

## CHOSEN BY POPULAR DEMAND

### 1 Chronicles 10

Children's game: Follow the leader

**How do you decide who gets to be the leader?**

How do you decide who should be the leader among God's people?

What are the prerequisites we should look for?

We naturally look for a dynamic person who can stand up in front of others and motivate them to join in and follow.

We want someone who can get things done!

Wouldn't that kind of person be useful in God's hands?

However, when we evaluate that way,

we forget that we're judging on the basis of external appearances.

God is most concerned about the condition of the heart

**(1 Sam. 16:7).**

God's counsel to Samuel, when he's seeking someone to take Saul's place, points to the main problem Israel had when looking for a king.

From the very beginning Israel set their eyes on *external* features; like people today, they're looking for someone who's *capable* of leading God's people.

Israel doesn't understand a basic principle of God's way of doing things:

**God doesn't need a capable person to lead His people!**

**God is looking for people who seek Him with all their heart.**

God can give such a person all the talent he needs to lead His people.

At the conclusion of his years of leadership over Israel, David passes on to his son, Solomon, the most important advice he learned during his years of experience. **1 Chron. 22:19a; 28:9**

What God wants is someone who commits himself to seek God before *anything* else!

God is seeking worshipers who want to please Him—not just go through the motions!

Chronicles focuses on *the end* of Saul's reign.

His reign demonstrates the consequences when God's people try to do His work *our way*, when we set out to do it the same way as the world accomplishes its purposes.

**They looked for a leader that would satisfy man's standards for leadership—but they didn't insist on fulfilling God's standards.**

**GOD WANTS PEOPLE WHO COMMIT THEMSELVES TOTALLY TO HIM.**

**LEADERSHIP FOR GOD'S PEOPLE SHOULDN'T BE CHOSEN ACCORDING TO THE WORLD'S STANDARDS.**

One of the main purposes of Chronicles is to elevate the reign of David and his dynasty, by demonstrating how God chose and directed him.

One way of doing that was by placing the start of David's reign along side of the tragic conclusion of Saul's, to show the contrast between the two.

Saul is presented as the first king of Israel; but also as the king who was set aside for David's kingdom to be established.

For that reason, the history of the ruler of God's people in 10-29, begins with Saul, David's predecessor.

The author supposes that his readers are familiar with the facts of Saul's life.

1 Samuel focuses on the details of his reign.

Chronicles only tells about Saul's *death*.

**SAUL'S BRILLIANT START 1 Sam. 10:20-24; 11:2-7, 11-13, 15; 12:12-15, 20**

**SAUL'S TRAGIC END 1 Chron. 10:1-12**

In spite of Saul's brilliant beginning, his reign ends in ruin, because he isn't worthy to rule God's people. **1 Sam. 13:13-14**

**SAUL'S DEATH 10:1-7**

Saul dies in conflict with the Philistines at Mt. Gilboa.

His army is wounded and can't defend him.

Therefore they're able to chase him down.

They kill all Saul's sons except Ish-bosheth (2 Sam. 2-4).

Then they go after Saul and wound him.

Rather than be disgraced by allowing pagan Philistines to torture and kill him, Saul asks his shield bearer to kill him.

When he refuses, Saul kills himself.

His helper realizes he can't accept the blame for killing the king of God's people.

He commits suicide to demonstrate his loyalty to the king and to avoid any appearance of treason or unfaithfulness.

When the Israelites realize their king is dead, they all flee.

**SAUL'S EXPOSURE 10:8-10**

When the Philistines arrive, they can't make fun of him, nor torture him as was their custom, because he's already dead.

So they do the best they can: decapitate him and hang his body on the wall.

In an attempt to maximize the media blitz, they send his head elsewhere. They place it, together with his armor, in the temple of Dagon, their god, as a tribute to him for the victory.

In oriental cultures, the power of the gods is proven by the victory of their people over other nations on the battlefield. The Philistines' victory is "evidence of Dagon's superiority to Yahweh."

Therefore, Saul's head is hung in the temple in tribute to him for his victory.

