

5. **Saul's is Made King and Samuel Warns the Nation** (1 Samuel 10:17–12:25)

2.3 **Saul Is Chosen King by Lot** (1 Samuel 10:17–27)

- “Ironically, the site chosen for the installation of Saul the Benjamite as king was also the site where Israel had previously covenanted to exterminate the tribe of Benjamin (cf. Judg 20:1–11).”
[Robert D. Bergen, 1, 2 Samuel, 131]
- Samuel begins with a **Prophetic** address - warning the people of their rejection of the LORD God.
- 10:20 - the use of **Lots** emphasizes the LORD's providential choice of king. This also calls back to the sin of **Achan** in Joshua 7:16-18.
- 10:22 - “hidden among the baggage” - Saul's reticence to take his responsibility as King does not bode well for the days ahead.
- 10:25- “the rights and duties of kingship” - see Deuteronomy 17:14-20 (see page 3)

2.4 **Saul Defeats the Ammonites and Is Proclaimed King** (1 Samuel 11:1–15)

- Saul's first engagement as King is presented in a very positive light.

2.4.1 **Nahash lays siege to Jabesh-gilead (11:1-4)**

- “Nahash” means “serpent/snake”
- The **Ammonites** were **descendants of Lot** through his younger daughter and her son Ben-ammi forming one of Israel's closest yet most persistent neighbors and rivals east of the Jordan (Genesis 19:38; Deuteronomy 2:19). Though related by blood, they often stood in opposition to Israel, being excluded from the assembly because they refused aid during the wilderness journey (Deuteronomy 23:3–4). During the time of the Judges, the Ammonites oppressed Israel east of the Jordan and joined forces against the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and

Ephraim until Jephthah defeated them (Judges 10–11). In the early monarchy, Nahash king of the Ammonites besieged Jabesh-gilead until Saul's army delivered the city, marking Saul's first major victory (1 Samuel 11). Later, **during David's reign**, the Ammonites dishonored his ambassadors, provoking war that led to Joab's siege of Rabbah and David's eventual conquest of their capital (2 Samuel 10–12). Throughout Israel's history, the Ammonites remained emblematic of both kinship betrayed and enmity born from pride and distrust.

2.4.2 **Saul leads Israel to victory (11:5-11)**

- 11:6 - "the Spirit of God..." - there may be a subtle difference implied here by the use of "the Spirit of God," not "the Spirit of YHWH/the LORD." In Genesis to 2 Kings the only other person said to have "the Spirit of God" come over him is Balaam, a non-Israelite (Num 24:2) who incited Israel to act rebelliously (Num 31:16).
- 11:7 - "Saul and Samuel" - for now, they are united.
- 11:8 - **Israel and Judah** - Separating the counts suggest that the division first mentioned in Joshua was growing (Josh 11:21). It also portends the difficulties during David's rise (2 Sam 2:10–11) that ultimately split the nation (1 Kgs 12:19–20).

2.4.3 **Saul is installed as King (11:12-15)**

- 11:13, 10:27 - Saul is gracious toward his opponents
- 11:15 - "**peace/fellowship offerings**" (Leviticus 7:11–21) were voluntary sacrifices given in order to 1) give thanks for the LORD's unsought goodness and generosity, 2) complete the fulfillment of a vow (Hannah at the dedication of Samuel), 3) give thanks to the LORD for deliverance in a time of great need. Most sacrifices were not eaten by the people, but *the peace offering was meant to be eaten* and act celebrating the LORD's good provision.

- **Samuel Yields Leadership to Saul but Warns the People (1 Samuel 12:1–25)**

“On the whole, the chapter represents one of the theological climaxes of the Former Prophets, and takes its rightful place alongside such similarly toned sections as Joshua 24, Judges 2, 1 Kings 8, and 2 Kings 17.”
[Robert D. Bergen, 1, 2 Samuel, 140]

2.4.4 **Samuel gets witness of his faithfulness (12:1-5)**

2.4.5 **Samuel recalls the LORD’s acts of deliverance (12:6-11)**

- **Two Major points** in this section: 1) it is the LORD alone who rescues His people and 2) this rescue comes in response to prayer and repentance.
- 12:9 - Hazor (North), Philistia (Southwest) and Moab (East) figuratively represent ALL the enemies that surround Israel.

2.4.6 **Samuel confronts the people with their evil in asking for a king but exhorts them to be faithful (12:12-15)**

2.4.7 **The LORD sends thunder and rain on the wheat harvest as a sign (12:16-18)**

- 12:17 - This storm would have damaged the ripe grain and reduced the produce of the harvest.
- **“Why were the Israelites so moved by this event?** Because they understood this disruption of the God-ordained pattern for the natural world to mirror Israel’s disruption of the God-ordained pattern of relationship that was to exist between the nation and the Lord. As Israel moved out of her proper relational orbit with the Lord, the Lord had ordained that nature would move out of its proper orbit with the people (cf. Lev 26:19–22; Deut 28:18, 22–24). The present demonstration terrified the Israelites, for they understood it to be a precursor of the more severe disturbances of nature prescribed in the Torah.” [Robert D. Bergen, 1, 2 Samuel, 14]

2.4.8 **The people confess their sin and ask for Samuel to intercede (12:19-25)**

- It should be noted that the request for a King was not sinful in itself since the LORD had already provided instruction on the matter in the Torah (see Gen 17:6; Deut 17:14–20). This problem is one of **motivation** and **desire**: the people wanted a human “savior” like the other nations. This is a futile and foolish request in light of all that the LORD had already done to deliver Israel.
- 12:21 - “empty things” - idols, false gods
- 12:22 - “**for the sake of His Great Name ...**” Throughout the Hebrew Scriptures, the LORD makes it clear that His saving work is rooted in His jealousy for His reputation, not the “worthiness” of His people!!! (see Pss 25:11; 79:9; 106:8; 143:11; Isa 48:9; Jer 14:7, 21; Ezek 20:9, 22; Dan 9:19) Because He acts for the sake of Himself - His glory and honor - He can be trusted to be faithful to His Word.
- 12:23 - like **Moses** before, Samuel bore the responsibility of 1) praying/interceding for the people and, 2) instructing them. (see Deut 24:8; 33:10)
- 12:24 - Fear, Serve, Consider (Remember, Ponder)
- 12:25 - “both you and your king...” Samuel’s final warning emphasizes the reality that Israel’s greatest threat was not external but **internal**. *Their failure to be completely devoted to the LORD and do what is pleasing to Him would bring them to ruin; and no human king would be able to bring deliverance from that judgment.*