

I Sam 1-15: A Study of God's Authority and its effects on New Testament Worship

1:1-8

Story:

- Elkanah had two wives. One wife had kids, but Hannah didn't; yet, the husband loved Hannah more (he would give her double portions of the sacrifice).
- The jealous wife would torment childless Hannah. Hannah desperately wanted children.

1:9-18

Story:

- Being desperate for children, Hannah turns to God.
- In her prayer, she vows to return the child back to God if her request is granted.
- Her prayer is so emotional that she appears drunk while she prays (her lips moved but no noise came out).
- Eli blesses her, and Hannah cheers up.

Applications:

- Hannah respects the authority of God. She knows that He is the only one capable of granting her request.
 - Part of respecting the Lord's authority is understanding His ability to do anything. This leads us to seek Him for everything as Hannah did.
 - Let a respect for God's authority inspire you to pray to Him always for everything.
- *Hannah was so emotionally involved in her prayer that she appeared drunk. We need to be personally involved in worship.*
 - *Our prayers should be so heart felt that we become this personally involved.*
 - *Hannah's emotion came from her great desire for a child. Let your own personal needs lead you to emotionally petition them before the Lord knowing that He has the authority to grant your request.*
- *After Hannah prayed, she was no longer sad (for two reasons).*
 - *She had faith that the Lord could grant her request. She felt more confident that she would one day have children.*
 - *She felt better have expressed herself to God. Mat 5:4 teaches that those who mourn will be comforted. When we go to God in worship, we can anticipate a better feeling afterwards. Comfort is one of the gifts from God.*

1:19-28

Story:

- They got up early to worship before their long trip home.
- The Lord granted Hannah's wish that night.
- The child is named Samuel and given to the Lord to work in the temple at the age of three.
- Hannah says a prayer of thanksgiving.

Applications:

- We have to be worshipers of God to have our prayers granted
 - Hannah isn't just someone who uses God as a genie or vending machine. She respects God's authority before and after her request is granted.

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- Her constant genuine worship of God was a crucial part of the Lord fulfilling her prayer request (James 4:2-3: *You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. 3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions*).
- It's easy to ask God for something when we need it, but it's hard to respect the Lord all the time.
- We can't just respect the Lord's authority as being able to grant our prayers. We must respect His authority our entire lives.
- Understanding God's authority will teach us to sacrifice unto Him.
 - Again, Hannah realized that this child was from God. That inspired her to give him back to God.
 - When we realize that all things come from God, that proper perspective will teach us how much we need to give back to Him.
 - Everything you have (money, time, talents, skills) is from God. If He gives them to you, you should be willing to sacrifice them back to Him.
 - Our sacrifices respect Him as the authority over all things. Mat 6:25-26 (*Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are ye not much better than they?*) teaches us that we need to have faith in God's authority to give us what we need. This will lead us to a sacrificial worship.

2:1-10

Story:

- Hannah prays to God.

Applications:

- 1-4: Next to God's authority, man has no reason to boast.
- 6-9: God as authority over all actions on the earth.
 - This is recognizing that Samuel came from God's authority.

2:11-17

Story:

- Eli's two sons are very wicked self-serving priests.
- They were more concerned about using the sacrifices to God to fill themselves.
- There were parts of the sacrifice that the priests were commanded to eat, but we can see that they were breaking the rules to suit themselves (wanted raw meat so they could roast it because they preferred that to boiled meat).

Applications:

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- “They did not know the Lord and the customs of the priests”
 - How could they be priests and not know God? Had they never heard of Him? That's not likely. The reason they did not know Him is because they did not know His commands.
 - They had served themselves for so long that they didn't even know the proper rules for worship.
 - God reveals Himself to us by His word. God's word is His expression of His authority. If we don't know His word, we don't know Him or His authority.
 - If we don't keep His word, He will treat us as if we don't know Him and He doesn't know us (Mat 7:22-23: *Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity., iniquity means lawlessness (people who don't live under law)).*
 - We can only know God if we know His commands and keep them.
- Since they didn't care about God's word (authority), whose authority were they concerned about?
 - When the Lord's authority isn't first, our authority takes its place. The result is we worship by our own authority. When we worship according to our own authority, we worship ourselves.
 - Each step away from the authority of God's word is a step closer to idolatrous self-worship.
 - We need to be fearful that we adjust the word of God to fit our own desires (food, entertainment, power, etc...)
- “They despised the Lord's sacrifice”
 - Do you think they despised it? They probably loved it. They could eat all that meat. In what way did they despise it?
 - Gen 25:33-34 (*And Jacob said, Swear to me first; and he swore unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob. And Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: so Esau despised his birthright*) shows Esau despising his birthright. “Despise” doesn't describe how he felt about it (he would've liked his birthright). Despise describes how Esau treated his birthright (very disgracefully)
 - Eli's sons enjoyed their version of worship, but did their enjoyment justify their falsehood? No, because they were despising the sacrifices by treating them disgracefully.
 - Just because you enjoy your version of worship it doesn't make it correct. We must enjoy God's authorized version of worship. Otherwise we will despise it.

2:18-21

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Story:

- Hannah and Elkanah would visit Samuel yearly in Shiloh for their annual sacrifices.
- Hannah would make Samuel clothes.
- Eli would bless them.
- God gave Hannah more children.

