

TEXT 1 Samuel 9:1-2; 10:17-26

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to describe the attitudes of humility and obedience toward God which are two of the prerequisites for spiritual success, and also should realize that promotion comes from the Lord.

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted. — Matthew 23:12

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another. — Psalm 75:6-7

**ANSWER
TITLE:** **A Humble Job**
**SEARCH
TITLE:** **The First King**

REFERENCE INFORMATION

It had been nearly four hundred years since the Children of Israel left Egypt. Had they obeyed the Lord and followed His commandments, they would have had the most outstanding government on earth. However, they chose to have their own way and worshiped idols. The Bible says that every man did that which was right in his own eyes.

Since the death of Joshua, who followed Moses, Israel had been led by a series of judges. We are not told of any formal national governing body; the twelve tribes were apparently loosely knit politically, but had a strong allegiance to one another, based on their family ties. See Judges 1:3-4.

This lesson covers a portion of time when Samuel was the prophet and judge. His calling at an early age was recognized by all of Israel (1 Samuel 3:20). He had become a prophet at a time when Israel was in an apostate condition (1 Samuel 3:1) and had been a channel God used to, again, communicate with the people. See 1 Samuel 3:19-21 and 4:1.

Samuel was now old and had judged well. The people respected and trusted him (1 Samuel 12:4), but knew that his sons were not following in Samuel's ways (1 Samuel 8:5). They used that as a reason in asking for a king. However, in doing so, they rejected God as their King (1 Samuel 8:7).

YOUR OPENER

The First King

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RESPONSES

1. Samuel was also a judge over the Israelites “all the days of his life.” In 1 Samuel 12 we are told that he discharged his duties faithfully, calling upon the Lord (1 Samuel 7:5; 8:6; 12:23) in order to provide proper leadership and righteous judgment. A short discussion of Samuel’s humility and obedience can reinforce the fact that these are keys to spiritual success.

2. God said the people were rejecting Him. They no longer wanted God himself to reign over them. They were refusing His counsel and rebelling against His authority.

3. With God as their Leader the people had experienced the “good of the land,” but when they rejected Him they most certainly experienced the “sword.” Since the people continued to insist on an earthly king, God told Samuel to give them a king. Here is an opportunity for the students to learn that, if we insist, God often allows us our will even though it is not best for us. God has created us free moral agents. He will direct us to spiritual success through His Holy Spirit, the Bible, other Christians, and our own conscience, if we are “willing and obedient.” But disaster awaits those who “refuse and rebel.”

This study shows clearly that God is vitally concerned about benefiting His people. When Israel persisted in their request for a king, God used circumstances to bring together the long-time prophet Samuel and a young man whose name was Saul. Despite Saul’s impressive appearance, he demonstrated qualities of humility and obedience, two characteristics necessary to be a leader of God’s people. If we possess these qualities, we will experience spiritual success and promotion from the Lord.

1. What position did Samuel occupy in addition to being a prophet to the people of Israel? How long did he occupy this position? See 1 Samuel 7:15-17.

2. Samuel was grieved that the Israelites had asked for a king. He felt as though he had been rejected, but, in 1 Samuel 8:7, God told Samuel this was not so. Who did God say the people had rejected, and why?

3. Throughout 1 Samuel 8, we read that Samuel had carefully followed God’s instructions, pointing out to the Israelites the future oppression they would suffer under such kings who would require of them some of their sons and daughters and a portion of their wealth. Despite that, the people still rejected God’s council. How does Isaiah 1:19-20 agree with Samuel’s message to the people? What did God finally instruct Samuel to do? See 1 Samuel 8:22.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

4. Circle the right answer:

Saul was of the tribe of . . . (1) Dan (2) Ephraim (3) Benjamin (4) Judah

He was . . . (1) little of stature (2) taller than others (3) a poor physical specimen

His father's name was . . . (1) Abiel (2) Zeror (3) Bechorath (4) Kish

Saul was . . . (1) proud (2) humble and obedient (3) disobedient

5. The extent of a family's livestock in Saul's day was a measure of its prosperity. How did Saul respond to his father's request to seek the lost donkeys? Was he thorough in his search? Why? See 1 Samuel 9:3-10,20.

6. Do you think it was coincidental that Saul, in his search for the lost donkeys, came to Samuel at the end of his third day's search? Why or why not? See 1 Samuel 9:15, 16.

7. Mark the following statements true or false:

(a) Saul had been anointed by Samuel prior to his coronation in 1 Samuel 10:24. See 1 Samuel 9:16; 10:1.

(b) Saul traveled with Samuel to the coronation. See 1 Samuel 10:21-22.

(c) God demonstrated to the Israelites the man that He had chosen to be king by directing the casting of lots (similar to drawing names). First, a tribe was chosen (Benjamin), then a family from that tribe (Matri), then a man from that family. See 1 Samuel 10:20-21.

(d) Saul immediately confirmed his kingdom by putting the political dissenters into prison. See 1 Samuel 10:27.

8. God has given Christians a system of success and promotion in His service. This is very different from the system used by most individuals, corporations, or by those seeking political office today. After studying 1 Peter 5:5-6 and this lesson, comment here on how you feel God's system differs from that of the world's.

4. Correct answers are (3), (2), (4), and (2). The students should understand that Saul was chosen, not because of his stature, family, or tribe, but, because he was humble and obedient.

5. He was obedient and followed carefully his father's instructions. Saul and his servant searched a wide area encompassing perhaps thirty miles for a period of three days. He was determined to find the donkeys and accomplish his father's desire—to bring them home. The students can learn the importance of being thorough, not sloppy, in their obedience to God.

6. It was not coincidental. In 1 Samuel 9:15-16, we learn that God had previously told Samuel, "Tomorrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be captain over my people Israel, . . ." The discussion should bring out that if we are humble and obedient, we will experience God's arrangement of our lives. Details will miraculously fall into place as we are seeking His will.

7. The statements are — (a) True. (b) False, Saul showed his humility by hiding himself among the "stuff" where at first he could not be found. (c) True. (d) False, Saul demonstrated his new heart given him by God (1 Samuel 10:9) by not saying anything about the rejection of the political dissenters.

8. Encourage your students to share their thoughts by dividing your class into two groups. Have one group determine among themselves God's system for success and promotion. Have the second group determine business and political formulas for success and systems for promotion. In these determinations have the students include the character traits being looked for, the requisite abilities, and the various qualifications of the candidate. As a wrap-up, let the spokesman for each group present that group's conclusions. The contrast, despite occasional similarities, will be evident. Be prepared with your own list so you can fill in any gaps and guide the discussion.

YOUR WRAP-UP
