

# The Story 10: "A King Like Everyone Else"

## 1Samuel 8 and 15

February 15, 2026

**Main Idea:** When we choose self-sovereignty over obedience, even great beginnings can end in tragic loss.

### Background

Before we step into Saul's story, we need to pause and understand where Israel is in the timeline. At this point, the nation is roughly 1000 years removed from Abraham and Sarah and about four hundred fifty years beyond the Exodus from Egypt. Israel has just endured three centuries of chaos during the period of the Judges.

### Meet Samuel

Samuel stands as the last of the Judges and the first of the Prophets. From 1 Samuel through Esther, Scripture records Israel's political and national history. From Isaiah through Malachi, we hear God's prophetic commentary on that same period. The stage is now set for Israel's next major transition: from God as King...to a king like everyone else.

### A King Like Everyone Else (1Samuel 8)

At this time in history, the Philistines are Israel's primary enemy. God has already delivered Israel from them through Samuel's leadership. But when Samuel grows old and appoints his sons as judges—men who pervert justice—the people lose confidence. So they demand a king. Not just any king. A king *"like all the other nations"* (see 8:5).

From the lower-story perspective, this makes sense. Other nations had kings who wore crowns, commanded armies, and made decisions instantly. Priests seemed slow, ceremonial, and unimpressive by comparison. Why pray when a king could just give orders? But from God's upper Story perspective, the request cuts much deeper. God tells Samuel plainly, *"It is not you they have rejected, but Me"* (1Samuel 8:7)

### All Hail King Saul (1Samuel 9–14)

Saul is everything Israel wanted in a king. He is tall, impressive, and charismatic. Saul looks like leadership. He sounds like leadership. He carries himself like leadership. But appearance is not character. Saul experiences early success. God gives him victory. The people rally behind him. Everything is set up for long-term faithfulness—if Saul will simply trust God. But self-sovereignty has not died. It is alive and well, personified by King Saul.

### Saul Stood Tall but then Fell Hard

Saul was chosen as we would typically choose. He was an impressive physical specimen, a born leader, a man of valor and influence. But let me remind you, God rarely chooses as we might choose. Saul disobeys God and it cost him. Note...

- **Partial obedience is disobedience.** Saul almost did what God commanded, but obedience is all or not at all.
- **Pride can masquerade as worship.** He's serving self while claiming to serve God.
- **Self-rule always costs us.** There is a reason God hates self-sovereignty; it will cost us.

### Family Night – Read 1Samuel 8:1-22

- **Elementary School:** Ask, "Who did Samuel appoint as Israel's new leaders? Did they do a good job? Who did the people reject as their king (v.7)? How did Samuel warn the people about a king (v.11ff)?"
- **Middle / High School:** Ask, "Why was it important for the people to have a king? Why did they prefer a king instead of God as King? Why didn't the people respond to Samuel's warning about a king? How are we like these people?"

**Prayer:** "Father, we want to obey You because You are faithful and we trust You. Amen"

#### Velocity (Middle and High School Students)

**Velocity:** Meets on Wednesdays here at the church.

**Gravity:** Today in Both Services

#### Today's Songs

*It Really is Amazing Grace*.....Phil Wycham

*Holy Spirit*.....Francesca Battistelli

*How Good It Is*.....Chris Tomlin

#### "The Story" New Series

We cover Chapter 10 today. Books are \$5 in the lobby.

#### Ghost Pirates Hockey Game

Join us March 20<sup>th</sup> in a private section at the Enmarket Arena in Savannah. Tickets are \$35 and available on the GCC Website: [gracestatesboro.com](http://gracestatesboro.com).

#### Wandering to Jerusalem

Wondering to Jerusalem is for Easter like Wondering to Bethlehem was for Christmas. KidsJAM kids get the devotional and start reading this Wednesday, Feb. 18<sup>th</sup>. QR code is at KidsJAM sign in. The outdoor event "Wondering to Jerusalem" is Wednesday, March 18. Come and experience the last week of Jesus' life.