**SAUL'S BURIAL 10:11-12**

In light of the pagan perspective on the power of the gods, Yahweh demonstrates, 2<sup>nd</sup> time in O.T., Dagon's inability to help his people (1<sup>st</sup> time => 1 Sam. 5:1-5).

Yahweh isn't defeated at Gilboa!

A small band of valiant men enter Dagon's territory and take Saul's remains, and those of his sons, right out from under the nose of their god.

The Philistine god sits quietly, unable to stop these mere mortals.

What kind of god is this Dagon anyway?

That's the way man's gods are.

They could never defeat Yahweh.

The attitude of these valiant men of Jabesh merits attention.

When they hear about the public display of the king and his sons, they go after the bodies, to bury them adequately.

At the beginning of his reign, Saul rescued them from the hands of Nahash, the Ammonite (1 Sam. 10:27-11:15).

Now they have the chance to repay him, even though it's after his death, by providing him a decent burial.

They act valiantly to put a stop to the evil being done against him.

David congratulates them for loyalty to the king, even after his death.

God will show them *His* loyal love and David will treat them well (2 Sam. 2:5-6).

Two demonstrations of respect toward the authority God established, even when he's *not* following God's revealed will:

1. His shield bearer refuses to touch the king to kill him, even though Saul asks him to.
2. Brave men of Gilead risk their lives to give the king an honorable burial.

God is pleased with those who acknowledge His right to rule,  
by submitting to the authority He has established.

## **SAUL'S FAILURE 10:13-14**

### **The popular reason for Saul's tragedy**

#### *What the people want*

Saul's dreams are doomed from the beginning because  
the people set him up.

The people lay aside their loyalty to Yahweh, their true  
King, to establish one like other nations have. **1 Sa.**  
**8:7, 19-20**

**They want a king like other nations have.**

God wants His people to be different!

*He* is to be their king!

The man on the throne is His representative and  
ought to be like Him!

They want him to be like all the other kings!

#### *What the people see (1 Sam. 9-14)*

Saul possesses qualities that would make him  
an excellent king.

As king over any of the pagan nations he would be a  
great king!

1) **He's humble 1 Sam. 9:21; 10:22**

2) **He's handsome 9:2**

3) **He's strong and muscular 9:2**

4) **He's respected by the people 10:23-24**

5) **He's a valiant warrior 14:47-48**

6) **He's mightily used by God 9:16; 10:6-10**

The people had great expectations!

Saul would make a GREAT king!

**Saul has everything *the people* want in a king,  
But he lacks the most important requirement:  
necessary for the leader of God's people**

**his heart isn't set on seeking God** before anything else.

**WYSIWYG**

BUT--WYS isn't WYG

Compare David's call: 16:1, 6-13; 13:14

**The Personal Reason for Saul's Tragedy 10:13-14**

**The writer's purpose in including this story is revealed in the final statement.**

**He uses it to point out the cause of failure and death of Saul.**

The LORD put Him to death!

These statements are especially important because **they stand out in such vivid contrast to David's reign, the king that God established, who was determined to follow Him.**

1 Samuel traces the degeneration of Saul to teach us that **obedience to God's revealed will is the foundation for godly leadership.**

But Samuel doesn't make such a concise, pointed summary as Chronicles.

**Chronicles presents 3 reasons for Saul's death:**

**1. He rebels against God** (NIV--"He was unfaithful to the Lord")

(NAS--"He committed a trespass against the Lord")

**Saul persists in revealing disobedience and egotism, traits which have no place in a theocracy, where the king represents God and His revealed will before the people.**

**Most important characteristic of a leader of God's people: that he be faithful to God. 1 Cor. 4:1-2**

**God will never bless His people unless we do things His way and give Him first place.**

This virtue is lacking in Saul; therefore God rejects him.

## 2. He disobeys God's Word

Saul's unfaithfulness is confirmed on **two occasions when he openly disobeys God's orders:**

- \* **He gives greater importance to the urgency of the moment than to what God says.**

### 1 Sam. 13:1-23 (8-14)

He was supposed to wait for Samuel.

But Samuel didn't get there soon enough.

Instead of waiting for Samuel to arrive, Saul becomes impatient.

