

The Bigger Story – Journey

Week Four: Freedom

Theme

“I am who I am” in Hebrew is *ehyeh asher ehyeh*. “I AM” is the ultimate statement of self-sufficiency, self-existence and presence. God’s existence is not contingent upon anyone else. His plans are not contingent upon any circumstances. He promises that He will be what He will be... He will be the eternally constant God. He stands, ever-present and unchangeable, completely sufficient in Himself to do what He wills to do and to accomplish what He wills to accomplish (see Revelations 1:8).

We have freedom when we recognize His power, authority and control.

Word Choice

Moses is the principal author of the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible.

Horeb” means “desert” or “desolation,” giving an idea of the terrain.

The Hebrew word used to describe the bush comes from the word “to stick or to prick,” meaning a thorn-bush or bramble. Here we can be reminded of the **Cross**: where Jesus, crowned with thorns, endured the fires of judgment and yet was not consumed by them.

Facts & Figures

God did not turn His attention to Israel because they were such good people, but because of the covenant He made with them. He gives His love and attention to us on the same basis: the covenant relationship we have with God through Jesus. This is the first time in God is described as “Holy” in the Bible (Exodus 3:5) Fire is a picture of purifying and refining. God revealed Himself to Moses by declaring His relationship to the patriarchs, the covenant. His covenant with Israel was still valid. This wasn’t a “new God” meeting Moses, but the same God that dealt with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

God’s name is so sacred to the Jews today will not speak his name: they simply call God, “Adonay” (Lord) or “Ha Shem” (the Name). They also will hyphenate the English spelling of the name G-d.

The proper name of God is “Yahweh” or the Anglicized version is “Jehovah”. In the Old Testament, whenever you see the word LORD in all capital letters, the Hebrew word is “Yahweh” and whenever you see Lord, it is “Adonay”.

Guiding Verses

“And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. God saw the people of Israel—and God knew.”
Exodus 2:24-25

God said to Moses, “I am who I am.” And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel: ‘I am has sent me to you.’”
Exodus 3:14

Week’s Readings

Genesis 48-49, Matthew 14

Genesis 50, Ex 1-3, Matt 15

Exodus 4-5, Matt 16

Exodus 6-8, Matt 17

Exodus 9-10

Exodus 11-12, Matt 18

Exodus 2:24-3:17, Psalm 106:1-12, 2 Peter 1:1-11, John 8:51-59

For 40 years, Moses lived as a shepherd in the desert of Midian without even have a flock of sheep to call his own (they belonged to his father-in-law). He was 80 years old, a runaway who was “slow of speech and tongue” (Exodus 4:10)

Moses lived to be 120 years old. His life can be divided into three sections of 40 years each.

In the first 40 years of his life he lived in Pharaoh’s palace, enjoying all of the privileges of a child of the leader of the nation (Acts 7:23-29).

The second 40 years was a time of running and refining for Moses. He ran from Pharaoh and fled Egypt after he killed an Egyptian who was fighting with a Hebrew man. Moses went to the desert of Midian, where he would find a wife and have two sons. In Midian, Moses had an encounter with God and the burning bush.

In the last 40 years of his life, he returned to Egypt and was used by God to lead the 3 million Hebrew slaves out of bondage back to the Promised Land of Israel.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16

Part 2 - Journey: Week Five's Readings - Law

Exodus 13-15 Exodus 16-17 Exodus 18-20 Exodus 21-23 Exodus 24-25 Exodus 26-28
Matt 19 Matt 20 Matt 21

Exodus 20:1-17, Psalm 111, Romans 7:12-25, John 15:1-12

Specific Questions for This Week

God hears the cries of the people and remembers them (the idea of turning His active attention to them). **Discuss** what this says about God and what it means to children of God.

Do you lack confidence that the Lord has promised to be with you when he's called you?

Read and discuss Matthew 10:19-20, 2 Corinthians 4:7 and 1 Corinthians 2:4-5.

"When the Lord saw that he turned aside to look" God didn't speak to Moses until He had Moses' attention. **How can we give God's Word our attention? How can we yield to "I AM"?**

Compare and contrast Moses with Abraham. Specific discussion points may include: God's timing and/or God's use of ordinary men to do extraordinary things. God will take the little we have and do powerful things...we just need to give him what we have and watch he'll do. **How have you (can you) live this way?**

Compare both men to **Jesus**, who was extraordinary and always acted in the perfect will of the Father and in His time (John 7:2-9, 11:5-6).

