



CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

NOVEMBER 2019

Scripture Story: 1 Samuel 8–14.

Commentary: *Patriarchs and Prophets* (or *Beginning of the End*), chapters 59 and 60.

trading leaders



Photo by Audrey Goforth

flashlight

"When the Israelites first settled in Canaan they acknowledged the principles of the theocracy, and the nation prospered under the rule of Joshua. . . . Gradually they lost their reverence for God and ceased to prize the honor of being His chosen people. Attracted by the pomp and display of heathen monarchs, they tired of their own simplicity. Jealousy and envy sprang up between the tribes. . . . As they departed from obedience to God's law, they desired to be freed from the rule of their divine Sovereign; and thus the demand for a monarchy became widespread throughout Israel" (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 603).

keytexts

"But the people refused to listen to Samuel. 'No!' they said. 'We want a king over us. Then we will be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles.' "

(1 Samuel 8:19, 20, NIV)

"The LORD sends poverty and wealth; he humbles and he exalts."

(1 Samuel 2:7, NIV)

what do you think?

Would you rather depend on how God leads you or on how human culture leads you? Look at these scenarios and write down what God has planned as opposed to what man has planned:

- Tempted to take revenge on someone who has wronged you:

God's plan _____

Man's plan _____

- Tempted to gossip:

God's plan _____

Man's plan _____

- Tempted to steal something you want but cannot afford:

God's plan _____

Man's plan _____

did you know?

The word "theocracy" comes from the Greek *theokratia*, which is by definition a government directly guided by God. This was the governmental structure God had set up and which was actually working well in Israel. However, the people wanted to be like their neighboring countries and have a king they could call their own. Sounds as if they might have given in to some peer pressure, doesn't it?

INTO THE STORY

"Then Samuel took a flask of olive oil and poured it on Saul's head and kissed him, saying, 'Has not the LORD anointed you ruler over his inheritance? When you leave me today . . . three men going up to worship God at Bethel will meet you there. One will be carrying three young goats, another three loaves of bread, and another a skin of wine. They will greet you and offer you two loaves of bread, which you will accept from them.

" 'After that you will go to Gibeah of God, where there is a Philistine outpost. As you approach the town, you will meet a procession of prophets coming down from the high place with lyres, timbrels, pipes and harps being played before them, and they will be prophesying.

The Spirit of the LORD will come powerfully upon you, and you will prophesy with them; and you

will be changed into a different person. Once these signs are fulfilled, do whatever your hand finds to do, for God is with you.' . . .

"As Saul turned to leave Samuel, God changed Saul's heart, and all these signs were fulfilled that day. . . .

"Samuel summoned the people of Israel to the LORD at Mizpah and said to them, 'This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: "I brought Israel up out of Egypt, and I delivered you from the power of Egypt and all the kingdoms that oppressed you." But you have now rejected your God, who saves you out of all your disasters and calamities. And you have said, "No, appoint a king over us." So now present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes and clans.'

"When Samuel had all Israel come forward by tribes, the tribe of Benjamin was taken by lot. Then he brought forward the tribe of Benjamin, clan by clan, and Matri's clan was taken. Finally Saul son of Kish was taken. But when they looked for him, he was not to be found. So they inquired further of the LORD, 'Has the man come here yet?'

"And the LORD said, 'Yes, he has hidden himself among the supplies.'

"They ran and brought him out, and as he stood among the people he was a head taller than any of the others.

"Samuel said to all the people, 'Do you see the man the LORD has chosen? There is no one like him among all the people.'

"Then the people shouted, 'Long live the king!'"

(1 Samuel 10:1-9, 17-24, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

What did you think of the introduction speech that Samuel gave to the people before introducing Saul? (verses 17-19) Would you like to be introduced that way?

What prompted the people of Israel to want a human king?

How do you think choosing to be ruled by a human king as opposed to by God was a bad idea for the Israelites?

What is the background of Samuel's sons (1 Samuel 8)? How do you think these activities might have played into the people's desire for a king?

What themes do you see displayed in this reading?

Why was Samuel so specific in the instructions that he gave to Saul?

In what ways do you think Saul had what it took to lead a group of people? In what ways didn't he?

punch lines

"If it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully" (**Romans 12:8, NIV**).

"When the angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon, he said, 'The LORD is with you, mighty warrior' " (**Judges 6:12, NIV**).

