

=KINGS OF THE BIBLE=

Lesson 1

King Saul

AIM: to teach my pupils the tragedy in the life of this great king.

POINT OF CONTACT: The Bible says that King Saul was head and shoulders above all the people. Because of this, have the class stand up, and you choose the biggest member of the class. Let that pupil be King Saul. Especially would this be good if there is someone exceptionally tall in the class. You might even show how much bigger “head and shoulders above the rest of the people” would be. In other words, he would be the biggest fellow in the kingdom.

INTRODUCTION: Our new series of lessons is about kings of the Bible. The Jews began to clamor for a king. The reason they wanted such a king was because the other nations had kings. This was their slogan: “Everybody else has a king; we want a king.” The fact that everybody else is doing something certainly does not warrant our doing the same thing. The fact that everybody else has something does not warrant our wanting the same thing. Let us notice the rise and fall of King Saul.

- I. KING SAUL WAS A BIG MAN. See I Samuel 9:2. He was the outstanding young man of his day.
- II. HE WAS A GOOD MAN. Again, read I Samuel 9:2. In fact, he was probably the best man of his nation.
- III. HE WAS CHOSEN TO BE KING. Notice I Samuel 9:17. What an honor this was! Along with authority, however, comes responsibility. The extent of one's authority certainly makes him more responsible. The more a person grows in grace, the more responsible he is. The more a person grows, the more precarious is the fall. The longer the fall, the more people who will see the fall, and the more tragic is the fall. If you have grown to a state of influence, or if you have grown in grace to be considered a good Christian by some, then be careful. The fall is then more dangerous, more deadly, and more influential.
- IV. SAUL WAS HUMBLE. Read I Samuel 9:21. What a rare combination was his! He was big—the biggest man in the kingdom. He was good—the best man in the kingdom; and yet, he was humble. Humility is certainly a characteristic that every person should possess.
- V. SAUL BECAME DISOBEDIENT. See I Samuel 15:3, 9, 11. This is a tragic story! Saul had been commanded to destroy everything when the victory was his. However, he held out the best sheep and oxen for himself. He did this, I think, for a worthy cause. He was going to use them, maybe, for sacrifices. Nevertheless, he was disobedient. Disobedience is the mother sin of many, many other sins.
- VI. THIS SIN LED TO DECEIT AND LYING. This is found in I Samuel 15:13. Saul tried to cover his sin. This is most always the case. The thing to do when one is found in sin is to confess it, forsake it, ask forgiveness, and start over again; but as so often is the case when one is found in sin, he tries to deceive and to lie concerning it. (Teacher, stress the importance of telling the truth and the danger of lying.)
- VII. HIS SIN WAS FOUND OUT. Read I Samuel 15:14. This is an interesting and rather amusing incident, I think. He tried to hide the sheep; he couldn't. He tried to hide the oxen; he couldn't. Their bleating and the lowing revealed his sin. Sin will be found out. We may hide it for a while, but in the end, it will be found out. Such was the case with Saul; such is the case with any person. Sin will find us out.
- VIII. SAUL BECAME PROUD. See I Samuel 15:17. You will notice that God could use Saul when he was little in his own eyes. When he got big in his own eyes, he was of no use to God or God's work. A person who is little in his own eyes is often big in God's eyes. A person who is big in his own eyes is always little in God's eyes. Pride is one of the things that God hates the most and one of the things that causes the most sin.

- IX. SAUL WORSHIPPED WITHOUT BEING OBEDIENT. Read I Samuel 15:22. Do not get the idea in all this that Saul had lost his faith in God. He still wanted to worship God. In fact, that perhaps was the purpose of his withholding the sheep and oxen. God plainly says, however, that worship without obedience is not acceptable. “Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams,” so says the Scripture in I Samuel 15:22c. Obeying God is better than worshipping God, for in obeying God one does worship God. The first time the word “worship” is mentioned in the Old Testament it concerns Abraham's offering of Isaac. When Abraham offered Isaac, he worshipped. How did he worship? He worshipped when he obeyed God. God asked for his son; Abraham offered his son. This is worship. We have the idea that some kind of an ethereal, aesthetic atmosphere in a dark, spooky room with a quiet, sober countenance is worship. Nothing could be further from the truth. Worship is wrapped up in obedience. There can be no worship unless there is obedience. People who come to church and rob God of the tithe and then say they worship are deceiving themselves, but they are not deceiving God.
- X. DISOBEDIENCE IS IDOLATRY. Carefully read I Samuel 15:23. Here is a very interesting fact: God had said, “Destroy everything.” Saul thought he knew more than God; hence, he kept back the best of the animals. God said that was idolatry. Was Saul worshipping some idol made with hands? Was he worshipping an idol of wood or gold or silver or stone? No, Saul was worshipping another idol—his own mind, his own wisdom, his own conceit. His own knowledge was his idol. When a person disobeys God, he becomes his own idol and he becomes guilty of idolatry. He takes his own judgment and his own will over God's, and he thinks he knows more than God about what will do him good.
- XI. SAUL WAS GUILTY OF THE FEAR OF MAN. Notice I Samuel 15:24. What a tragedy this is! The fear of man is always associated with backsliding. We become more interested in what men think than what God thinks. We fear men more than God. We want to please men more than God. Such was the case with Saul.
- XII. SAUL BECAME EXTREMELY JEALOUS. See I Samuel 18:6-8. In the intervening chapters, David had risen to a place of prominence. He had killed Goliath. Now Saul it was who should have fought Goliath. He was the biggest of Israel. Yet, he left it to little David to fight Goliath. David was victorious over Goliath with the use of the slingshot and the five stones, and the ladies started singing and dancing in the streets. As they sang and danced, the words they used were, “Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.” This angered Saul! Was not he the king of Israel? Had not Saul been the object of the ladies' worship? Had not he been their idol? Had not he been their leader? Now David was getting more acclaim than he. Hence, Saul became jealous. Jealousy is a deadly, green-eyed monster that has destroyed many a person, many a home, many a church, many a marriage, many a friendship, and many a life!