Discuss the holiness of God (see 1 Cor. 1:30 and 2 Cor. 5:21)

What skills and abilities do you have that you can give God? (Consider 2 Corinthians 5:20 and Romans 10:14-15). **What excuses do we give God** (Exodus 4:13)? **What is the appropriate response?** **Share** any experience in which you have heard God calling or sending you.

How can you discern if you are in the will and timing of God?

- Look up instead of around (Exodus 2:12)...ask God!
- There should be peace, not guilt (Genesis 3:8, John 18:20)
- There should be no fear (Exodus 2:14, 2 Timothy 1:7, Colossians 3:15)

Remember God will be with you (Exodus 3:12, Matthew 10:19-20, 1 Cor. 2:4-5, 1 Cor. 4:7)

- Not "Who am I" but "Who is God: it is only about us to the degree that our lives should properly represent Christ so we might be a good example of him in the world.

God's first words to Moses called him by name, even though Moses was a forgotten shepherd in the desert, God knew who he was, and Moses was important to God. **How does God's personal love for His people impact you? Reveal about God?**

Observational Questions

What does it say?
Why was it written?
Who is the audience?
Who is the author?

What is the historic context of the passages?
How does it fit within Scripture as a whole?

Interpretation Questions

What does it mean?
What does it tell me about God?
Jesus? The Holy Spirit? About humanity?
How does it reveal God's glory?
The Gospel message?
Did other verses come to mind?
What questions do I have about what I read?

SPECK

Is there a **sin** to avoid?
A **promise** to claim?
An **example** to follow
A **command** to obey?

How does this passage increase my **knowledge** of Jesus?

Significance Questions

Why does this matter?
What is the essence of what I have read and learned?
How would I explain this to others?
How can I implement what I have learned into my life?

ACTS Prayer

Adoration (praise) Confession Thanksgiving Supplication (requests)

The Bigger Story – Journey

Week Five: Law

Theme

The Ten Commandments were not invented at Mount Sinai but clearly lay out God’s law as it was written in the heart of man since the time of Adam.

The Ten Commandments explain what sin is (Romans 7:7) and exposes sin in us (Romans 3:20, James 2:10).

The Ten Commandments express our need for Jesus our Savior (Galatians 3:24-25!) and we are inspired by God’s love and empowered and equipped by His spirit!

Guiding Verses

And God spoke all these words, saying, “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. “You shall have no other gods before me...” Exodus 20:1-3

“If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love...” John 15:10

Specific Questions for This Week

Do you think most Christians have a favorable or unfavorable view of the Ten Commandments? Non-Christians?

Do people consider the Ten Commandments as being too restrictive? Out of touch with the times?

How do they show God’s love for His people? Where do you see Jesus (Romans 8:2-3)?

Do the Ten Commandments cause you to live in obedience and holiness? How do they encourage your life, worldview, home, family, choices?

What are challenge you have faced trying to live them out?

How have your thoughts/actions changed as your understanding of these law as Scripture grows?

Word Choice

The Hebrew for Ten Commandments is “aseret ha’devarim”, “the ten words” or “The ten utterances”. In Greek: “deca” (ten) “logoi” (words) or “the decalogue.” The word “jealous” appears 6 times in the Old Testament (each time referring to God) and can be translated to: zealous: a protective, parental love
First 4 Commandments: Vertical (our relationship with God), last 6: Horizontal: our relationship with others.

This Week’s Readings

Exodus 13-15, Matt 19

Exodus 16-17, Matt 20

Exodus 18-20

Exodus 21-23, Matt 21

Exodus 24-25

Exodus 26-28, Matt 22

Exodus 20:1-17, Psalm 111, Romans 7:12-25, John 15:1-12

Notes & Quotes

From the perspective of the entire Bible, we see the law of God’s three great purposes and uses:

- As a guardrail, keeping humanity on a moral path.
- As a mirror, showing us our moral failure and need for a savior.
- As a guide, showing us the heart and desire of God for His people.

