

- Last week we looked at the Sabbath system that God setup. We noted how it came from God's traditional "rest" for a day after creating the world, ([Genesis 2:1-3](#)) but that God doesn't need "rest," so He really made the commandment as a way of getting humans to observe His creation by resting every seventh day. ([Exodus 31:12-17](#)). God even established a Sabbath year (every seventh year) in which the Israelites were to let the land rest as well. ([Leviticus 25:1-6](#)). Finally, God established a year called Jubilee every 50<sup>th</sup> year in which all Israelites were to return to their own family's land. ([Leviticus 25](#)). God gave Israel these laws so that the Kings would see that the people carried them out ([Deuteronomy 17:18-20](#)), but the evil Kings that would rule Israel would ignore them so the people did too. It wasn't until King Josiah that an earnest effort was made again for awhile. ([2 Kings 22 and 23](#)). We concluded by noting that today we are blessed if we hunger and thirst after righteousness. ([Matthew 5:6](#)). The only way to do this is to read and study scripture ourselves. ([2 Timothy 3:16-17](#))
- God did not want to make Kings in Israel in the first place. The only reason God allowed this is that it was what the people wanted because they wanted to be like other nations. In fact, in the very act of demanding a King to rule over them, God says that they are rejecting God's kingship. ([1 Samuel 8:1-9](#))
- When God decided to do something, He doesn't do it halfway. He told Samuel how to recognize Saul and to anoint him King. ([1 Samuel 9 - 1 Samuel 10:1](#)).
- God then has Samuel tell Saul what is going to happen to him in the next few days, and God pours out His spirit on Saul. ([1 Samuel 10:2-16](#))
- At first, Saul honors God, even by making peace offerings to Him. ([1 Samuel 11:15](#))
- Soon, though, Saul starts disobeying. For example, after one battle, He is supposed to wait for Samuel to come before he starts the offering process. When Samuel is late arriving, Saul goes ahead when he is not supposed to do so. Samuel tells Saul the consequence is that Saul will lose his kingdom. ([1 Samuel 13:8-13](#))
- Saul also make a rash vow, that no one in his army can eat until they have won a victory. At the end of the day, the army is so hungry that they eat unclean things (blood). In this way, Saul caused the people to sin. ([1 Samuel 14:24-33](#))
- Saul disobeys again by taking prisoners from a victory against the Amalekites. God was so upset that He regretted ever making Saul King. ([1 Samuel 15](#)). This was "the last straw" – Saul had clearly rejected the system God had setup.
- Can an all-powerful, all-knowing God really have "regrets?" Or does God perceive time the same way we do? He communicated with us in time-bound terms we can understand. Does God also operate in a greater sense without a sense of time? Peter, in talking about the Lord's return, tells us to remember how God sees time – a day is like a thousand years to God ([1 Peter 3:8](#)) Remember a thousand was just a big number back then, which was often substituted for "infinity" or "everything" as in the cattle of a thousand hills belong to the Lord. ([Psalms 50:10](#)) The Psalmist is not saying the cattle on the thousand and first hill don't belong to the Lord. Remember that God is a lot higher than what we can even

understand, ([Isaiah 55:8-9](#)) and although we have been given all things we need to know ([2 Peter 1:3](#)) the things we don't need to figure out for our salvation belong to God ([Deuteronomy 29:29](#)).

- Today, we are still faced with a choice of following God's system. Unfortunately, just the Israelites strayed from God's teaching over time, the same thing continued to happen under our new system of worship. Remember that departing from the system God setup may seem small at first – for example, Saul not waiting for Samuel to start making sacrifices. We can quickly end up far afield from where God wants us to be in worship over time.
- A great example of how this can happen today is in instrumental music. John Calvin, who founded the Methodist denomination, and Martin Luther, from whom the Lutheran church took their name, both opposed to instrumental music, yet their "churches" have them today.  
([http://www.thirdmill.org/newfiles/joh\\_barber/PT.joh\\_barber.Luther.Calvin.Music.Worship.pdf](http://www.thirdmill.org/newfiles/joh_barber/PT.joh_barber.Luther.Calvin.Music.Worship.pdf))
- Always remember two points: 1) There is a big difference between the Bible, as the inspired Word of God and any interpretation, study, or prophesy. Aaron or Madison or our elders will tell you what we think and how we understand things, but we are no substitute for those who were divinely inspired. ([2 Peter 1:16-21](#)) 2) We are in trouble when we worship God the way we want to do it (like Saul did and as many "churches" do today) as opposed to how God want to be worshiped. Paul uses the metaphor of "itching ears" to describe the way that people will want to worship by pleasing themselves ([2 Timothy 4:3](#))
- A very famous man named Martin Luther (we talked about him above), became so fed up with the Catholic Church of the 15<sup>th</sup> Century that, at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century he started writing against the Church. Legend has it that he nailed a document (called now the "95 Theses") to the door of the church in Wittenberg Castle on October 31, 1517.  
(<http://www.history.com/topics/martin-luther-and-the-95-theses>)
- Martin Luther made great strides by rejecting the hierarchy that came with the Catholic Church. He also started to emphasize faith more and reject the priesthood. Unfortunately, compromise lead him to certain positions that were not consistent with what God wants. Other people (like a fellow with the last name Zwingli) opposed such compromises but made compromises of their own. (<http://www.history.com/topics/martin-luther-and-the-95-theses>)
- This all happened because people were falling into the "itching ears" problem Paul warned us about in his second letter to Timothy.

#### Questions:

1. Why did Israel want a King?
2. What did God say Israel was doing in demanding a King?
3. Who does God choose as the first King of Israel?
4. What person does God have anoint the first King of Israel?

Originally developed by Madison Laird for high school study at the East Foothill Church of Christ in San Jose, CA following a curriculum outline by Aaron Curtis. Edited by Betty Brown of Jackson, TN. Material may be used free of charge without license or royalty. Questions or comments: [madison@madisonlaird.com](mailto:madison@madisonlaird.com)

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5. Does God pour out his spirit on Saul?
6. Does Saul obey God at first?
7. Name three ways Saul disobeys God.
8. Does God regret that He made Saul King?
9. How can we explain the fact that God can have regrets?
10. How can we stray over time from the proper way to worship?
11. What are "itching ears?"
12. Who is Martin Luther and what did he do?

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