Applications:

- This version of proper worship greatly contrasts with Eli's son's worship.
- There needs to be a balance of observing the commanded laws of worship and extra personal devotion and sacrifice.
 - We see that Hannah observes the designated laws of worship, but she was also willing to make extra sacrifices to God.
 - Observing the commanded sacrifices is nothing in comparison to the sacrifice of her son.
 - If you are eager to change or improve your worship of the Lord, don't be eager to change the Law. Obey the law as commanded, but find extra ways to make self-sacrifices unto God.

2:22-34

Story:

- Eli rebukes his children for being disobedient, but it doesn't seem like they are willing to change.
- A messenger from God comes to Eli and holds him responsible for allowing his children to disgrace God's sacrifices.
- The man tells of a coming judgment against Eli and his sons.

Applications:

- We need to be fearful of God when we worship Him.
 - Sometimes we feel like incorrect worship is better than nothing. "We might not be doing exactly what God wants, but it's close enough." This false concept is strongly addressed here.
 - It seems worse worship God incorrectly than not at all. When we begin to worship God, we aren't free from temptation. We are tempted to worship God by our own authority. If we do this, our worship is worse than nothing at all (Mal 1:10: *Oh that there were one among you that would shut the doors, that ye might not kindle fire on mine altar in vain! I have no pleasure in you, saith Jehovah of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand.*)
 - We can be in danger of bringing sin upon ourselves when we worship improperly. I Cor 11:27: *Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord.*
 - We see that Eli and his sons have their own special judgment because of their improper worship. We can expect the same if we worship God outside of His authority.

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- God gives men authority to lead people, and holds them accountable when they allow other's sin to disgrace God's worship.
 - As High priest, it was Eli's authority to ensure that the Lord was being worshipped properly. Maybe he was no longer able to make his children behave, but it was still his responsibility to keep worship proper. He should have used his God given authority to remove them from office. Since Eli didn't do this, he was also guilty of sin.
 - Consider Ex 32:21 (*And Moses said to Aaron, What did this people do to you that you have brought such a great sin upon them?*) and 32:25 (*And when Moses saw that the people had broken loose (for Aaron had let them break loose, to the derision of their enemies). Aaron was blamed for allowing others to sin. Moses single handedly rectifies the situation (showing that Aaron could've done it himself if he desired).*)
 - As leaders and members in the church, we must respect the authority God has given us to ensure that the entire church equally respects God's authority.
 - I Cor 5:1-2 (*It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife. And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you.*), and 5:13 (*Purge the evil person from among you.*) Show the churches responsibility to purge open, undeniable sin from the church. The church can't properly worship God if they are tolerating sin.
 - Revelation 2:28 (*But I have this against you, that you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols.*) is an example of a church tolerating sin. It is the churches responsibility to purge this sin from among them.
 - To prove His point, God claims all the things He did. What He has done is His argument for why we need to respect His authority. He says that He revealed Himself, He chose His people, He gave them the tabernacle, and He gave them the sacrifices. If God has done all those things, He has the right for them to be done His way.
 - Jesus says, "I will build my church." If He built it and it belongs to Him, we need to respect His authority. What gives us the right to change it?
 - When you get a job at Taco Bell, do you make it all your own way? No. You respect the authority of your employers.

2:35-36

Story:

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- The man of God tells that Eli's house would fall from the priesthood and be replaced by someone else. This is fulfilled by Zadok, but is ultimately fulfilled in Christ.

Applications:

- God uses men to carry out His will, but when they don't submit to Him, He simply replaces them with something better.
 - We need to either be a part of God's plan, or expect to be left behind.

3:1-18

Story:

- God speaking to prophets was rare in those days. It would be the same as how it is for us today. The only difference is we aren't expecting any more messages. They would be waiting and anticipating His revelations.
- God calls Samuel. Samuel thinks it is Eli calling Him.
- Eli, suspecting that God is speaking to Samuel, tells him how to respond.
- God's message was of condemnation toward Eli.
- Samuel told Eli the message, and Eli humbly accepted it.

Applications:

- What is the point of the interesting account of God reaching Samuel? Two reasons:
 - God is speaking to Samuel, but Samuel keeps thinking it is from Eli.
 - Sometimes we don't hear the messages the Lord is sending to us because we keep attributing the to earthly things, and don't see the spiritual messages in the events of our lives.
 - Being dumped by a girl: we can act like it's all the girl's fault, but maybe God is trying to tell us that we aren't worthy of a girl.
 - God is also making a point for Eli.
 - We know that the word of God was rare, and we see Eli's excitement at the prospect of the Lord revealing Himself to Eli.
 - Why was the word of the Lord rare? God wasn't speaking to Eli because of his disrespectful worship. When the Lord finds the worthy servant Samuel, he begins to reveal Himself again.
 - Eli was missing out on the wonderful opportunity to speak with the Lord because of his disrespect.
 - There are many consequences of rejecting the Lord's authority. When we leave the authority of God and live disobediently, we miss many blessings in life. We see good Christian spouses married to good Christians. They didn't marry the people that were wasting their younger years procrastinating their needed spiritual growth.
- Eli had great excitement to hear the word of God.

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- Are we that excited to hear the word of God? To learn from His authority?
- Even when the message of the Lord was negative for Eli, he still accepted it.
 - Respecting the Lord's authority is accepting His word when we don't like it.
 - We need to humbly conform to the commands of God even when it condemns us.
 - People try to change and fudge His word when it condemns them. This is open rebellion of His authority. He condemns divorce. He condemns homosexuality. He doesn't allow women to be leaders in worship service. We must accept His authority whether we like it or not.