“The great message of the Christian faith is, therefore, that we are free from the Law’s condemnation in order that we may be able to fulfill its obligation by the power of [Jesus] within us.” (Redpath)

The Bible tells us that the law is holy, just, and good (Romans 7:12) and every good and perfect gift comes from God (James 1:17). These commandments are *good* gifts, because:

- They show the wise moral guidance and government of God.
- They answer the need of mankind for moral guidance and government.
- They give us a way to teach morality.
- They would make the world so much better if obeyed.
- They are good for all humanity/universal.
- They are good when they are promoted and held as ideals, even when they are not perfectly obeyed.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16

1. You shall have no other gods before Me

- God is above nature, personal, good, holy, knowing who He is leads to an understanding that He is the only One worthy of worship

2. You shall not make for yourself an idol

- Worshiping stuff more than our Savior (Colossians 3:5), or creation rather than Creator (Romans 1:21-25), instead, flee idolatry (1 Corinthians 10:14) and worship Him in spirit and truth (John 4:24)

3. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God

- Profanity (cursing, blasphemy), frivolity (using His name in a superficial way), hypocrisy (claiming the Name but acting in a disgraceful way), rather, “hallow” His name (Matthew 6:9)

4. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy

- Purpose of the Sabbath: Remembrance (Genesis 2:3, Deut. 5:12-15) Rest (Exodus 20:8-11)
- Our ultimate rest is in Jesus (Matthew 11:28-30)

5. Honor your father and mother

- Honor, value, prize, respect (Leviticus 19:3), obey (Ephesians 6:1-4) care (1 Timothy 5:4)
- Points to God as Father (Psalms 68:5) and promises a blessing to those who obey

6. You shall not murder

- Difference between “murder” (“lo ratsach”) vs. “kill” (“nakah”), this commandment protects life from conception to natural death. God is the author/definer of life (Psalms 139:16, Job 1:21, 33:4)
 - Exceptions: Accidental Homicide (Numbers 35:9-12, 22-25), Self-Defense (Exodus 22:22, Romans 13:3-4), Capital Punishment (Genesis 9:5b-6, Numbers 35:16-21)
- In Matthew 5:21-22, Jesus elevates this command to include anger/hatred, literally “to have contempt without cause”

7. You shall not commit adultery

- Marriage and family are the backbone of society... When we start tampering with or redefining marriage/family, we do so at our own peril (Hebrews 13:4)
- Jesus elevates this commandment (Matthew 5:27-28) as a warning to never underestimate how thoughts and imaginations can lead to actions and behavior (Proverbs 4:23, Malachi 2:15, Philippians 4:8, 2 Corinthians 10:5)

8. You shall not steal (Psalms 24:1, 1 Chronicles 29:11)

- A command to motivate us to honest, hard work (Genesis 3:19, Ephesians 4:28, 2 Thessalonians 3:10, 1 Timothy 5:8)
- A command to trust in God’s provisions (Philippians 4:19, 1 Corinthians 6:20, 1 Peter 1:18-19) and respect God as the Giver (John 10:10, James 1:17).

9. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor

- A call for truthfulness, honoring God with your words
 - No false accusations (Deuteronomy 5:20), lies (Psalms 34:12-13, Proverbs 6:16-19, 12:22, 26:38, Colossians 3:9) slander (1 Peter 2:1), gossip (Proverbs 20:19), deception (Proverbs 24:28) or inappropriate silence
- God is “The God of Truth” (Psalms 31:5), He does not lie (Hebrews 6:18), Jesus the Way, the Truth, the Life (John 14:6), The Holy Spirit is “The Spirit of Truth” (John 14:7) and God’s Word is “The Book of Truth” (Daniel 10:21)

10. You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor

- “Covet” literally translated (Hebrew “hamad”) means to “pant after”
- The 10th Commandment deals with the thoughts and attitudes of the heart...Our thoughts and attitudes may not lead to outward behavior, but we can be guilty of coveting without ever acting upon our thoughts or the attitudes of our hearts. God is not simply interested in what we do or what we say, He’s interested in what we think (Psalms 94:11a, Mark 7:21-22, Luke 12:15)
- Hebrews 13:5: “Keep your life free from love of money and be content with what you have, for He has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’”

The Bigger Story – Journey

Week Six: Wandering

Theme

The central act of redemption in the New Testament is the work of Jesus on the cross.

The central act of redemption in the Old Testament is the deliverance of Israel from Egypt.

