

# God's Permissive Will

## 1 Samuel 10 & 11

### Key Bible Texts

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### Key Bible Verse(s)

“And ye have this day rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations; and ye have said unto him, Nay, but set a king over us. Now therefore present yourselves before the Lord by your tribes, and by your thousands.” (1 Samuel 10:19)

## Background to the Study

God's plan for Israel was that He should be their King. From time to time, He had raised leaders as needed. Gideon, Barak, and Samson were examples of military leaders, and Deborah and Samuel were examples of spiritual leaders. At the time of today's text, Samuel had served the nation of Israel well for many years as a prophet and priest. The end of his life was drawing near, and without an heir apparent, the people wanted a king to lead them so they would be just like all their neighbouring countries. This was against God's will, and Samuel told them as much, but they were resolute in their demands. Therefore, God chose Saul to be a captain (“commander” in the original Hebrew) of his people. When Samuel anointed Saul, it was a symbolic act showing that he was appointed by God. Priests or prophets anointed Israel's kings. The oil was a special mixture of costly spices, myrrh, and olive oil, and this same oil was used to anoint the priests. To confirm the authenticity of the anointing, Samuel foretold three events that would happen to Saul: two men would report the asses had been found and that Kish, his father, was concerned about Saul; he would receive two loaves of bread from three men; and a company of prophets would meet him, and God's Spirit would come upon him. All these events came to pass. Saul was given a spiritual anointing from God when he received a new heart and the Spirit of God came upon him (vs. 6 and 9-10). God came into Saul's life and changed him from what he had been before, thereby enabling him to do what God had called him to do, which was to be the king. When he met the prophets and God's Spirit came upon him, Saul praised God and worshipped Him. The surprise of the people who knew Saul (“Is Saul also among the prophets?”) indicates that Saul had been noticeably changed. The public appointment of Saul as king took place at Mizpah, where God had previously delivered Israel from the Philistines (ch. 7). When Samuel told the people the “manner of the kingdom” (v. 25), he was, no doubt, confirming that Israel's government would operate in the manner that God directed in Deuteronomy 17:14-20. Gibeah was Saul's home and therefore became the political capital of Israel at this time. Samuel resided in Ramah, and therefore

that town was the religious centre. This was the first time the political and religious centres were separated.

In chapter 11, God established Saul as king in the hearts of his countrymen. The Ammonites were Lot's descendants. Nahash means "snake." When Saul heard that the people of Jabesh were threatened, the Spirit of God came upon him. Further proof that God was in control was shown when the fear of the Lord fell on the people as Saul moved into action. Ultimately, the mighty army of the Ammonites was partially destroyed and completely scattered, while the nation of Israel was unified under their new king. As a result, Saul's position as king was solidified, and the whole nation rejoiced and gave thanks to God.

## A TESTIMONY FROM OUR DAY

*My wife always has crafts for the little ones in her preschool Sunday school class. She does her best to provide them with materials to make something especially nice that they can be excited to take home and show to their families. Of course, when dealing with such young children, she makes the craft simple and demonstrates with careful step-by-step instructions. Even so, there are some youngsters who feel they MUST do everything their own way! No amount of encouragement and careful demonstration will sway them otherwise. As you might expect, the results vary! How disappointing it is to see a messed-up project. However, her love for the little ones in her class keeps her going, and you can be sure next Sunday there will be another charming craft for the children to work on. The Children of Israel insisted on their own way of having a king. God had given them everything they needed to be successful, including step-by-step instructions. They had not followed His commandments, and at this time they were convinced that having a king would be the solution to their problems. Perhaps you can look back in your life and see times when you followed your own way and ended up in a mess. Also, you may be able to look back to situations when you heeded God's step-by-step instructions, possibly without understanding them, and saw the Lord work out details in your life in a better way than you could have imagined. How it must grieve the Lord when He sets out a pattern for our success, but we are so consumed with our own desires that we are blinded to His plans! How often do we settle for a "mess" when God has far greater plans for our lives? Today, may the purpose of our hearts be to follow God's directions and have His will worked out in our lives.*

## A Closer Look

### Question 1

Why did the people of the nation of Israel want a king? Why did Samuel oppose the idea?

### Question 2

What three prophecies did Samuel make regarding the signs that would happen on Saul's journey home (1 Samuel 10:2-6)? What can we learn from them for our lives today?

### Question 3

Saul was anointed king three times: privately by the prophet Samuel (1 Samuel 10:1), in public at Mizpeh (1 Samuel 10:17-24), and after his first victory as the leader of the tribes in battle against the Ammonites (1 Samuel 11:15). At the second coronation, Saul “hid himself among the stuff” (1 Samuel 10:22). Was this an appropriate action? Why or why not?

### Question 4

How do you suppose the history of the nation of Israel would have been different if they had not insisted on having a king?

### Question 5

In what ways do we benefit when we discern the will of God for our lives and follow His leading?

## Take Home

In God’s infinite love and mercy, He continues to bless us when we stray into His permissive will rather than cling to His perfect will. How much greater our blessings are when we stay centred in His perfect will.