

ISRAEL DEMANDED A KING

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: 1 SAMUEL 8-12



Desiring anything more than God, even if it's a good thing, is evil.

The STORY

Pray with children to start class.

Teaching Points for Class Discussion:

Israel rejected God and demanded another king – During the life of Samuel, God routed the Philistines and restored peace to Israel. The aging Samuel appointed his sons as judges, but they were corrupt. Frustrated with the judges' corruption, the people demanded that Samuel give them a king. Instead of asking Samuel to discipline his sons, the people demanded a change.

In response to their demand, Samuel gave them a lengthy warning about how much they stood to lose. After this warning, the true motive of the people was exposed. They wanted a king who would "go out before us and fight our battles". This request was a blatant rejection of God. God was the one who had gone before the people, despite their rebellion, and destroyed their enemies.

In spite of their sinful motives, God granted their request. The prophet Hosea shared this commentary from God, "I gave you a king in my anger and I took him away in my wrath" (Hosea 13:11).

Saul is chosen to be king – God gave the Israelites Saul, a man with a very impressive outward appearance. Saul was on a search for lost donkeys. But in reality, God was sending him to Samuel (1 Samuel 9:15-16). God chose a man who looked like a leader on the outside, but who in time would inwardly serve himself and bring suffering to Israel.

God routed the Ammonites and blessed Saul's kingship in spite of Israel's sin – As is the case throughout the story of Israel, God had a plan that was bigger than Israel's sin. In spite of Israel's sinful motives, God blessed Saul. God anointed Saul (1 Samuel 10:1), he touched his heart (1 Samuel 10:9), and he poured out His Spirit upon Saul (1 Samuel 11:6). God gave Saul victory over the Ammonites and sent His prophet to commission Saul (1 Samuel 11:14-15). God was making a promised transition. It was not the asking for a king that was sinful, but asking for wrong reasons. God had planned to give a king to Israel. He had announced it to Abraham (Genesis 17: 6, 16). God wanted to give them a king after God's own heart.

God rebuked Israel and warned them – In 1 Samuel 12, Samuel recounted the faithful deeds of the Lord as Israel's king. At the end he reminded them of their rejection of God for an earthly king, but gave them a promise. If they and their king followed God's commands it would go well with them, see 1 Samuel 12:14. If, however, they rebelled and did not obey the voice of the Lord, then God would be against them, see 1 Samuel 12:15. God rebuked Israel for rejecting Him and in His mercy warned them with a loud storm rather than bringing a judgment upon them. The people feared the Lord, and Samuel told them that in spite of their sin, the Lord would not forsake His people. He would not abandon them because of His great namesake and because it had pleased the Lord to make Israel a people for Himself, see 1 Samuel 12:22. This was an amazing revelation of the love of God toward them, showing once again that God's love is unfailing.

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Where Is Jesus?

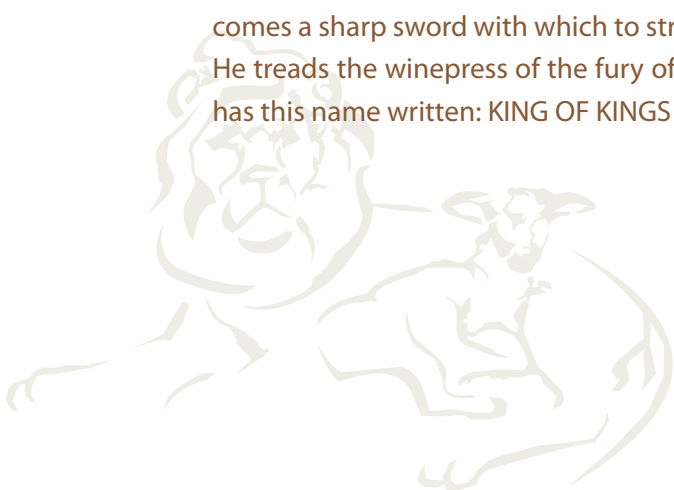
Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the Gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God's greater plan of redemption.

