

April 23, 2025

CONFIRMATION LESSON

Kings

Last class we learned about the judges of Israel, who were leaders raised up by God to guide and protect the people in times of trouble.

Unfortunately, the people were not satisfied with the judges. They begged to have a king rule them, like the other nations around them.

Read **1 Samuel 8:4-9** in your Bible and discuss:

- What emotions are the elders feeling? (Possibilities: frustrated that Samuel's sons are not behaving appropriately, perhaps afraid that their nation will look weak compared to neighbors that have kings.)
- What do the elders want? (A king.)
- What is the Lord's response? (Possibilities: disappointment. The people aren't really rejecting Samuel's leadership, they are rejecting God's leadership because God is supposed to be the only king they answer to.)

Read **1 Samuel 8:10-18** in your Bible and discuss:

- What is Samuel's warning to the people about what will happen if they have a king?
 - Their children will be drafted into the military.
 - The king will favor his peers and rich people.
 - The people's land and work will enrich the king without benefiting the people.
 - You will live to regret it, but God will not intervene to change what you asked for.

Read **1 Samuel 8:19-22** in your Bible and discuss:

- Do the people listen to Samuel's warning? (No.)
- What is the Lord's response? (To give them what they ask for.)

The Israelites wanted to be like everyone else. Have you ever wanted to change yourself in order to fit in? What did that feel like? How did it go?

Have you ever thought you really wanted something, only to find out it wasn't what you expected?

- A small example could be picking the wrong color to paint your bedroom. A bigger example could be working really hard all through high school to get into a specific college and then finding out you don't like it there once the school year starts.

- Bad or difficult things that happen after a decision aren't necessarily punishments, but they are consequences that help us learn.

A judge named Samuel picks a man named Saul to be the first king of Israel.

It only takes three generations of kings for the nation of Israel to face so much conflict that it splits into two. Open the other pdf on the church website to see the roller coaster that happens during the reigns of King Saul, King David, and King Solomon.

- Read 1 Samuel 9. Why do you think Samuel chose Saul to be king? Read 1 Samuel 13:13-14. What happened to Saul?
- Read 1 Samuel 16:8-13 to learn how David becomes king. What makes him a surprising choice? Read 2 Samuel 11:2-5. In what ways did David also fail to be a good leader?
- Read 1 Kings 11:1-5 to learn about the next king, King Solomon. In what ways did Solomon also fail to be a good leader?

Look at the image in the bottom right of the handout. Some nations still have kings today, but many don't. What are other names we use for leaders of countries or important organizations? (Possible answers: prime minister, pope, CEO, president, principal, etc.)

- What are the pros and cons of different titles and systems?
- Are any of them perfect? Are some better than others?
- What can we learn about good leadership and bad leadership from the stories of these kings in the Bible?

Would it be easier if God did not give us the freedom to make bad choices? Would you like that better? Why or why not?

There is one queen of Israel mentioned in the Bible! You can read about Queen Athaliah in 2 Chronicles chapters 22 and 23.

There were only three kings before the kingdom split, but there were hundreds that followed. Watch this video for an overview of the rest of the kings:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bVFW3wbi9pk>

Have you ever heard the song "Hallelujah?" It was originally written by Leonard Cohen, but it's been covered by many people, famously in the first Shrek movie and also by Pentatonix. Listen to it here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LRP8d7hhpoQ>

Which biblical king does this song tell the story of? Is it accurate to what we read in the Bible? If you could add a verse to the song, what would you have it say?