a son; Samuel served God faithfully and obediently; and Eli's household was judged by God for its wickedness.*

Through all of those events, God demonstrated many of His attributes. We saw His faithfulness in fulfilling promises, His grace in granting Hannah a son, and His justice in the judgment brought on Eli's household and superstitious Israel.

Encourage students to read the text between the accounts you are studying to get the full picture of God's work through history.

When we left the account last week, the Ark of the Covenant had been captured by the Philistines, and Samuel took over as the judge of Israel. Those events took place around 1117 BC. The ark was returned shortly after it was taken, and you can read that very interesting piece of history in 1 Samuel 6–7.

In the 20 years after Eli's death, Samuel judged Israel, and the Philistines were eventually subdued. There was a brief period of restoration as the Israelites turned back to worshipping God, but that wouldn't last long. The Israelites were about to try to be like the nations around them—failing to worship God once again. That is where we pick up the history today. Samuel is getting old, and a major change is in store for the nation of Israel.



- Write on the board, "What are the fruits of seeking to be like the world?"



Studying God's Word

READ THE WORD

1 Samuel 8

Let's read 1 Samuel 8 together. *Have someone read the passage aloud.*

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

- ? **What was the problem with Samuel's sons?** *They did not walk in the way of Samuel; they sought dishonest gain, took bribes, and perverted justice in their role as judges.*
- ? **What did the elders request of Samuel?** *A king.*
- ? **What was their reasoning?** *A king would judge them like all of the other nations.*
- ? **How did Samuel respond?** *He was displeased. He prayed to the Lord.*
- ? **How did God respond?** *God told Samuel to give them a king.*
- ? **Who were the Israelites really rejecting?** *They were rejecting God as their King. Just as they had behaved when He had led them out of Egypt, they didn't want God reigning over them.*
- ? **What warning did God give through Samuel?** *The kings would oppress the people, taxing them, taking their land, and forcing their children to be laborers.*
- ? **Look at verses 19 and 20. How did the people respond to the warning?** *They did not listen to the warning and were willing to accept a king's oppression in order to be like the world around them.*
- ? **Who were the people putting their trust in?** *Verse 20 shows that they were trusting in a king to judge them and to fight their battles for them.*
- ? **What was God's final word on the matter?** *He instructed Samuel to give them a king, just as they desired.*

Discover the Truth

God had been leading the Israelites, providing for their every need, and fighting their battles for them. They could not have asked for a better king than God Himself! In this act, the Israelites rejected God's wisdom and ignored His warning.

They doubted God's faithfulness to keep His promises.

They doubted God's love for them as a people.

They had rejected the grace God had shown them over the past 400 years since He led them out of Egypt. They did all of this so that they could be like the world. And God was pleased to give them what they wanted—even though He knew the trouble it would bring them.

If they really thought a human king would be better than the heavenly King, they were wrong.



➤ Refer to the History of Israel poster to help the students understand the timeframe of the period between the Exodus (1491 BC) and the anointing of Saul as the first king of Israel (1095 BC).

READ THE WORD

As we continue, I am going to give you a summary of what happened in chapter 9.

Kish, the father of Saul, lost some donkeys. Saul and a servant went looking for the donkeys. After the donkeys had been lost for three days, they sought

➤ If time allows, read through the account in chapter 9 as an introduction to the teaching in chapter 10.

the counsel of Samuel the prophet. Samuel was in town for a sacrifice, and they met him on the road. By God's revelation, Samuel knew they were coming and told them about the donkeys—they were already safe back at home. Samuel brought Saul to the feast and honored him there.

Now that we have that framework, will someone please read 1 Samuel 10, but start in 9:27, and we will see what happened the next day. *Have someone read the passage aloud.*

1 Samuel 9:27–10:27

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

- ? **What did Samuel announce to Saul?** *Saul was to become commander of God's inheritance (the leader of Israel).*
- ? **What symbol did Samuel use in the announcement?** *He anointed Saul with oil. This was a common symbol of setting someone apart for service to God.*
- ? **How did Saul know that what Samuel said was truly from God?** *All of the signs that Samuel gave came true that day.*
- ? **What do we learn about Saul's heart in this passage?** *God changed Saul's heart. The Holy Spirit made this inexperienced man able to assume kingly responsibilities in much the same way as the judges before him had been blessed.*
- ? **In verse 10, what did the Spirit of God empower Saul to do?** *He prophesied along with the group of prophets.*
- ? **Who was responsible for choosing Saul?** *It was God's choice, according to verse 10:24.*
- ? **How did the people gathered at Mizpah respond to Samuel's announcement?** *They said, "Long live the king!"*
- ? **What did Samuel do in light of the fact that this was the first king of Israel?** *Samuel explained and recorded the expected behavior of the king.*
- ? **What roles of a prophet did Samuel fulfill?** *He anointed the king (10:1), offered sacrifices (10:8), spoke for God (10:17–24), and told of future events accurately (10:2–9).*

► Refer to the Roles of the Prophets poster.