We are so blessed to have the greatest King of all, Jesus!

Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death - even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:6-11)

Israel requested a king to rule them like the rest of the nations had (1 Samuel 8:5). So, God answered their desires and gave them a man who is large in stature. Saul would make a great king from the world's perspective. But God has another kind of king in mind, a king after his own heart. God is not interested in outward appearance, but is interested in the heart. David was eventually selected by God. But ultimately God would send Jesus to be our eternal king. Jesus perfectly reflected the heart of God by becoming obedient to death, even death on the cross. In Philippians, God the Father promised that He Jesus would fill the highest place of all and that every knee shall bow before Him. Why? Because Jesus is the greatest King! It was always God's desire that His people be ruled, not by mere man, but by God. How wonderful that our king is God the Son, the man Christ Jesus.

He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. (Revelation 19:13-16)



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ON THE ROAD TO EMMANUS

Read the following Bible passage from the Old Testament. Use the following questions to help the children understand how this passage points to Christ in the New Testament.

Bible Passage: Malachi 3:1

Connecting the passage to Christ:

John the Baptist is the messenger who prepared the way for Jesus. Jesus is the messenger of the covenant, who comes into the temple. Mark identifies this messenger as John the Baptist and quotes Malachi 3:1 at the start of his gospel (see Mark 1:1-3).

Questions for reflection:

- How might this verse apply to the life of Jesus? (John the Baptist was a messenger to proclaim Christ's arrival. Jesus is the messenger of God sent to tell us about the new covenant.)
- Why do you think Mark started his Gospel by quoting the Old Testament? (Mark wanted his hearers to place the same importance upon the words he was writing as they did on the scriptures of the law and prophets. This was not a new story, just a continuation of God's story of old.)

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY

BE A DOER OF THE WORD

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.



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ACTIVITIES & OBJECT LESSONS

Use the following activities for practical application and discovery of this lesson. For the younger children, review the preschool questions and use them to help the children relate to the passage. For older children, ask them why they think this passage is in the Bible for us today. How is it supposed to affect our lives?

TAPE OUT A PATH

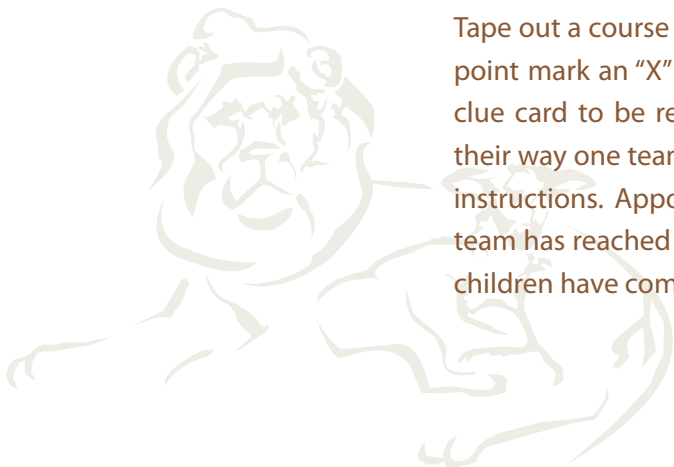
Supplies

- masking tape
- index cards

This exercise is designed to help the children see how God is at work behind the scenes to achieve His purpose. Write out the following on index cards:

1. I lost my donkeys, follow the tape path and search for them. Stop anytime you reach an "X" on the line and read the card for your next clue before you continue.
2. You have searched through the hill country of Ephraim, now continue to the land of Shalishah.
3. You have not found them in Shalishah so you had better look in Shaalim. Continue your search.
4. You did not find them in Shaalim, you should look in the land of Benjamin. Continue your search.
5. You did not find them in the land of Benjamin, look in the land of Zuph. Continue your search.
6. They were not in the land of Zuph, your father may become worried about you. You had better go look for the prophet who can tell you where they are. Continue your search.
7. You have just met a young woman who has told you to hurry, the prophet is in the city. Go find him there.
8. You have found Samuel. He greets you and tells you he knew you were coming. God sent you!