3:19-4:1

- God revealed Himself to all Israel through His worthy servant Samuel.

4:1-11

Story:

- The Philistines camped against Israel for battle.
- To their surprise, the Israelites lost.
 - *They knew their loss was somehow related to God, so they decided to take the ark into battle. The ark was a VERY sacred object that represented where God abode. Only once a year could the high priest enter into the room in which it stood. How could they justify taking it into battle?*
- The ark gave them great faith and an assurance of victory. Even the Philistines were fearful of the ark.
- The battle started and the Philistines won. They killed Hophni and Phineas and captured the ark.

Applications:

- Faith without obeying God's authority is useless. Let's look at examples of their faith:
 - They were surprised they lost. They knew that God wasn't supposed to lose. They had faith in God's power.
 - They knew getting God on their side was the only way they could win. They believed that bringing a golden box into battle would ensure their victory. They cheered so loudly that the earth shook.
 - It is clear that they had immense faith in the power of God, but we see that it did them no good because they lost the battle.
- They lost because their faith wasn't coupled with obeying God's authority. Let's look at examples of their spurning of His authority.
 - Why did they lose the first battle? Because they were disrespecting His authority for the past many years. Eli allowed his sons to profane the

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worship. The nation didn't do anything about it either. There were years of empty worship. There were years of worshipping no according to His authority.

- Their loss was God's way of trying to wake them up, but they didn't understand. They wondered, "what's the matter with God?" Instead they should have asked, "What's the matter with us?"
 - It is similar to Joshua losing the battle at Ai. Joshua questioned why God would allow that to happen. The answer was because there was sin in the camp.
 - When we don't submit to God's authority, we no longer have His protection of acceptance. We need to be careful that we've been worshipping Him properly the past few years, otherwise we won't be saved from Hell.
- After losing the first battle, they were still unwilling to submit to His authority.
 - They knew their loss was related to their relationship with God.
 - Instead of changing themselves, they tried to change God.
 - They should've gone back to the given authority (The Law: the thing that told them what they needed to do), and change their worship to conform God.
 - Instead of submitting to God's authority, they decided to follow their own authority.
- We don't have the authority to change the Lord's worship.
 - First the nation was condemned for worshipping God disgracefully. Then they were condemned for altering the pattern of worship.
 - Some churches want to change God's pattern of worship to improve things. If we feel that our worship needs improvement, we need to go back to God's authority and see what we need to change. We can't go into our own minds and make up things that need to change.
 - Our good faith doesn't give us the right to alter worship for God with the intention of improving worship.
 - Improper worship comes from a disrespectful attitude.
 - We see that the nation's sins are bad, but what's worse is their disrespectful attitude that will keep leading them to sin.
 - They didn't respect God's authority. That led them to worship Him improperly for many years. They didn't respect Him. That led them to take the ark into battle.
 - They should've considered how sacred the ark was and respected it. They should've never had the audacity to bring it into battle.
 - We need to have the same respect for God's word. It is the sacred revelation of God. If we sufficiently respect His word we won't be tempted to misuse.

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- We need to have the same respect for God. How could we dare consider ourselves able to improve the design that He has set for us? We can't.
- It is useless to discuss NT doctrinal semantics with someone that doesn't fully respect God and His authority. We might say, "The Bible doesn't authorize musical instruments in worship service." They might say, "Yeah, but where does it say you can't. I like how the instruments make the songs sound better." They don't respect the Lord's authority enough to limit their worship to the exact way He commands.
- Often times, people are ignorant when they are disobeying God's authority. This doesn't make it ok.

4:12-22

Story:

- A man from battle comes to tell Eli that his sons have died and the ark has been stolen.
- Eli falls over backwards and breaks his neck.
- Phineas' daughter-in-law goes into early labor and dies because of the distressing news.
- The child is named Ichabod saying, "The glory has departed from Israel."

Applications:

- The result of disregarding God's authority is His disregarding of us.
 - When the people didn't heed God's authority, He left them. How long do you want to talk to someone that doesn't listen?
 - They brought the ark into battle thinking they had God with them. Little did they know God had left a long time ago.
 - Worship and sacrifice to the Lord are as empty as that box when they aren't done under the spectrum of His authority.
 - God protected His people for years, but not after the Jews rejected Christ and the apostles. He left them when they disregarded His authority. The result was the destruction of Jerusalem.
 - Rev 2:4-5 (*Remember therefore whence thou art fallen, and repent and do the first works; or else I come to thee, and will move thy candlestick out of its place, except thou repent.*) is a threat from Christ to remove a church from His regard if they don't regard His authority.
 - We won't be spared from the destruction of Hell if we don't regard His authority.

5

Story:

- The Philistines took the captured ark, and placed it with their idols. God showed His authority over the idols.
- Everywhere they moved the idol, God caused plagues to burden those people.

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- They began to fear the ark so much that they wanted to give it back to Israel.

Applications:

- God can glorify Himself even when His people don't
 - We might be worried that God allowed His ark to be stolen. It might make Him appear weak. God didn't let that happen.
 - Even though His people didn't respect His authority, He made the other gods submit to Him, and He made the foreigners submit to Him.
 - God has authority whether we respect it or not. On a planet that does not regard His authority, we might doubt His power. Do not be mistaken. Just because His people don't respect His name doesn't mean He doesn't have authority on earth. There will come a day (much like I Sam 5) when God will teach the world to respect His authority.

