



STORY

Saul - 1 Samuel 8-15

TEACHER PRAYER

Dear God, my heavenly Father, who tells us, "Let him who has My word speak My word faithfully," guide and direct me as I teach this lesson to the children in my class so that I teach that which you would have them learn from it. Help me to impress upon them that Your will is to be done. But when they fail to do so, lead them to repent and to trust in the forgiveness which Jesus has earned for them and all people. We ask it in His saving name. Amen.

VOCABULARY

terebinth - a type of oak tree

ephod - a vest with an onyx stone on each shoulder, the names of six of the sons of Israel engraved on each.

OUTER AIM

The people of Israel demanded a king. God gave them Saul who started well, but later followed his own will and lost God's support.

INNER AIM

Unrepented disobedience to God can only result in disaster.

BACKGROUND

Rupprecht *Bible History References, Vol. 1*, pp. 279-285)

The people of Israel were not content to have God rule them through judges and prophets. They wanted a king to lead them. Samuel did not like this, but God told him to listen to them. God selected Saul to be the king. He was accepted by the people when he led them to victory over the Ammonites who were besieging Jabesh Gilead. Saul disobeyed God by offering a sacrifice which was unlawful for him to do. His excuse was that he had hoped to keep more of his soldiers from deserting. Because of this sin, the throne would not remain in his family.

God gave the Israelites victory over the Philistines. Saul's son, Jonathan, had eaten some honey during the battle. He did not know about Saul's foolish oath that no one should eat before evening. Saul's soldiers would not permit him to punish Jonathan. Saul was ordered by God to utterly destroy the Amalekites. He spared the king and some of the best animals. God rejected him as king.

Chapter 8

Because Samuel's sons were unworthy to succeed him as judges, the people asked him to give them a king. In doing so, they were rejecting God's direct leadership. God told Samuel to give them a king. Samuel explained to the people just what demands a king would make of them.

Chapter 9

Saul, of the tribe of Benjamin, was a tall, humble and handsome young man. He was sent to find some of his father's donkeys which had strayed. He learned that there was a man of God in town. He went to learn from him where the donkeys were. The man, Samuel, informed him that the donkeys had been found. He took Saul and his servant in to eat with him. The next morning Samuel went out of the city to send them on their way.

Chapter 10

Samuel anointed Saul to be king. To prove that this was really so, Samuel told Saul exactly what would happen on his way home. Everything happened as Samuel had said. Saul was given a new heart, that of a king. The Holy Spirit came upon him and he prophesied. His uncle asked him what had happened. He told about the search for the donkeys, but not about Samuel. Samuel called the representatives of all the people to meet. Lots were cast and Saul was chosen. Samuel told them that Saul was their king. Not all were happy with the choice.

Chapter 11

The Ammonites besieged Jabesh-Gilead. The inhabitants learned that they could have peace only if they permitted their right eyes to be put out. They asked and received a week to make a decision. Messengers brought word to Saul. He summoned the men of Israel who, with God's help, destroyed the Ammonite army. Offerings were made to the Lord.

Chapter 12

Samuel gave an address at Saul's coronation in which he pointed out that he had served the Israelites well. They had sinned by rejecting God's rule and asking for a king. The people repented after God sent a very unusual storm during the harvest season. Samuel told them not to fear, but to serve the Lord with all their heart.

Chapter 13

Saul recruited an army. When his son Jonathan attacked a Philistine garrison, the enemy came in force. The Israelites waited for Samuel to come to offer a sacrifice. When Samuel hadn't arrived at the set time, Saul offered the sacrifice which was not lawful for him to do. Because of this, his family would not keep the throne. The Israelite army was poorly equipped because the Philistines did not permit blacksmiths among the Israelites.

Chapter 14

Jonathan and his armorbearer attacked an enemy garrison. This caused panic in the enemy camp. The noise attracted Saul's attention. The Israelites attacked and God gave them a great victory. The army of the Israelites was handicapped by hunger. Saul had foolishly taken an oath forbidding his men to eat until evening. Jonathan had not heard about the oath and had eaten some honey. When God did not answer Saul's request to pursue the enemy that night, he realized that someone had broken the oath. Lots were cast and it was learned that Jonathan had eaten some honey. The soldiers would not let Jonathan be killed for this. Saul had war with enemies on every side.

Chapter 15

The Lord sent Saul to destroy utterly the Amalekites who years earlier had attacked the Israelites on the way to the Promised Land. Saul was successful, but spared the king and the best of the cattle and sheep. The Lord sent Samuel to speak to Saul about his disobedience. Saul blamed the people for saving the animals for a sacrifice to God. Samuel told him that obedience was better than sacrifice. Saul was rejected by God as king. The Amalekite king was executed and Samuel went home, never to see Saul again.

STUDENT PRAYER

Dear heavenly Father, who clearly shows us what You wish for us to do and to avoid doing in Your Word, prevent us from following our own ways when they are contrary to what You expect of us. Give us the desire and the strength to follow where You lead us. When we fail to do as we should, lead us to ask Your forgiveness and comfort us with the assurance that our sins are forgiven, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

PRESENTATION

Dissatisfaction over the judges by whom God had ruled Israel led the people to demand a king like the nations around them. God gave them a king, Saul the son of Kish. He started well as a humble servant of God. But later he chose to ignore God's will and to do things his own way. When he failed to destroy the Amalekites completely, God rejected him as king.

APPLICATIONS

Though God chose Saul to be king and he started well, he was weak. He trusted in himself and lost God's help and finally his life and kingdom.

God's guidance is always good. He makes no mistakes. Human leaders are often wrong. We do well to follow God's will and not our own or that of others.

PASSAGES

These passages can be assigned as memory work or simply discussed in class as to how they fit the lesson.

Lower

1 John 5:3 This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.

Middle any of the above and...

Prov. 3:5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding.

Upper any of the above and...

Jer. 17:5 Cursed is the man who trusts in man, and makes flesh his arm, and whose heart departs from the Lord.

Prov. 14:12 There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.

HYMN CHOICES

The Law of God Is Good and Wise - TLH #295

Speak, O Lord, Thy Servant Heareth - TLH #296

God Moves in a Mysterious Way TLH - #514

If Thou But Suffer God to Guide Thee - TLH #518

If God Himself Be for Me - TLH #528