Discover the Truth

As the people had requested, they now had a king just like the other nations around them. They had rejected God as their King, but God granted their request. Although they would serve the coming kings under much oppression, they wanted to be like the world.

As we go through the rest of the history of Israel, we will see these problems played out. But God knew what He was doing.

- ? **Can anyone think of a reason that God would allow the Israelites to have a human king? (Hint: It has to do with Jesus.)** *Jesus was to come as the King of the Jews and the King of kings through the line of King David. God allowed the earthly kingdom to be established in preparation for the coming of the heavenly King Jesus.*

This should remind us of how wise and omnipotent God is to allow a sinful request of rejecting God as King to bring about His perfect plans. God can use bad to bring about good, and that is exactly what we see in this account.



Not of This World

MATERIALS

- Student Guides
- Pencils

INSTRUCTIONS

Have the students read the passages and answer the questions in their Student Guides to complete the activity.

In your Student Guides you will find an activity called Not of This World. In small groups, use the passages there to answer the questions, and we will discuss the answers in a few minutes.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

1. From these passages, write a definition that explains the phrase “the world.” *The system of materialistic or humanistic thinking that characterizes all of those things that are not of God.*
2. What does “the world” not mean in these passages (i.e., how else is the phrase used in Scripture)? *Any passages that refer to mankind in general (John 3:16) or the earth itself (Psalm 24:1) are using the phrase in a different sense.*
3. What three categories of worldliness are given in 1 John 2:16? Can you think of examples of sins that would fit into each

category? *Lust of the flesh: the desire to indulge the sinful nature with gluttony, laziness, immorality, gossip/slander, etc. Lust of the eyes: lustful looks, covetousness, desiring beauty, entertainment, etc. The pride of life: reliance on self, arrogance, exaggerating, seeking to impress others, etc.*

4. In both passages, what is contrasted with doing worldly things? *The will of God is set against the ways of the world.*
5. Use cross-references, study notes, or your concordance to identify some other passages that use the idea of “the world” found in these passages. *James 4:4; John 15:18–19; Matthew 18:7; 2 Peter 1:4; 1 Corinthians 1:21.*
6. Where do you see the need for repentance and change in your life in light of these passages? *Encourage students to put these sins to death (Romans 8:13; Colossians 3:5–10) and to involve others in helping them through prayer and exhortation.*

Following the world is the opposite of following God. If we will admit it, sometimes we act very much like the Israelites. We need to understand how these sins affect us and seek to put them to death by God’s grace and power. We need to acknowledge His authority as our King and stop seeking to fulfill our lives with the things of the world.



Applying God’s Word

WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

Looking for solutions to our problems in the world’s system or in humanistic thinking is never the answer. When we reject God and look to

mankind for hope, we have made a fatal mistake. Israel did this in the face of clear warnings directly from God, and they reaped the consequences of their decision. God has also directly communicated to us—through His Word—and we cannot afford to set those warnings aside.

No matter what era of history we live in, human kings are not the solution to our problems—we need the King of kings to rule our lives. We must submit to His kingship above all others. Christ alone is King! As we submit to Him, we can overcome the sins that are so prevalent in this world's system.

GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

- ? What do we learn about human nature from the account we studied today of Israel rejecting God as King? *People tend to seek things of the world rather than the things of God, even in the face of clear warnings.*
- ? What do we learn about God from this account? *We see that God is willing to turn people over to their own desires but that He is able to accomplish His good purposes through sinful people.*
- ? How do you seek to be like the world? And how can we work together as the body of Christ to help one another put these sins to death? *Discuss various influences, including school, television, music, video games, and friends; and how mutual confession and accountability in fellowship can help each of us to be conformed to the perfect will of God and the perfect character of Christ. Christians should repent when they fall into sin, knowing they have been forgiven in Christ and have His power to move on in faith and obedience.*
- ? In this lesson, we have a clear picture of the common attitude of sinners toward God—they reject God as their King. How could you use this passage of Israel rejecting God's rule as a way to proclaim the gospel to someone who is rejecting Jesus Christ as King of kings? *Sin blinds the lost to their need for a Savior. In this blindness, they set themselves as if on the throne of God and want to be in control of their own lives and destinies. Explaining this rebellious independence sets the stage to help people see their sin of idolatry and their need for a Savior from that sin.*



MEMORY VERSE

1 Samuel 16:7 But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."



GROUP PRAYER TIME

Be sure to pray with your class before you dismiss them.

- Thank God for lessons from Scripture that teach us.
- Praise God for giving us the Holy Spirit to overcome sin.
- Ask God for hearts that would seek after Him.