6

Story:

- The Philistines wanted to return the ark, so they asked their priests what they should do.
- The priests told them to send it back with gold and gifts. They had developed a healthy fear of God.
- They set it on a cart with some cows. They didn't even want to return with it. They declared that if the cows returned home by their own will that the plagues truly were from God. If the cows went somewhere else, the plagues were simply coincidence.
 - This is a good example of understanding God's providence in the OT. We assume that they should know that God was involved in everything they did, but here we see their uncertainty. Things were not that different for them then than they are for us today.
- The ark returned to Beth-Shemesh. The people were foolish enough to open the ark. God killed 50,070 people that day.

Applications:

- God has the capacity to make us respect Him, but He'd rather we do it voluntarily.
 - God used force and fear to make the Philistines respect Him. In this chapter we see that they were more respectful of the ark than the flippant Israelites.
 - The Philistines respected God, but what was missing? They didn't love God. They just respected the ark because they were afraid of it. They wanted to get rid of it. God wants more from His people.
 - We see that we need to respect God, but the Philistines were able to do that. God wants us to respect Him because we love Him (not just out of fear).

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- The Israelites still didn't respect God.
 - As soon as the ark returns, they open it. After all the care and attention we see the Philistines take in disposing the ark, this deed seems very disrespectful and foolish.
 - RESPECT GOD ENOUGH TO TREAT WHAT HE'S GIVEN US CAREFULLY.

7:1-14

Story:

- They took the ark to the house of Abinadab for keeping.
- It stayed there for 20 years as the lamented.
- Then Samuel speaks to the people and tells them to repent and remove their idols.
- The people repent.
- As they are gathered to one central area for prayer, the Philistines camp against them to destroy them all.
- Unprepared and defenseless, the people cry out to Samuel. They ask him to continue making his petition to God.
- While Samuel was offering the sacrifice, the Philistines drew closer to destroy to Israelites. Then the Lord sends a great thunder to confuse the Philistines.
- The Philistines run away with the Israelites hot on their trail. The tables have turned.
- Samuel makes an Ebenezer to remember this significant event.
- Thus the Lord delivered them from the hand of the Philistines.

Applications:

- True respect for God demands repentance.
 - The people feared and lamented God, but they still hadn't let go of their idols. They knew they had made mistakes in the past that had immense consequences, but they were unwilling to repent.
 - If we truly respect God's authority we will make a full repentance removing all sinful things from our life.
- God wins battles for those submissive to Him.
 - Many years later, this story has come full circle. The Philistines have camped against the Israelites, but the Israelites have a much different attitude.
 - This time the Israelites were submissive.
 - They had finally begun to worship God properly.
 - When they were in trouble they didn't make up any bright ideas to save themselves. They trust in God.
 - They didn't follow their own authority. They followed God's.
 - Thus God wins the battle.

7:15-8:9

Story:

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- Samuel devotes his life to prophesying and judging the people. He keeps Israel on track for many years.
- As he grows old, he appoints his sons as judges; however, they are very wicked.
- The people decide that they would rather have a king instead of a judge.
- Both Samuel and the Lord are offended by this request.
- Though He is hurt, God commands Samuel to appoint a king over them.

Applications:

- When we fail to accomplish the plan God has given us, we don't have the right to conceive a new one.
 - This is similar to the people deciding to bring the ark into battle.
 - God had set up judges to rule over Israel. When the judges were God fearing (like Samuel), everything was fine; however, when sinful people (like Samuel's sons) were in power, things weren't so good.
 - Instead of asking Samuel to appoint new judges (as the Lord would have them do), they ask Samuel to give them a king.
 - If there's a problem, we should fix it by rectifying it according to the already God given precepts. We can't just make up new solutions to manmade problems.
 - If our worship is lacking, we need to investigate the scriptures to inspire ourselves with the love of Christ instead of adding musical instruments.
 - We can't trust our own authority to fix our problems. The Lord's plan is perfect. We are the imperfections. We need to fix ourselves, not God.
- When we reject God's plan, we reject Him.
 - The reason the people didn't have an earthly king is because God was their king.
 - Since they didn't have a proper respect for God, they were easily able to reject His system of things and ask for a king. By rejecting His order, they were rejecting Him.
 - When we want to change God's plan for the church, we reject God.
 - God established His word as our authority. What happens when we replace His word with the authority of men?
 - Christ is our priest in heaven. What happens when we replace Christ with earthly priests? We reject Christ as our priest.
 - Christ is the head of the church. What happens when we replace that heavenly head with a pope? We reject Christ as our head.
 - When we change God's plan and replace elements with people or earthly things, we are replacing God. We can't reject His plan without rejecting Him.

8:10-22

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Story:

- Samuel warns them how kings are going to make their lives more difficult.
- They want a king regardless. They want to have a physical king to fight their battles and lead them. They want to be more like the surrounding nations.
- Samuel repeats their words to God.
- God commands Samuel to appoint a king.

