

The First King

TEXT: 1 Samuel 9:1-2; 10:17-26

KEY VERSE: For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another. — Psalm 75:6-7

This study shows clearly that God is vitally concerned about benefiting His people. When Israel persisted in their request for a king, God used circumstances to bring together the long-time prophet Samuel and a young man whose name was Saul. Despite Saul's impressive appearance, he demonstrated qualities of humility and obedience, two characteristics necessary to be a leader of God's people. If we possess these qualities, we will experience spiritual success and promotion from the Lord.

1. What position did Samuel occupy in addition to being a prophet to the people of Israel? How long did he occupy this position? See 1 Samuel 7:15-17.

2. Samuel was grieved that the Israelites had asked for a king. He felt as though he had been rejected, but, in 1 Samuel 8:7, God told Samuel this was not so. Who did God say the people had rejected, and why?

3. Throughout 1 Samuel 8, we read that Samuel had carefully followed God's instructions, pointing out to the Israelites the future oppression they would suffer under such kings who would require of them some of their sons and daughters and a portion of their wealth. Despite that, the people still rejected God's council. How does Isaiah 1:19-20 agree with Samuel's message to the people? What did God finally instruct Samuel to do? See 1 Samuel 8:22.

4. Circle the right answer:

Saul was of the tribe of . . . (1) Dan (2) Ephraim (3) Benjamin (4) Judah

He was . . . (1) little of stature (2) taller than others (3) a poor physical specimen

His father's name was . . . (1) Abiel (2) Zeror (3) Bechorath (4) Kish

Saul was . . . (1) proud (2) humble and obedient (3) disobedient

5. The extent of a family's livestock in Saul's day was a measure of its prosperity. How did Saul respond to his father's request to seek the lost donkeys? Was he thorough in his search? Why? See 1 Samuel 9:3-10, 20.

6. Do you think it was coincidental that Saul, in his search for the lost donkeys, came to Samuel at the end of his third day's search? Why or why not? See 1 Samuel 9:15-16.

7. Mark the following statements true or false:

(a) Saul had been anointed by Samuel prior to his coronation in 1 Samuel 10:24. See 1 Samuel 9:16; 10:1.

(b) Saul traveled with Samuel to the coronation. See 1 Samuel 10:21-22.

(c) God demonstrated to the Israelites the man that He had chosen to be king by directing the casting of lots (similar to drawing names). First, a tribe was chosen (Benjamin), then a family from that tribe (Matri), then a man from that family. See 1 Samuel 10:20-21.

(d) Saul immediately confirmed his kingdom by putting the political dissenters into prison. See 1 Samuel 10:27.

8. God has given Christians a system of success and promotion in His service. This is very different from the system used by most individuals, corporations, or by those seeking political office today. After studying 1 Peter 5:5-6 and this lesson, comment here on how you feel God's system differs from that of the world's.