They had to do *something!* NOW!

Otherwise it would be too late!

"We'd better not wait for God!

We often get the idea that we can't wait for God.

If we don't DO something now, *God might lose!*

Saul stops waiting and offers the sacrifice on his own.

According to God's Word, that wasn't his place.

- \* **He substitutes his plan for what God says.**

### 15:1-35 (2-3, 8-29 [25])

During the war against Amalek, God tells him to destroy everything.

Saul has a better idea!

**Saul chooses a more logical alternative,**

to take better advantage of what's there.

Therefore, **God rejects him.**

He takes away his kingdom and Saul dies, a sad failure, in the hands of pagan Philistines.

**God wants His children to obey His Word**

**as a demonstration of our submission to His will.**

Our commitment to seek Him, and to do His will, is more important than going through all the "right" motions in worship.

Our worship is meaningless if our heart isn't committed to seek Him first.

True worship acknowledges His right to rule.

It's not about style, traditions, or ritual!

It's about seeking Him and giving Him the praise He deserves, from hearts committed to doing whatever He wants!

### **3. He fails to seek God's will**

#### **POSITIVE--He seeks help from a medium.**

He seeks guidance from a spiritist medium—"spirit guide"—to see what to do.

**Israel isn't to seek God's will by the counsel of spiritists** nor false prophets; only through prophets God designates. Deut. 18:10-14

**Saul is aware of this prohibition because he enforces it! 1 Sa. 28:9**

Once God rejects him, he seeks help wherever he can find it. 1 Sa. 28:8-19

#### **NEGATIVE--He doesn't ask the Lord**

**He never learned that God's Word must have first place.**

#### ***THE ROAD TO FAILURE:***

**\* UNFAITHFULNESS TO GOD**

**\* DISOBEDIENCE TO GOD'S WORD**

**\* FAILURE TO SEEK GOD'S WILL**

**Saul's failure came because he rebelled**

**He didn't obey all God commanded him to do.**

**1 Sa. 15:11**

All the religious ritual in the world is meaningless, unless it's accompanied by a commitment to do what pleases Him!

Appropriate worship **MUST** be accompanied by seeking to do His will.

His offense is much greater because he is the leader of God's people.

**If the king is not faithful to Yahweh, his people won't be either.**

When leaders don't follow God, their people imitate their example.

**Therefore, God removes him and gives His Kingdom to His own king,**

**David, a king who will seek above all else the way to please God; a "king after God's own heart.**

### **WHAT'S THE DANGER FOR US TODAY?**

As a body? As God's people

On a church level--the people's mistake in their standard of selection

How might we fall in the same trap?

How can we be sure that we avoid it?

As individuals? You and I

Danger of "going through the motions" --not committing our heart to give God first place.

On a personal level--the importance of following God's standard (Give some examples of what this might mean)

Saul's specific mistakes--set out above

*Correcting a false impression!*

This is a warning *to God's people*

about going through the motions without truly acknowledging God's right to rule.

It's not intended to give *people without Christ* the impression that we must try to be good enough to earn our way to God.

***We'll never be good enough!***

The only way to come to God is through trusting His Son!

He offers us eternal life as a gift, if we'll trust Jesus--stop trying to earn our way!

When we have become members of His family, then God wants us to worship Him, in Spirit and in truth, from hearts totally committed to Him.

If you've never made a decision to trust Christ, issue for you isn't how you worship!

God wants you to trust His Son and receive new life through Him.

### **WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO ABOUT IT?**

Will we make a commitment to follow Him whether anyone else does or not?

Implications for worship?

Saul's priority for worship, but without obedience.

He wants to be faithful in worship—but isn't committed to do what pleases God!

Are WE just going through the motions?

Or, are we committed to giving Him first place in our life?

Are we committed to worship Him in spirit and truth?

Worship without commitment to God = Ritualism.

God isn't seeking our ritual.

God is seeking our worship!

He's seeking people who are totally committed to pleasing Him!

He's seeking people who demonstrate that commitment in our worship!

—giving Him the spontaneous expression of praise that only He deserves.