Applications:

- Our ideas and designs are inferior to God's. We can't improve God's plan.
 - It was the people's idea to have a king. Samuel shows them how a king is going to make everything worse.
 - When we trust ourselves enough to change God's plan, we make problems for ourselves.
 - With every change man has made to God's commands and plans, there have been problems.
 - The Catholic Church stepped out God's authority and refused priests the right to marry. They tempted many to become pedophiles.
 - Churches ignore the true message of the gospel and created the social gospel. They helped create many shallow lost "Christians".
 - Churches began to misuse the Lord's money for superficial and secular things. The result is preachers and churches only interested in making money.
 - We need to trust that God knows best, and not step outside His authority by trying to improve His plan with our own ideas.
- Rejecting God's authority is telling Him that we aren't satisfied with His plan.
 - They wanted a human king to fight their battles and protect them. This is what God was doing for them, but they wanted someone else to do it.
 - This hurts God. It is the same as a wife wanting another man to support and nurture her. Because the husband loves his wife, his number one goal is to take care of her. Being rejected from this responsibility hurts him because he feels as if his wife isn't satisfied with his care and love.
 - The people told God that they weren't satisfied with his protection when they asked for a physical king.
 - We tell God that we aren't satisfied with Him when we reject His authority.
 - When we alter worship service by adding instruments, plays, candles, or other superficial things, we are telling God that we aren't satisfied with His plan for worship.
 - When we command others to pray to saints, we are telling God that we aren't satisfied with Christ as our intercessor.

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- When we command others to confess to a priest for forgiveness, we are telling God that we aren't satisfied with Christ as our mediator.
- Doubting God's plan is doubting God.
 - They wanted to change God's plan so they could have a physical king. They wanted their king to save them from enemies.
 - They doubted God's plan. God was the one that saved them from the enemies, but when they doubted His plan, they doubted Him.
 - When we change worship, we doubt God's plan, and doubt God.
 - When we add entertainment and food into worship service, we doubt that God's word is able to convict people without bribing them.
 - When we have youth groups that go to movies and play on church basketball teams, we doubt that God's word is able to transform the youth.
 - When we add offices and positions (bishops, archbishops) we doubt that God's plan is able to keep order in His church.
 - When we doubt these things, we doubt God's ability to design and run His church. God made the world. He is able to make a church. We can't improve it.
 - I Cor 1:20 (*Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?*) and 25 (*Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.*) show that God is wise and we are foolish. We need to trust His plan.
- We need to trust God's authority over men.
 - The Israelites wanted to be like the other nations.
 - All the other nations had kings to fight for them. When the Israelites wanted to be like the other nations, they were trusting in man's authority over God's.
 - There are many different "churches" doing many different things. We must always remember to trust in God and do as He says, and not false prey to changing our worship to resemble the false churches around us.
 - I Cor 27 (*but God chose the foolish things of the world, that he might put to shame them that are wise; and God chose the weak things of the world, that he might put to shame the things that are strong.*) teaches that God purposely chose to organize things against worldly standards.
 - God made a point to design things against human nature. Consider how illogical (according to world standards) it is to send a meek, humble, and poor servant destined to save the world by dying miserably. That doesn't make sense. If that's the wisdom He used to establish the church, we can expect that His wisdom in organizing the church will not resemble worldly standards.

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- We worry that the world might think our worship to be bland or boring. If that's what they think, that's fine, but that's according to worldly standards. That's not our authority. God is our authority.

9:1-14

Story:

- Saul was a simple but tall good-looking man.
- Saul goes off with his servant to look for his father's lost donkeys.
- They couldn't find them, but they decide to visit Samuel the prophet.

9:15-17

Story:

- God tells Samuel that He will show him that man that He has selected as king.

Applications:

- God is the authority in choosing the king.
 - We can see that even though God is going against His wishes, He is still the one in authority over the selection of the king.
 - Samuel must obey God's authority in anointing the new king.

9:18-24

Story:

- Saul comes to Samuel.
- Samuel tells Saul about his donkeys and invites Saul to eat with Him.

9:25-10:16

Story:

- Samuel and Saul spend that day talking together.
- The next morning Samuel wants to speak the word of God to Saul before he sends him away.
- Samuel anoints Saul as king, and goes on to tell him some prophecies.
 - Anointing is a ritual done to signify choosing someone for a certain task. Christ means the "anointed one". Christ was chosen for the task of saving the world from sin. Saul is chosen for the task of leading the nation.
- Samuel tells Saul that some men will tell him about his donkeys and he will meet some prophets and begin prophesying.
 - These two events were given as signs. There is no established kingdom, so it will be a challenge for Saul to begin acting like a king. These signs were given as proof meant to empower him to accept his responsibilities as king.
- After these signs Saul is told to "do what the Lord required him to do". After these proofs, Saul was given the first task to exercise his authority as king.

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- Then later he was commanded to go to Gilgal and wait seven days for Samuel to make a sacrifice. This was going to be his first test to exercise his trust in God's authority.
 - In the next few chapters, we will see how these things transpire.
- Both proofs are fulfilled by verse 13.
- Saul goes back to his father but does not tell him about the events with Samuel.

10:17-27

Story:

- Samuel goes to the people and tells them the amazing deeds of their God whom they are rejecting.
- He commands them to assemble according to tribes, and begins casting lots to determine who would be the next king.
- Saul is selected, but was hiding behind some baggage.
- Saul is the new king, but there are others that don't approve.

