

Lesson 17: 1 Samuel 12 – 13:14

Samuel's Farewell Address and Saul's Unlawful Sacrifice

In the last lesson, Saul was chosen by lots to be the king of Israel. There were those who were doubtful that he could be an effective king, and he was reluctant to accept the title. Then the Ammonites threatened Israel. Saul, filled with the Spirit of the LORD, gathered the men of Israel and defeated the Ammonites. His leadership secured the respect of the people and they wanted to kill those who had opposed Saul as king, but Saul rejects the idea. Samuel gathers the people together at Gilgal for a "renewal" ceremony of Saul's kingship before the Lord, which included sacrificial peace offerings.

1. Read 1 Samuel 12: 1-5 and footnotes. Authority in Israel was about to change from Samuel the Judge to King Saul. Samuel addresses the people.

What point is Samuel trying to make in these verses?

How did the people respond?

Compare the qualities and actions described here about Samuel to Samuel's warnings about kings. (See 1 Samuel 8:10-18.)

2. Read 1 Samuel 12:6-12 and footnotes.

In verses 12:6-8, Samuel reminds the people of the leaders in history that God had chosen for Israel.

Reflection: What do these verses say about *God*?

Israel desired to have a king to solve the problems they faced with warring neighbors and oppression. Would having a king solve these problems for Israel?

What is needed to solve the problems of Israel? (Think of the cycle of events in Judges and verses 12:8 and 10.)

Who is Nahash? (See 1 Samuel 11)

What is Samuel implying by mentioning him here?

3. Read 1 Samuel 12:13-18 and footnotes. *Share any footnotes you find.*

What did Samuel say is necessary for Israel to do, now that the LORD has given them a king?

What sign does Samuel give the people to legitimize this prophecy? (12:13-18)

4. Read 1 Samuel 12:18b-25 and footnotes.

How do the people react to Samuel's words and sign?

What does Samuel say about the LORD in these verses?

Does Samuel intend to change or discontinue his activities as priest, prophet, and judge in the community?

What comments does Samuel make about idols and/or "other gods"?

5. One of the oldest prayers in the Hebrew Bible is the *Shema*. Read the beginning verses of this prayer, that is based on verses from Deuteronomy 6:4-9 below:

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Blessed is the name of His glorious kingdom for ever and ever. ⁵ Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. ⁶ These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. ⁷ Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. ⁸ Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. ⁹ Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

How are Samuel's instructions to Israel in 1 Samuel 12:19-25 similar to this prayer?

6. Read 1 Samuel 13:1-14 and footnotes. Share any footnotes that are interesting.

Who is Saul's son?

How large is the army of the Philistines? See also 13:15-16.

How did the Israelites react to the size of the Philistine's army? (13:6-7)

Describe the sin of Saul in 13:8-10.

Why did he do this?