Tape out a course in your classroom with eight stopping points. At each stopping point mark an "X" with tape on the tape line and nearby post the corresponding clue card to be read. Divide the class up into teams of five and send them on their way one team at a time. Instruct them to stop at every "X" and get their next instructions. Appoint a reader in every group and send them off. Wait until the first team has reached the third station before sending the second team. When all the children have completed the course have them sit down.



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Read through the account of Saul's journey. Ask the class the following questions:

- What did Saul think he was traveling for? (Saul thought he was searching for lost donkeys.)
- What was the true purpose of Saul's journey? (God was sending Him to Samuel to be chosen and anointed as king over Israel.)
- How did God do that? (Ultimately, God's sovereign control over everything is too wonderful for us to understand. It is true that in everything we freely do, God works according to His plan. Read Proverbs 16:9 to the class).
- Giving Israel a king was a small part of God's bigger plan. What is God's big plan? (God's big plan is to use the introduction of kingship in Israel to bring the ultimate King, Jesus.)



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EMPTY THINGS DO NOT PROVIDE

Supplies

- three empty half-gallon ice cream containers
- two empty cans of whipped cream
- an empty bottle of chocolate topping
- ice cream scoop
- bowls
- spoons (You may want to bring a small treat for the class as their disappointment over this might be great.)

In preparation for class, empty the following cans and containers and wash them out: three half gallons of ice cream, two cans of whipped cream, one bottle of chocolate topping.

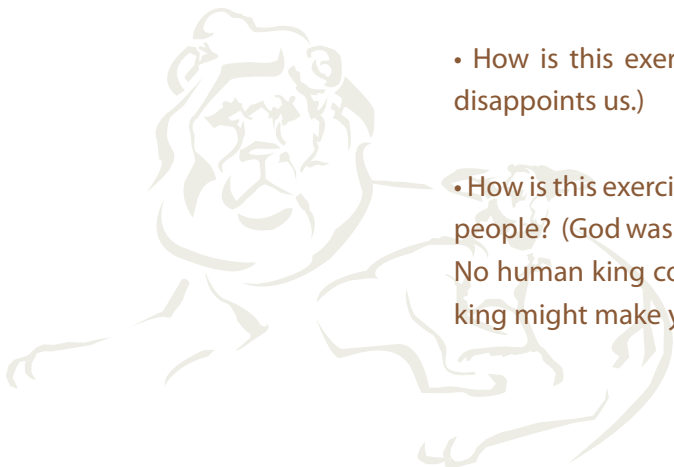
The object of this lesson is to show the children just how disappointing it is to trust in empty things over God, see 1 Samuel 12:21.

Place the ice cream containers and other items in a paper bag out of sight. After the class is seated, ask them if they like ice cream, and tell them you have a special surprise for them today. Pull out the containers and pretend they have some weight. Have one of the teachers start putting out bowls and spoons on the table. Ask the children which flavor they like the best. (Play this up, but never actually say they are getting any ice cream. This is a deception, but do not outright lie.)

Open up the first container and mime taking scoops of ice cream out and putting it in bowls. Mime adding chocolate syrup and whipped cream. (Make sure all the propellant is out of the whipped cream container or it will make a noise for your charade.) Pay no attention to the children's comments. Continue the exercise, only speed things up. Give each person a bowl and then tell them to enjoy their surprise.

Then ask the class the following questions:

- When you first saw me take out the ice cream containers, what did you think? (I thought we were going to have ice cream.)
- When you saw that the containers were empty how did it make you feel? (Disappointed.)
- How is this exercise like our sin? (Sin promises us pleasure but in the end it disappoints us.)
- How is this exercise like Israel asking God for a king so they would be like the other people? (God was their King. He delivered them time and again from their enemies. No human king could compare to God. Having a visible man in your midst to call king might make you feel good but you will be sorely disappointed when he rules



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PLANT A MOLE

Prior to class involve the help of one of the more mature students. Tell them to do the following. Raise their hand and tell you that the class is boring and you think another teacher could do a better job. Wait for the class to react a bit. Correct him by saying that you work hard to prepare the lessons and that another teacher may be worse than you are. Have the student respond by repeating his request that he would like a different teacher. Again, wait a minute for the class to realize the impact and then move on to the questions.

