

Lesson 1

1 Samuel 9 - 15

We have been studying about all the judges that ruled the Israelites. In 1 Samuel chapter 8, the Israelites had asked Samuel to find them a king. Samuel's sons, Joel and Abijah, were judges then. They did not follow the way of the Lord like Samuel. (1 Sam. 8:5)

Samuel was not happy when the Israelites asked for a king. Samuel prayed to God. (1Sam. 8:6) Samuel tried to warn the people how it would be if they had a king. The people would not listen to Samuel. They wanted a king. So, the Lord told Samuel to give them a king.

When we start our study in 1 Samuel 9, we read about a man named Saul. Saul was from the tribe of Benjamin. Saul was tall and very handsome. Saul loved God.

Saul's father was Kish. Kish had lost some of his donkeys. He sent Saul and one of the servants to find them. Saul and his servant searched everywhere for the donkeys but never found them. Saul decided that he needed to go back home before his father started to worry about him. Saul had traveled a long way from his home. The servant told Saul that a prophet of God lived close to where they were traveling. The servant thought that the prophet, Samuel, might be able to help Saul locate the donkeys.

When Saul and his servant got close to the city, they met Samuel. Samuel was on his way to worship on a hill outside the city. (1 Sam. 9:14) The Lord had spoken to Samuel. He told Samuel that He was sending a man from the tribe of Benjamin. He told Samuel that the man would be the king of the Israelites. When Samuel saw the men, he knew it was the man God sent.

Samuel told Saul that the animals had been found. Then he told Saul that he wanted him and his servant to eat with him. Samuel took Saul and his servant to a feast. Saul sat in the place of honor. (1 Sam. 9:22) After they ate, they went to Samuel's house to talk. Saul and his servant stayed the night at Samuel's home.

The next morning, Samuel woke Saul early. Samuel told Saul that he needed to leave to go home. They both went outside. Samuel walked with Saul and his servant until they got to the edge of the city.

Samuel told Saul to ask his servant to go on ahead. Then he told Saul, “But you stand here awhile, that I may announce to you the word of God.” (1 Sam. 9:27) After the servant had gone on, Samuel took a small bottle of oil and poured it on Saul’s head. Samuel anointed Saul as the king of the Israelites. (1 Sam. 10:1)

Samuel told Saul that three things were going to happen to him that would be signs from God. Samuel told Saul that he would come later to tell him what to do. (1 Sam. 10:11) Everything happened just as Samuel had told Saul it would. When Saul returned home, he did not tell the people that he was their king. But, the people could see that Saul seemed different. Some of the people asked if Saul was a prophet. (1 Sam. 10:11)

The time came for the people to know who their king was going to be. Samuel called a meeting of all the people at Mizpah. Samuel told all the tribes to come close. Then he chose the tribe of Benjamin. (1 Sam. 10:20) The men went to find Saul and brought him to stand in the middle of all the people. Then Samuel said, “Do you see him who the Lord has chosen, that there is no one like him among all the people?” (1 Sam. 10:24)

Saul was a very good man that loved God. But Saul needed to show the people that he would be a good king. There was a group of people called Ammonites that wanted to hurt some of the people of Israel. Saul and his army went out to fight the Ammonites. When Saul and his army won the battle, the people knew he would be a good king. The people were happy to have Saul as their king. They rejoiced and made offerings to the Lord. (1 Sam. 11:15)

Samuel was getting old. He spoke to the people and reminded them of all the things God had done for them. (1 Sam. 6:11) Then Samuel told the people, "I will call to the Lord, and He will send thunder and rain..." Samuel wanted this sign to show the people that his words were from God. The Lord sent thunder and rain as Samuel had asked. The people were afraid. They cried out to Samuel to pray for them. (1Sam. 12:19)

After Saul had been king for 2 years, he called together an army to fight against the Philistines. (1 Sam. 13:2) Saul's army was down to only 600 men. The Philistines were strong. They had taken all the weapons away from the Israelites. King Saul had a son named Jonathan. Saul and Jonathan were the only two men who had swords.

Samuel had told King Saul to wait for him at Gilgal. Days went by and Samuel still was not there. The people were afraid and went to hide in caves. King Saul decided to offer the sacrifices himself and not wait for Samuel. (1 Sam. 13:9) That was not what God had commanded Saul to do. King Saul sinned because he was not patient. (1 Sam. 13:13) Samuel told Saul that God would take away his kingdom because he had not obeyed Him. (1 Sam. 13:14)

Jonathan was not in the same camp with Saul. Jonathan decided it was time for him to do something to help against the Philistines. One day, Jonathan and his servant went out alone to fight the Philistines. Jonathan had faith that God would help him. Jonathan killed 20 of the Philistines. Suddenly, there was an earthquake. The earth shook and the people were afraid. The Philistines ran away.

The watchman from Saul's camp saw the Philistines run away. Then Saul did something foolish. Saul decided to tell all the people not to eat anything until they had fought all the Philistines. (1 Sam. 14:24) Jonathan did not hear Saul say this to the people. As Jonathan walked through the woods, he found honey dripping from the trees. Jonathan took some honey and ate it. (1 Sam. 14:27)

Later, Saul heard what Jonathan had done. Saul commanded the men to kill Jonathan. But, the men refused to kill Jonathan because he had won the battle with the Philistines.

The Lord appeared to Samuel. The Lord told Samuel that Saul needed to go into battle with the Amalekites. God said that Saul was to kill all the people and all their animals. He was not to take anything from the Amalekites. (1 Sam. 15:3) But Saul did another foolish thing. He did not kill Agag, the king of the Amalekites. Saul also kept some of the best sheep and oxen.

God appeared to Samuel and told him that Saul had not obeyed Him. God told Samuel that He was sorry that He had made Saul the king. (1 Sam. 15:11) When Samuel went to Saul, Saul told him he had done what God commanded. Samuel heard the animals Saul had brought back. He asked Saul about them. Saul made the excuse that he saved the best animals to use as a sacrifice to God. But that was not what God had commanded King Saul to do.

Samuel reminded Saul that God had made him king when he was a quiet, shy person who was faithful to God. Saul started thinking he could make decisions on his own and not listen to God.

King Saul had turned away from God, and now God was turning away from Saul. Saul told Samuel that he had sinned and he was sorry. Samuel turned to walk away. Saul grabbed Samuel's robe and tore it. Samuel told Saul that he had torn the robe the same as God had torn the kingdom out of Saul's hand. (1 Sam. 15:28) Saul begged Samuel to go with him, but it was too late. Saul had sinned against God. Samuel was very sad that Saul had not obeyed God.