

1 SAMUEL WEEK FIVE – “Saul’s Failure”

January 14, 2021

It was Israel’s desire to be like other kingdoms coupled with fear of their enemies that led them to make the transition from a tribal confederacy to a monarchy. Samuel was tasked to find a king and Saul seemed to be the perfect candidate. He was the epitome of what Israel wanted in a king. But since they were a new nation, no one knew what a “good king” looked like or how one was to behave. Saul certainly looked good on paper (well, papyrus or cuneiform tablets) and fit the bill at least physically speaking. He just didn’t have the character that was needed. This section is where we discover Saul’s deficits which include (but are not limited to) dishonesty, a prideful arrogance, and a lack of integrity. Israel and Saul’s first test would be the Ammonites, raiders from the east who were wanting to size up this new potential enemy.

Questions for 1 Samuel 11-15

1. What sort of relationship does Nahash the Amonite want to have with Israel? How do his diplomacy skills rate? Do the conditions of his proposed treaty seem unrealistic? How did the Amonites, as enemies of Israel, measure up to the Philistines?
2. How does Saul seem to be adjusting to his role as King of Israel? How has his life seemed to change or not change? How do Saul’s diplomacy skills rate?
3. How did the Amonites hold up against Israel? Were they dealt with in a way that seemed to be pleasing to God?
4. What role does Samuel play in this conflict with the Amonites? Does his role change once it is over?
5. What reason did Samuel give to Israel for “resigning from King Saul’s cabinet?” What was his “I told you so” moment when he addressed Israel?
6. What kind of King did Samuel say that the people of Israel *really* needed?

7. What was Samuel's message to Saul concerning the future of his reign in Israel?
8. After Samuel's resignation, what were some of Saul's good and bad moments as King? What did he do right? What did he do wrong?
9. What re-kindles the conflict with the Philistines again?
10. How does Saul's son Jonathan fit into the big picture?
11. What role does the ark of the covenant play in the conflict with the Philistines? How is it any different than how it was used before?
12. What evidence can you cite *this week* that Saul is arrogant, impulsive, dishonest, and lacking in integrity?
13. What marks the return of Samuel? What does he have to say about Saul, and how does Saul react?
14. Do the words of Samuel in 15:22-23 sound familiar? What is the message of this prophetic word? To whom does it apply?
15. What leads Saul to admit his failure? How does it change the way he approaches his responsibilities as King? How does Saul feel about Samuel's announcement that God will be raising up a new king to replace him?