God wants us to be strong and courageous, remembering how He will never leave nor forsake us, we will have the comfort and goodness of His presence and the counsel and structure of His Word.

Guiding Verse

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

Joshua 1:9

“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, ... but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on His law he meditates day and night.” Psalms 1:1-2

Specific Questions for This Week

Joshua is a warrior and faith-filled believer in God, so **why would God need to repeatedly tell him to “be strong and courageous”?**

Have there been times when you were afraid or discouraged, but had the comfort of God’s presence in your life? (Joshua 1:9, Psalm 139:7-10, John 14:16, Hebrews 13:5)

What would others say about how well you’re doing when it **comes to following the Word of God? How do you obey and meditate on it day and night?** (Psalms 1:1-2)

How have you been comforted in His promise to “never leave you nor forsake you”?

Catching Up

Israel (3 million people) was delivered from bondage in Egypt. Israel, as led by Moses, wandered in the Sinai wilderness, experiencing the providential supply of manna, water from rocks, the leading pillar of cloud by day and fire by night, etc. They also received the 10 Commandments as God communicated His holy standards.

The land of Canaan was the destination, though sin, grumbling and lack of faith resulted in the wandering of the people, so that an entire generation would not see this Promise Land. God, in His authority, gave this land, but they had to fight for it and trust Him above all else.

Moses knew his time was near, he asked God to appoint a man to succeed him (Numbers 27:18-23)

Joshua was a warrior (Exodus 17:9,13), he accompanied Moses part way up Mt. Sinai, he (with Caleb) were part of the 12 men scouting out the promise land and were the only two who trusted in the Lord, encouraging others not to rebel against Him in fear of man (Numbers 13:26-14:9)

The book of Joshua is divided sections:

- 1) Chapters 1–5: entering the land
- 2) Chapters 6–12: conquering the land
- 3) Chapters 13–21: dividing and settling the land
- 4) Chapters 22-24: Joshua’s farewell address

The book of Joshua covers a period of about 25 years and ends with Joshua’s death at the age of 110...he was about 85 when he assumed the leadership role.

Notes

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16

Language

Joshua's birth name was Hoshea ("salvation"). In Numbers 13, Moses changed it to Yehoshua, "The Lord is Salvation" The English version: Joshua.

"Obey the Law": keep, heed, observe, never veer from it or redefine it (on lips, mind and in actions)

"Meditate on it": ponder, consider, think about, contemplate (foundational)

What blessings are known when we obey and meditate on Him and His laws? (See Joshua 1:7, 8, Psalm 1)

This Week's Readings

Exodus 29, Matthew 23

Exodus 30-32

Exodus 33-34, Matthew 24

Exodus 35-36

Exodus 37-39, Matthew 25

Exodus 40, Leviticus 1

Joshua 1:1-9, Psalm 1, Romans 3:1-4, Matthew 15:21-28

Additional Information

Joshua is the first book in the Bible named after a person. Joshua was Moses' assistant throughout the 40-year journey between Egypt and the Promised Land. Following Moses' death, Joshua became his successor, God's chosen leader to take the people of Israel into the Promised Land.

Three times in the first nine verses, God told Joshua to "be strong and courageous" linking this command with His promise "I will be with you". Joshua's leadership would only be as good as his relationship with God...

Joshua 1:5: "...I will be with you"

Victory is assured not because Joshua is a great leader, or because Israel is a great nation, but because God is a great God!

Verses 6, 7 and 9:

Joshua is called to boldness in God. This bold courage would not be in Joshua himself, but in God. We can be full of self-confidence that will take us to ruin, but we should instead be full of a genuine God-confidence.

Joshua 1:5 and 9 "For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go"

Reminds us that Joshua's success did not depend solely on his ability to keep God's Word but God's presence with him. God is faithful and keeps His word and promises.

Part 2 - Journey: Next Week's Reading: Judges

Lev. 2-4,
Matt 26

Lev 5-6

Lev 7-9,
Matt 27

Lev 10-11

Lev 12-13,
Matt 28

Lev 14,
Mark 1

Judges 6:11-16, Psalm 46, Romans 3:9-20, Luke 4:42-44

Observational Questions

What does it say?

Why was it written?

Who is the audience?

Who is the author?

What is the historic context of the passages?

How does it fit within Scripture as a whole?