Applications:

- There is no reason to reject God as our authority.
 - The people rejected God as their king, but not for any shortage of deeds. Before Samuel appoints their new king, he reminds them of the amazing saving deeds He has done.
 - We need to consider all the amazing things God has done for us before we think about revising His plan. He has never failed us and given us reason to change His plan.
- God is still the authority in selecting new king.
 - Casting lots was the way God would use His providence to make decisions for the people.
- There will always be people that don't respect the Lord's authority.
 - Even after bending to the will of the people, there are still those who did not respect His decision for king.
 - There's no point in trying to change God's plan to suit humans, because there are always people who will never be satisfied with the Lord's authority.

11

Story:

- The Ammonite nation besieged one of the Israelite border cities.
- The Ammonite would only accept surrender if the Israelites would gouge out their right eyes.
- The Israelites call for help.
- When Saul hears the news, he becomes angry and calls the entire nation to him.
 - This is the deed that "he is required to do" alluded to in 10:7.

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- The nation joins him and they smite the Ammonites.
- After the battle, supportive Israelites want to kill those whom didn't originally accept Saul as their king, but Saul refuses this.
- He claims that it was a day in which the Lord has gained victory.

Applications:

- This event was for the purpose of establishing Saul as king.
 - As mentioned before, there was no established kingdom, and there were those who didn't want Saul as king. It would be a challenge for Saul to exercise his authority as king over the nation. This event allowed him to prove his worth and gain the nation's support.
- Realizing that God is the authority will teach us humility.
 - Saul didn't feel the need to defend his name because he knew that God was in power.
 - Sometimes in churches, people get very personally involved and defensive. If we remember that God is the leader, we will be more worried about defending His name instead of our own. This will teach us humility.

12:1-5

Story:

Before Samuel passes his authority to King Saul, he reminds them that he has never defrauded them.

Applications:

- Things are fine the way God establishes them.
 - Samuel wants the people to know that he has done them no wrong. When the days of wicked kings come, they will look back at the time of Samuel, and remember how much better it was.
 - Samuel wants the people to know that God's way is always best.
 - Before we change God's ordination, remember that His way is always best. The more we change His pattern, the more earthly and evil it gets.

12:6-18:

Story:

- Samuel preaches about all the times God has appointed men to save them from trouble.
- He preaches to them about their need to continue to submit to God. Their success pivots upon their willingness to obey Him.

Applications:

- God has always been the authority.

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- When there were troubles, God would send a human to act, but it was always God's authority that really saved the people.
- Our salvation depends on our willingness to submit to His authority.
 - With or without a king, the nations success depended on how closely they followed God.
 - Throughout the different ages of this world (Patriarch, Mosaic, Christian), submission to God has always been a continuing factor.
 - During the times of the Israelite kingdom, they were tempted to leave God for idolatry. Today we can be tempted to leave God's authority for denominationalism. Every generation has their temptation. Regardless of the era of circumstance, remember that submission to God is a constant we must always maintain.

12:16-25

Story:

- After Samuel's sermon, God sends a powerful thunderstorm.
- The thunderstorm leaves them afraid and helpless. They realize their sin, and pray for forgiveness.
- Once again, Samuel exhorts them to stay on the right path.

Applications:

- A proper perspective of God will teach us to submit to Him.
 - After being rejected, God sends a thunderstorm to show the people His true authority.
 - Weather is an entity only controlled by God. Only He has authority over it.
 - Once the people saw the awesome authority of God, they realized how great their sin was.
 - There are many churches that carelessly and ignorantly transgress God's authority. If we don't understand the amazing power of God, we will do the same; however, if God revealed His true self, all Christians would fear and make sure that they were acceptable to Him.
 - Once we understand God's true authority, we are less likely to undermine it.
 - How do we ensure a proper perspective on God's authority? Search the scriptures to see how He reveals Himself. Studies like these teach us why we are so careful to stay within the Lord's authority.
- Christians have a perfect forgiveness.
 - The people claim that they added to their sins by asking for a king.
 - God kept pardoning the people for their iniquities, but He remembered.
 - As Christians, we are given a clean slate after every new rededication to the Lord. We need to appreciate this.

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- Samuel considers it sinful to neglect praying for the people.
 - God is all authority, but He delegates His responsibilities to humans as well.
 - It was Samuel's responsibility to lead and aid the people. He considered it sin to shirk that task.
 - Do you have that sense of obligation? Are you responsible for others? Do you consider it sin to not pray for those around you? You should.

13:1-14

Story:

- Saul gathers 3,000 soldiers to fight against the Philistines.
- Jonathon conquered a small Philistine garrison, and Saul proclaimed it to all Israel. This is kind of like shaking a hornet's nest.
- Saul summoned more Israelites at Gilgal.
- The Philistine nation came out with a total of 36,000 soldiers. Israel was greatly outnumbered.
- The people became afraid and hid in the caves. Saul fearlessly remained in Gilgal while his soldiers trembled.
- After waiting seven days for Samuel to come and make a burnt offering, (This was the test God had given him (10:8). This was to see if Saul would respect God's authority.) Saul forced himself to do it because his soldiers were deserting. Only the priest had the right to offer this sacrifice. Saul did not have the authority to do so.
- After the sacrifice was completed, Samuel arrives. Samuel condemns Saul for his foolish behavior and tells him that his dynasty would end with him.

