

## *Norwood's Notes: Brief Summaries of Bible Stories*

These "notes" are intended to provide a general overview of the basic stories of the Bible in the hope of building greater biblical knowledge and encouraging Bible reading and study. For more information, visit [www.UjimaChurch.org](http://www.UjimaChurch.org)

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### **15 - Highlights from 1 Samuel 10-16, "King Saul"**

The prophet Samuel anointed Saul to become king of Israel. And as Saul departed from Samuel, God gave him a "new heart," so much so that when he met a group of prophets, the spirit of God rushed upon him and he too began to prophesy (1 Sam 10).

Samuel called the people together at Mizpah and the Lord confirmed to the people who was chosen to be their king. As they cast lots before the various clans and families, it became evident that Saul had been chosen, but he was nowhere to be found. Reluctant to take on the mantle of leadership, he had hidden himself among the baggage. Inquiring yet again of the Lord, Saul was found. As they brought him from his hiding place, his appearance pleased the people. He was taller than any of them from his shoulders up and very handsome. The people shouted, "Long live the King!" But some worthless fellows spoke disrespectfully about Saul, yet he humbly kept his peace.

After Saul had been made King, the Ammonites attacked Jabesh-gilead. When word came to the Israelites, they wept in fear. Saul, not yet settled into his new role as king, was plowing his field when he saw the people weeping and heard the news. The Spirit of God rushed upon Saul, filling him with great anger. Slaughtering a yoke of oxen, he sent the pieces throughout all the territory, letting the people know that whoever did not rally behind him would suffer the fate of the oxen. The men of Israel mustered together behind their new king (1 Sam 11). Saul led his forces to victory against the Ammonites. As the people celebrated their king, they demanded that those who had disrespected Saul earlier be put to death. But, Saul stopped them because the Lord had been so merciful to give them the victory that day. Under the prophet Samuel's direction, and with great joy, the people reaffirmed Saul as king.

An aged Samuel warned the people, yet again, about their folly in wanting to be like other nations (1 Sam 12). He reminded them of all that the Lord had done for them and how unfaithful they had been toward Him. He warned the people never to forsake the Lord or they would suffer dire consequences. Samuel called upon the name of the Lord, who sent thunder and rain, and the people greatly feared the Lord and His prophet, Samuel.

King Saul established a standing army of 3000 soldiers, dividing it between himself and his oldest son, the crown prince Jonathan, and

they continue to make war against the Philistines, who mustered 30,000 chariots and 6000 horsemen and troops to come against Israel. Out of fear, many of the people hid themselves in holes and among the rocks and even in the tombs and cisterns for fear of the Philistines. Saul prepared for battle, awaiting the arrival of the prophet Samuel. When Samuel did not arrive when Saul thought he would, the king presumed to make burnt offerings himself. When Samuel arrived, he chastised the king for being disobedient and presuming the authority of a priest. Samuel let Saul know that the Lord had chosen another, after his own heart, who would someday lead the people (1 Sam 13). Despite this chastisement, the Lord still gave the victory over the Philistines into the hand of the Israelites. The heroic Jonathan and his armor bearer went off on their own and, trusting in a sign from the Lord, challenged a Philistine garrison, sending it into a panic as the Lord shook the earth beneath their feet (1 Sam 14). This act of bravery and blessing of God rallied the small and poorly armed Israelite forces to battle against the much larger, well-armed, but greatly confused and panicked Philistine army.

As the battle went in their favor, King Saul made a rash decree, condemning anyone who ate any food until he had avenged himself on all his enemies. Even as the soldiers, weakened by hunger, walked through a forest that had honey on the ground, they dare not eat and engage the wrath of their king. Having not heard of his father's decree, Jonathan ate of a honeycomb and was refreshed. When the others told him of the king's command, Jonathan criticized his father's foolish decree. When Saul discovered that Jonathan had broken his order not to eat, he was about to put him to death, but the people stood by Jonathan and refused to let him be punished over breaking a foolish vow.

Saul continued to make war against the enemies of Israel. The Lord told Samuel to send Saul against the Amalekites. As Saul defeated them, he kept the spoils of war and spared the wicked Amalekite king, disobeying the command of God. When Samuel arrived, he condemned Saul for his disobedience, told him that the Lord would tear the kingdom from his hand, and then the old prophet Samuel took a sword and killed the wicked Amalekite king himself. Samuel's heart was grieved over Saul's disobedience (1 Sam 15).

The Lord spoke to Samuel and told him to fill his horn with oil and go to the house of Jesse in Bethlehem to anoint one of his sons who had been chosen to become king. Jesse presented one son after another before the prophet Samuel, but none of them was the one the Lord had chosen. Samuel asked if there were any others, and Jesse said that there was only one more, the youngest boy, David, who was tending the sheep. David was summoned from the field and brought before the prophet. He was bright-eyed and handsome and the Lord spoke to Samuel, "...arise, anoint him, for this is he" (1 Sam 16:12), and the spirit of the Lord rushed upon David from that day forward.