Interpretation Questions

What does it mean?

What does it tell me about God?

Jesus? The Holy Spirit? About humanity?

How does it reveal God's glory?

The Gospel message?

Did other verses come to mind?

What questions do I have about what I read?

SPECK

Is there a **sin** to avoid?

A **promise** to claim?

An **example** to follow

A **command** to obey?

How does this passage increase my **knowledge** of Jesus?

Significance Questions

Why does this matter?

What is the essence of what I have read and learned?

How would I explain this to others?

How can I implement what I have learned into my life?

ACTS Prayer

Adoration (praise)

Confession

Thanksgiving

Supplication (requests)

Developed with the notes and resources of: MacArthur, Hamrick, Bruce, Morris, Spurgeon, Luther, Clarke, Guzik, and more:

Thanks!

The Bigger Story – Journey

Week Seven: Judges

Theme

The book of Judges details Israel's repeated failure (like our own) and God's abundant mercy. God gave His people an abundant land of promise. He gave them a covenant that He would never break.

Israel's continual sin cycle was foundationally a spiritual problem...they didn't trust God. They coveted the practices and materials of others.

Yet God's pattern was to remind them (like He reminds us today) of His great love and faithfulness to us *before* calling us to obedience or confronting our sin. We love Him because He first loved us (1 John 4:19). This is how we can obey Him: walk in His love and abide in His covenant with us.

Guiding Verses

¹² And they abandoned the LORD, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt. They went after other gods, from among the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed down to them. And they provoked the LORD to anger. ¹³ They abandoned the LORD and served the Baals and the Ashtaroth.

¹⁸ Whenever the LORD raised up judges for them, the LORD was with the judge, and he saved them from the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge. For the LORD was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who afflicted and oppressed them.

Notes & Discussion Questions

The presence and practices of the Canaanites, who were allowed to remain by the people, despite God's instructions, led into worship of idols (Joshua 17:12-13, Judges 1:27-33). Disobedience always brings judgement. *Discuss the results of sin and not following God's instructions* (Hebrews 12:6).

Judges 2:14-15: Wrath of God

God cannot abide in sin, not because He is intolerant, but because of His perfect goodness and pure holiness (2 Tim. 2:13, 1 Thess. 5:24). Every sin causes damage/has a cost. If God wasn't loving, He wouldn't care if you broke His law. *How can we understand the wrath of God?*

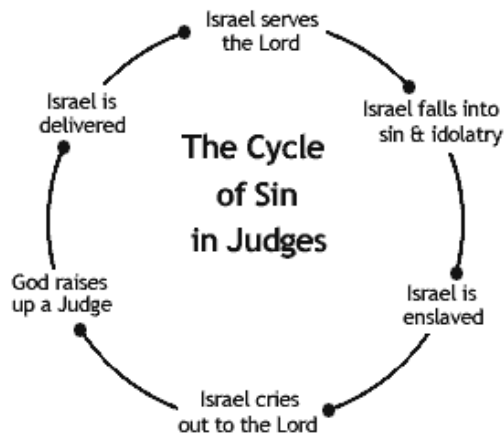
"They did not cease from their own doings" (v.19). After repeatedly running to sinful things, the people found God gave them what they desired... *What can we learn from this?*

See: Jer. 17:9, Psalms 37:3-4, 42:1-2, 51:10-12, Proverbs 4:23, Romans 13:14, Col. 3:2

How/where do we see this throughout the Bible? In our own hearts? In society today? How should we respond? (1 Jn 1:9, 1 Cor. 1:8-9).

Read all of today's selected Scriptures (Judges 2:6-19, Psalms 46, Romans 3:9-20 and Luke 4:42-44). *What do these verses say about God? About Jesus? The human condition?*

Judges 2:16-19: Though they were undeserving, because of His great love for His people, God "raised up judges" to rescue and show the people the way. God was with the judges. *How did the people respond to the judges?*



This pattern (bondage, deliverance and blessing; followed by sin and bondage again) is discouraging. It is easy to shrug off the Israelites actions here, but their example points to our need for God too. We fail Him too. That is why He sent His son (John 3:16, Ephesians 2:8-9).