Applications:

- Faith doesn't give us the right to disobey God's authority.
 - Saul displayed a great deal of faith that day, but it didn't help him because he wasn't obedient.
 - Signs of Saul's faith:
 - He knew it was his responsibility to free the people from Philistine oppression, and he knew God would help him do that. This led him to boldly (recklessly is more like it) confront the Philistines.
 - He had 3,000 men total. He proclaimed the destruction of the Philistine army to incite the enemies. They were far outnumbered, but Saul wasn't shaken.
 - His soldiers were hiding in caves, crossing back over the Jordan, and deserting, but Saul did not waver. He remained at Gilgal those 7 long days of testing.
 - Even the sacrifice had some faith. He knew he had to do it, and that he would win the battle against impossible odds. Some might consider his premature sacrifice to be a sign of weak faith, but I see it more as impatience.

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- Though Saul had all that faith, it did him no good. In the end he transgressed God's authority and lost his kingdom.
- We can't expect our good faith to pardon us of our transgressions against his authority. Faith is necessary, but it doesn't change the fact that we sin against him. Regardless of our faith, we need to make sure that we are respecting His authority.
- We don't have the right to disobey God's authority because we think it would be appropriate.
 - Logically Saul had to offer the sacrifice to get the Lord's approval, and then on to the fight before all his soldiers fled, but that didn't excuse him from transgressing the Lord's authority.
 - He thought it was best to offer the sacrifice himself, but where did he get the authority to do that? He listened to himself, not God. We can't put ourselves in the position of authority just to suit the situation.
 - Sometimes we think situations give us the right to step outside God's authority. This isn't true.
 - In any situation, we must respect God as our only authority.
- We need to treat worship with the proper respect.
 - Notice the manner in which Saul offers the sacrifice. He just did it because he knew he had to before battle. He didn't do it out of love or respect. It was a menial task that needed to transpire before he could get on to (what he considered to be) the important stuff.
 - Do we treat worship this way? Is it a task and requirement we do just to get out of the way? Do we do it just to get on "our side"? "I go to church so I can go to heaven." "I pray because I need something."
 - We need to remember that worshipping God isn't the means to an end. It is the end. Take worship more seriously, and give it proper respect.

13:15-23

Story:

- After the sacrifice, Saul numbers his people. After all the deserters fled, his meager 3,000 was reduced to a feeble 600.
- The Philistine army of 30,000 separated into three parties. They are on the move to conquer the Israelites.
- Israel didn't even have proper weapons. They had to pay Philistines to sharpen their farming tools.
- They didn't need weapons though. They had the Lord's anointed.

14:1-14

Story:

- Jonathon leaves the Israelite camp with his armor bearer to go fight some Philistines.

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- He realizes that his victory over the Philistines doesn't depend on numbers. He knows God wins battles by His power.
- Jonathon and his armor bearer conquer the small garrison.

Applications:

- Faith in God's ability to win the day will improve our worship.
 - Jonathon knew that numbers didn't matter to God. God is able to win.
 - We need to stop thinking about numbers.
 - If we consider that number of Christians versus lost souls, we can feel overwhelmed and give up teaching.
 - If we consider the number of times we've failed with a specific temptation, we can be overwhelmed and give up fighting.
 - Faith in God's ability to win will give us hope against hope and improve our spiritual lives.

14:15-23:

Story:

- After Jonathon conquered the garrison, God sent an earthquake to startle the Philistines.
- The Philistines started to flee. Saul sees this and decides to capitalize on the moment.
- He asks for the ark. We aren't completely sure why, but it could be to make some sort of tribute to God before the fight.
- When Saul sees that the commotion increases, he tells the priest to "withdraw his hand." I take this to mean, "Forget about it. We're going into battle now."
- As the Israelites attack, the Philistines are confused and attack each other. Hebrews that lived among the Philistines switched sides and fought the Philistines. The cowards that hid in the caves came out and joined the fray.
- God won the battle that day.

Applications:

- We must remember that the work of God's people is to glorify Him.
 - Saul was more interested in winning the battle than glorifying God.
 - He was doing God's work, but with no regard to God. He was doing God's work, but not glorifying God.
 - When he saw the opportunity to win the battle, he knew he had to petition God, but skipped it when it was going to be a hindrance to the fight.
 - This was a careless thoughtless deed before God.
 - We need to remember that the work of Christians and the church is to glorify God.
 - Sometimes we get caught up with baptizing people, getting more people at church, and having more Bible studies that we become more involved with the competition and challenge than serving God.
 - A church that identifies itself by its attendance, collection, building, preacher, or Bible classes has begun to lose its focus.

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- The church is identified by the spirit of the Christians that dwell there. There are churches of five people that are more impressive than churches of 500.
 - We shouldn't just worry about getting baptisms. We should worry about praising God. Baptisms will happen if we focus on praising God.
- Let's not lose focus of why we do the things that we do. The purpose of the Lord's work is to glorify Him.

14:24-46

Story:

- Saul made an oath that the people couldn't eat until they conquered the Philistines.
- This wasn't a very smart oath because it weakened all the soldiers.
- Since Jonathon was away from the camp, he didn't hear the oath. He innocently ate some honey and was refreshed.
- When the Israelites won against the Philistines that day they were so hungry that they ran and ate raw meat. Eating meat with blood is sinful according to Gen 9.
- Saul is angry about this and makes an altar (his first thus far).
- Saul inquires of God about some battle plans. God doesn't respond to him.
- He concludes that God isn't responsive because someone has broken his vow.
- He casts lots to determine the perpetrator.
- Lots fall on Jonathon, and Saul attempts to kill Jonathon, but the people save Jonathon.