First, explain to the class that the whole exercise was pre-arranged and that you asked the student to confront you.

Then ask the class the following questions:

- What did you think when ____ confronted me? (I thought they were being disrespectful and was very surprised they would do that.)
- Did it surprise you even more that they did not change their attitude, but made their demand a second time? (Draw out the class a bit on this.)
- What do you think God thought of Israel's request to replace God as King with a man? (God thought it was an insult against Him.)
- Did this exercise help you to see just how sinful Israel was in asking for another King? (Yes, if it felt so bad to see a student disrespecting a teacher. How much more should we be affected when we read how Israel disrespected God.)

PRAYER

Pick several children to pray based on the day's scripture passages.

IN CLASS PROJECT

The first and second grade children can use the preschool coloring sheet and questions. Have the older children draw a picture of Samuel anointing Saul with oil.

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FOR OLDER GRADES

Read through 1 Samuel 12 and make a list of the things that we can apply to our lives with God today. Give the children about 15 minutes to read the chapter and write down the things that they feel apply to us today, and the corresponding verse. Have them explain why they chose their answers and how they think they apply to our lives with God today.

Here are a few examples:

1. If we fear the Lord and serve Him and obey His voice and not rebel against the commandment of the Lord it will go well with us, see 1 Samuel 12:14.

God's voice to us is His written Word. If we obey His Word it will go well with us.

2. If we do not obey the voice of the Lord but rebel against the commandment of the Lord then the hand of the Lord will be against us, see 1 Samuel 12:15.

If we don't follow God's Word then we will fall under God's judgment.

3. Do not turn aside from following the Lord, but serve Him with all your heart, see 1 Samuel 12:20.

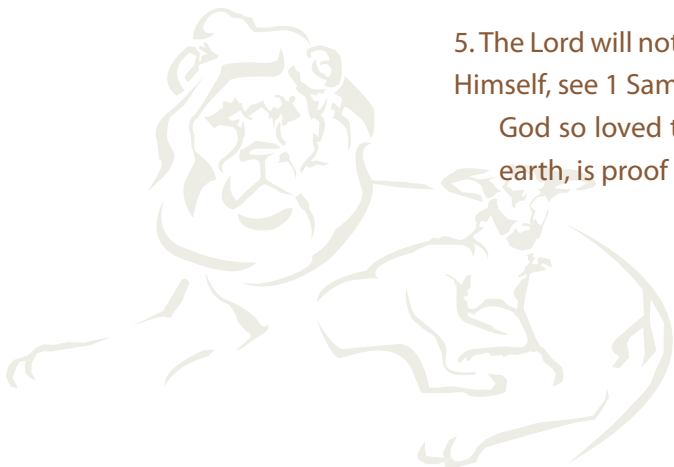
Jesus repeated the command to love God with all your heart in Matthew 22:37.

4. Do not turn aside from God to follow after empty things that cannot profit or deliver, see 1 Samuel 12:21.

Nothing can save us but Jesus. If we turn to anything else we will be lost.

5. The Lord will not forsake His people because of His name. He desires a people for Himself, see 1 Samuel 12:22.

God so loved the world that He gave His only Son. Jesus, and His mission on earth, is proof that God will have a people.



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A LITTLE BIT MORE

King – From the beginning God desired a king for Israel and a kingdom was promised and prophesied (see Genesis 17:6, Exodus 19:6, Numbers 24:17-19). Here though, the people wanted a king to fight their wars like the other pagan nations. In contrast God wanted a king who would lead the people in the ways of God, not in idolatry. David would be such a king and his life would point toward the King of Kings, Jesus.



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WORKSHEET

Read through 1 Samuel 12 and make a list of the things that we can apply to our lives with God today.

Lined writing area for student response.