Christians today have powerful tools to stop this cycle! *Discuss the Holy Spirit: His convicting and comforting role, His power, and how He works in every Christian's live.*

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16

Word & Name Choice

Baal: the “god” of weather, agricultural success, personal wealth. “Baal” also may mean “husband” or “owner”. *What we worship has ownership over us...*

Ashtoreth: the “goddess” of love, sex and fertility”

Idol worship in Canaan often incorporated child sacrifice.

“Stubborn” (“kawsheh” in Hebrew) comes from the idea of being hard or severe. To be stubborn against God is to have a hard and unyielding heart.

This Week’s Readings

Leviticus 2-4, Matt 26

Leviticus 5-6

Leviticus 7-9, Matt 27

Leviticus 10-11

Leviticus 12-13, Matt 28

Leviticus 14, Mark 1

Judges 2:6-19, Psalm 46,
Romans 3:9-20, Luke 4:42-44

About Leadership

“And the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua...” (v.7)

Joshua’s legacy was seen in the godliness of Israel during his leadership. But after Joshua’s leadership ended, (v.10) “there arose another generation after them who did not know the Lord or the work that He had done for Israel. *Discuss leadership.*

The people had:

- No personal relationship with God
- No personal awareness of His Word or power

Our faith should not rest on our leaders (1 Corinthians 1:11-13) but on Jesus (Hebrews 12:2-3). We follow Him, first and foremost.

Was there a time when you focused more on a parent, spiritual mentor, pastor or friend, more than Jesus? What can we learn from this?

Journey: Next Week’s Readings – Kings

Lev 15-16

Lev 17-19,
Mark 2

Lev 20-21
Mark 3

Lev 22-23
Mark 4

Lev 24-25

Lev 26-27,
Mark 5

1 Samuel 8:4-22, Psalm 103:6-22, 1 Timothy 1:12-17, John 19:12-22

Ash Wednesday Readings: Jeremiah 6:9-19, Psalm 78:21-43, Philippians 3:14-21, Luke 19:41-44

Observational Questions

What does it say?

Why was it written?

Who is the audience?

Who is the author?

What is the historic context of the passages?

How does it fit within Scripture as a whole?

Interpretation Questions

What does it mean?

What does it tell me about God?

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How does it reveal God’s glory?

The Gospel message?

Did other verses come to mind?

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An **example** to follow

A **command** to obey?

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Significance Questions

Why does this matter?

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How would I explain this to others?

Where do I see God here?

How can I implement what I have learned into my life?

ACTS Prayer

Adoration (praise)

Confession

Thanksgiving

Supplication (requests)

The Bigger Story – Journey

Week Eight: Kings

Theme

The people of Israel no longer wanted God to rule them through judges. They wanted an earthly king to rule over them, so that they could be like other nations. They were warned of the negative impacts of this request, yet their voices prevailed. Their ultimate rejection wasn't Samuel or any judge, but God.

How is such rejection prevalent today?

How are we pressured by the world to conform?

Who is the reigning King in your life?

What does this look like?

Guiding Verse

¹⁹ But the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel. And they said, “No! But there shall be a king over us, ²⁰ that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles.” ²¹ And when Samuel had heard all the words of the people, he repeated them in the ears of the Lord. ²² And the Lord said to Samuel, “Obey their voice and make them a king.” Samuel then said to the men of Israel, “Go every man to his city.”

Positive / Negative Examples & Discussion Questions

- While Samuel was a godly man, “His sons did not walk in his ways” (v.3)

It was likely very hard to look at them objectively. This stresses the importance of godly parenting.

What can we learn in this example?

+ “All the elders of Israel gathered” (v.4)

It is wise to gather, to not accept leaders who are unfit/ungodly (Samuel's sons).

How have you seen / benefited from wise counsel?

How have you seen it led astray and how can we safeguard against this?

- “Appoint for us a king...” (v.5)

The desire to have a king isn't necessarily bad.

God knew Israel would have a king one day, giving instructions (Deut. 17:14-20) 400 years before this for a king. But their reason was wrong. They wanted to be “like all the nations” not give all reverence and authority to our God (Exodus 20:2-3).

A threat to our relationship with God comes up when we forsake Him and His rule/reign to be like everyone else. We get into trouble when we want to be LIKE the world and LIKED by the world.

Rather, we should be transformed (Romans 12:1-2).

How have you been, are you being, transformed?

