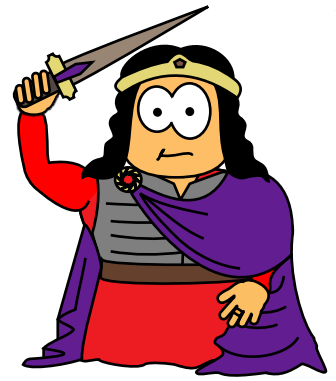


Bible Heroes

King Saul

Teachers Story notes



Essential Teachers notes:

Saul is a strange character, he's impressive visually, he's chosen by a prophet and given the honour of being the first Israelite king, but despite the new status of the kingdom and his success in battle he is both impatient and wilful. Eventually his logic is his downfall as the prophet Samuel tires of his inability to follow instructions. Though the ramifications of his decisions may not be seen immediately his actions echo down through other biblical stories such as Esther.

Main Passage : Acts 9

Additional passages : general gospel

I wonder if you've ever felt a bit lost on what to do and wished somebody would come and give you some instructions? God's people started like that in this story. They saw other people who had kings and all they had was a prophet. Samuel was the prophet and while he was really good at giving them advice about God he wouldn't lead them into battle when people attacked. So they went to Samuel and asked if he could choose a king for them.

Samuel thought it was a bad idea, a really bad idea. Still the people asked for a king. So Samuel chose one. Who would you choose as a king? What would they be like?

Samuel chose a man called Saul. Saul looked like a king. Saul was big and strong and brave. Saul was a good fighter and was good at giving instructions. *Saul put on his new robe and new crown and everybody cheered. *Saul gathered the army and went out to battle the bad guys, and Saul won the battle, God's people were very happy.

Samuel told Saul he would come to prepare for the next battle, but he was late and Saul didn't want to wait any more. When Samuel turned up to see they had started he was angry. At the following battle Samuel gave Saul clear instructions from God not to take any rewards, no animals or gold or people. Saul went and fought knowing God was protecting him but when he looked round after battle there was so much good stuff. Saul and his men took the best bits, it seemed like a waste to leave it all behind.

When Samuel arrived to meet Saul he was furious. Where did all these extra sheep come from? Why are there extra people here? Is that the other king's crown? Did Saul not care about God's instructions?

Saul had failed God's test, he had shown he wouldn't do as God asked. Samuel took hold of Saul's robe and tore a piece off it. He held the piece high and told Saul that the kingdom would be taken from him too. Then Samuel left, and he never ever went back to see Saul.

Saul walked around with a torn robe. He was sad, some people even think he went a little crazy. Eventually he found a young man to play him tunes. That man was David and he had already secretly been chosen by Samuel and God as the new king. Years passed and David had to run because Saul had become jealous of David, perhaps he imagined that David may be the new king one day.

Saul and his men went hunting for David, they followed him across the country, by mountains and streams and wide flat fields. Eventually they discovered David was hiding in some caves. Saul had climbed up to a cave and looked around, it looked empty. He stood in the pool of light by the entrance wondering which cave would make the best hiding place. While he stood there David quietly slipped out from where he was hiding further back in the cave, he tiptoed up to Saul and gently took hold of his robe. David cut off a bit of the robe then moved back into the shadows. When he was far enough away he shouted Saul's name.

"Saul look" called David "I hold a piece of your robe but you are not harmed!"

Saul looked down at his robe which now had 2 missing corners. David could have killed him but all he did was tore his robe.

"You are king, God made you king through Samuel, and I will not harm you" shouted David.

At the sound of Samuel's name the king felt sad again, Samuel had ripped his robe to take something away from him, but David had done it to give him his life.

Saul stopped hunting David after that, he went back to being king and at the next battle he died. David became king and was given Saul's torn robe as a reminder.

Today's hero is Saul because he shows us the gift of tearing.

** (these two sentences can be reversed dependant on the reading of the text)*