"He chose capable men from all Israel and made them leaders of the people, officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens" (**Exodus 18:25, NIV**).

"The people rejoiced at the willing response of their leaders, for they had given freely and wholeheartedly to the LORD. David the king also rejoiced greatly" (**1 Chronicles 29:9, NIV**).

further insight

"The higher the position a man occupies, the greater the responsibility that he has to bear, the wider will be the influence that he exerts and the greater his need of dependence on God. Ever should he remember that with the call to work comes the call to walk circum-spectly before his fellow men. He is to stand before God in the attitude of a learner. Position does not give holiness of character. It is by honoring God and obeying His commands that a man is made truly great."—Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*,

pp. 30, 31.

connectingtolife

Sabbath

Read James 4:7.

Take time to do the exercise in the *What Do You Think?* section of the lesson. Do you think it would be more difficult to do what people would have you do or what God would have you do? It seems that we often do things to impress other people, and those things are rarely what God asks us to do. Even the children of Israel tried to impress their neighbors by obtaining a human king, when they already had the Creator of the universe as their leader. Seems crazy, doesn't it?

What can you do to counteract these influences in your life?

Sunday

Read 2 Corinthians 5:17.

Read *Into the Story* about how Saul became the king of Israel. Do the questions in *Out of the Story*. What do you think was God's attitude as reflected through His prophet Samuel? Do you think it was happy, sad, or mad? Spend some time writing the emotions you would feel if you were leading a group of people who just couldn't seem to listen to you and take you seriously.

The Scripture story says that God's Spirit changed Saul into a different person. How has God's Spirit changed you? In what ways do you still need His Spirit to work in your life?

Monday

Read 1 Samuel 2:7 and 8:19, 20.

Read the *Key Text* and see how the people reacted to having a king. Why do you think they were excited to have a human king when they had the King of the universe as their leader? Do you think they understood what God had been doing through Samuel for all this time? Do you think they were happy that God listened to their desire for a king? Explain.

Tuesday

Read Proverbs 14:30.

The *Flashlight* section gives us some insights from inspired commentary on the texts we have been studying. Ellen White uses a few words that are interesting; "jealousy" and "envy" are the first two that jump off the page. Do these words have any meaning in your life? Have you ever asked for things out of jealousy and/or envy? Have they ever been the motivating factor in purchasing something, saying something, or looking or acting a certain way? It is a good time to ponder what motivates us to do the things we do. Usually, a negative outcome occurs when we do something out of jealousy and envy.

Wednesday

The quotes from the *Punch Lines and Other Eyes* deal specifically with leadership. You may want to read 1 Samuel 19 to see what kind of leader Saul became. He did not do a great job. The quotes show us some qualities of a good leader. It is safe to say that a good leader acts in the best interest of the group he or she is leading. Saul had a pretty rough time with that approach to leadership during his tenure as king of Israel. Think about how you would be if you were king. Would you be like Samuel and follow God's leading? Would you be like Saul? How about David or Solomon?

Often we are critical of those in charge, but we rarely think about what we would do given a certain situation. List the qualities you have that would make you a good king or queen. If you are really brave, give your list to someone else to verify that you are who you think you are.

Thursday

If you have the book or a computer available, read chapter 60 of *Patriarchs and Prophets*. (Or listen to it on www.cornerstoneconnections.net.) What you will see are the many mistakes and character flaws that were exhibited by Saul during his reign. In his pride he ordered his son Jonathan to be put

to death. You should have already thought about those characteristics you have that would make you a great leader; now take some time to think about those aspects of your character that are not so great. What can you do to eliminate those character traits so that you might be more effectively used by God and not fall into the traps that Saul found himself trying to muddle through?

Friday

Read Romans 12:9-13.

You have seen what the people asked God to do—give them a king. You have seen the kind of king Saul turned out to be—a weak one. You may have even looked inside yourself to see what kind of leader you might be. Now take a minute to think about what type of people you would like to lead and how you might be able to do that. The world and the church are in need of thoughtful leaders, whether it be in business, politics, sports, music, entertainment, academics, or even working at the neighborhood fast-food restaurant. What leadership role do you think God might have for you?

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this week's reading*

Patriarchs and Prophets (or *Beginning of the End*), chapters 59 and 60.

**Beginning of the End* is a special adaptation of *Patriarchs and Prophets*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#URihF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.