+ “But the thing displeased Samuel...and Samuel prayed to the Lord.” (v.6)

When we are distressed, we pray and seek the Lord. God comforts us and fights our battles (v. 7, Ex.14:14).

How has this been true for you? How ca you develop and grow this habit?

Israel's First King

Facts about Saul (1 Samuel 9:1-2)

- From a wealthy family, from the tribe of Benjamin.
- He was an “impressive [handsome] young man”
- He was taller than any other man (average height: 5'6”, Saul likely 6'3”)
- He was without equal among the Israelites, KJV uses the adjective “godly”

1 Samuel 16:7: “But the Lord said to Samuel, ‘Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.’”

This Week's Readings

Leviticus 15-16

Leviticus 17-19, Mark 2

Leviticus 20-21, Mark 3

Leviticus 22-23, Mark 4

Leviticus 24-25

Leviticus 26-27, Mark 5

1 Samuel 8:4-22, Psalm 103:6-22, 1 Timothy 1:12-17, John 19:12-22

Ash Wednesday: Jeremiah 6:9-19, Psalm 78:21-43, Philippians 3:14-21, Luke 19:41-44

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16

Facts, Figures & More Discussion Questions

1 Samuel 9:3-5: Saul Chases Donkeys

- Traveled 3 days, walked 60-75 total miles
- God used donkeys to accomplish His plan

Compare how God spoke to Samuel with how He got Saul's attention.

In what ways might He be seeking/speaking to you? What are we chasing after?

1 Samuel 10:1: The Anointing of Saul:

- First time a non-priest was anointed
- Oil is representative of the Holy Spirit
- Anointed with oil: Confirmation of the special calling from God upon someone

1 Samuel 10:1-11: Change of Saul's Heart

- God changed His heart (v.9)
- The Holy Spirit came upon Him (v. 10)
- Some who knew him before "wondered" (v. 11) (see also 1 Samuel 10:27)

How has God changed your heart? How was this received? (Deut. 31:6 Mark 8:38, Rom. 1:16)

What do you know of the Holy Spirit's power?

Were there any changes you made in your life after the Holy Spirit filled you?

How does the Holy Spirit empower us to live a life of courage and conviction?

Difference between "King" and "Judge":

- Judge: meets a specific need during a time of crisis. Then the judge often went back to doing what he did before (Judges 8:23)
- King: establishes government/bureaucracy, a king held his throne and passed it to his son.

The people were:

1. Disappointed with spiritual leadership
2. Dissatisfied by being different
3. Distant from God
4. Distracted by the world

When the elders of Israel asked for a king, they thought politics or government could meet their needs. Didn't God show Himself to be a worthy King? *Doesn't He show the same to us? How do we respond to Him?*

In Samuel's warning about the desired earthly king, *how many times does he use the word "take"?*

What does this say about the king? About the people who wanted one, their ancestors rescued from the bondages of slavery in Egypt, called to be "set apart" (Exodus 19:6)?

How does this point to Jesus, the most giving King (Matthew 20:28) who was rejected as King (John 19:15). Where do you see Jesus in this story?

How do the other readings fit into this theme?

Fulfilled: Next Week's Readings – Messiah

Numbers 1-2 Mark 6	Numbers 3	Numbers 4-5 Mark 7	Numbers 6-7	Numbers 8-9, Mark 8	Numbers 10-11, Mark 9
Jeremiah 23:1-8, Psalm 19:7-14, Romans 3:21-26, Matthew 5:17-18					

Observational Questions

- What does it say?
- Why was it written?
- Who is the audience?
- Who is the author?

What is the historic context of the passages?

How does it fit within Scripture as a whole?

Interpretation Questions

- What does it mean?
- What does it tell me about God?
- Jesus? The Holy Spirit? About humanity?
- How does it reveal God's glory?
- The Gospel message?
- Did other verses come to mind?
- What questions do I have about what I read?

SPECK

- Is there a **sin** to avoid?
- A **promise** to claim?
- An **example** to follow
- A **command** to obey?

How does this passage increase my **knowledge** of Jesus?

Significance Questions

- Why does this matter?
- What is the essence of what I have read and learned?
- How would I explain this to others?
- Where do I see God here?
- How can I implement what I have learned into my life?

ACTS Prayer

Adoration (praise) Confession Thanksgiving Supplication (requests)