Applications:

- Human authority is inferior to God's authority.
 - Saul made a foolish rule that needlessly burdened the people. This is why they should've been content with God's authority. It is wiser and better.
 - There are great human leaders, but all humans are bound to fail. God's leadership will never fail.
- Human authority will lead others to sin.
 - Not only did Saul's oath needlessly burden the people (making them hungry and weak), it tempted them to sin (eat meat with blood).
 - If someone tells someone else that they can't eat meat, and the listener believes, that person sins every time he eats meat. Why do we burden others with extra rules increasing their opportunity for sin?
 - Forbidding priests to marry has led to many sins. Paul likes being single, but even he said, "it is better to marry than to burn with passion." This unnecessary burden has tempted many to sin.
 - I Tim 4:2-3 (*through the hypocrisy of men that speak lies, branded in their own conscience as with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God created to be*

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received with thanksgiving by them that believe and know the truth.)

- Never regard human authority as equal to God's authority.
 - Saul could be forgiven of being a foolish leader. That happens. Saul's great sin is considering his authority to be equal with God's.
 - Saul was ready to kill anyone who transgressed his oath. Gen 9:6 (*Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed*) is an explicit statement of God refusing murder. This is right after God flooded the world. It is clear that God reserved capital punishment as His right alone. By attributing death to his oath, Saul placed his law as equal to God's.
 - As leaders in the church, we might make foolish decisions, but foolish decisions can be rectified. If you consider you decisions, however, to be equal to God's, you won't be willing to change them.
 - The Catholic Church made a claim that it can't uphold. The claim that the Church is able make and change laws as God's authority; yet, they make foolish decisions, change them, and change them again. Is that God's authority? No. That is people placing their authority as equal to God's.

- God won't speak to us when we won't listen.
 - Saul inquires God, but God doesn't respond. Why? I think it is because Saul has refused to listen. Why keep talking to someone who refuses to listen?
 - When we continue to rely and trust our own authority, eventually God will quit giving efforts to lead us. If He does speak to us, we'll be deaf because we've already got our own plans.
 - We can fill our time and life with worship, but it isn't necessarily right worship, and we might never know because we can't hear him over the noise of our own laws.

14:47-52

Story:

- Saul spent lots of time fighting, and God was delivering the enemies into his hand.
- He had a family.
- The whole time he had to be at war with the Philistines.

15:1-23

Story:

- Samuel told that Saul wants him to completely destroy the Amalekites.
- Saul destroys everything except the best cattle and the king.
- God speaks to Samuel about His disappointment. Samuel is distressed all night.
- Samuel meets Saul. Saul is pleased with himself assuming that he has obeyed God's commands.

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- Samuel questions why Saul didn't follow God's commands exactly as He said.
- Saul claims that he wanted save the cattle for sacrifices, but reveals that he was afraid of going against the people's wishes.
- Samuel says that God has greater delight in obedience than sacrifice.

Applications:

- God's choosing us gives Him to right to lead us.
 - Samuel gives Saul a command from God. Before he does, he reminds Saul that he was chosen of God. That is why God has the right to tell him what to do.
 - We are chosen of God. This is clearly stated in Eph 1:3 (*even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.*)
 - This is His church. He built. He paid for it. He chose who could enter into it. HE HAS THE RIGHT TO BE THE AUTHORITY. We have no right to make any decisions or changes. We must obey God because He is our authority.
- Small transgressions against God's law are big transgressions against God's authority.
 - Saul thought that he obeyed God because he did everything almost the way God said. Close enough, right? No.
 - Does God care if we don't do things EXACTLY the way He says? YES HE DOES. That's what this story is here for.
 - If it isn't exactly the way God specified, it isn't His way at all.
 - Being close doesn't cut it. We need to do exactly as He says.
- We can't justify going against God's authority because we have good intentions.
 - Saul thought that making sacrifices would be okay. It wasn't what God said, but since we're worshipping Him, it'll be okay.
 - God cares. God only wants our worship and sacrifice if it's done obediently. Sacrifice and worship are empty without obedience.
 - We can waste many hours at church if we aren't worshipping God obediently.
- When we going against God's law, it is for selfish reasons.
 - Saul claims that he transgressed God's commands so he could worship God. That sounds noble, but it isn't entirely true. We see that the reason he kept the animals alive is because the people told him to.
 - They were hiding behind the excuse that they wanted to offer sacrifices so they could get what they want. They were being selfish.
 - The only reason a nation would spare a king is to parade him through the streets to celebrate their victory. Saul's decision wasn't done with God in mind. It was made for selfish reasons.
 - There are many things that churches do in the name of Christ, but behind every step away from God's authority is a selfish motive. Let's be honest

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with ourselves and determine if we are thinking about God or us when we worship.

15:24-35

Story:

- Saul wants to be forgiven, but it's too late. The kingdom has been removed from him.
- As Samuel walks away, Saul grabs and tears his robe. This symbolized the kingdom being torn from Samuel.
- Samuel cuts the king into pieces.

Applications:

- Refusing God's authority will result in our refusal into His kingdom.
 - Saul wouldn't accept God's authority. God wouldn't accept Saul into His kingdom.
 - If we refuse to accept God's authority as a church, our church won't exist in His kingdom.
 - If we refuse God's authority as a Christian, we won't be in His kingdom.