Unit 11, Session 1

A Shepherd Slays a Giant

Summary and Goal
When Samuel’s career as prophet and judge was winding down, the people of Israel demanded that Samuel appoint them a king so they could be like the nations around them. God warned them of the foolishness of this demand and gave them over to the consequences of their request, consequences that did not take long to manifest under King Saul’s failed reign. In this session, we will look at David and see how he became the second king of Israel. In David we see the kind of king that God desires while also catching a glimpse of the future King God would one day provide. David won the battle over Goliath, one of the most dangerous enemies Israel ever faced, but Jesus, our perfect King, won the ultimate victory in His battle with sin and death.

Session Outline
1. God’s king is measured by the Lord’s standard, not the world’s (1 Sam. 16:1,6-7,11-13).
2. God’s king trusts in the Lord’s deliverance (1 Sam. 17:23,26,34-37).
3. God’s king wins an improbable victory for the Lord and His people (1 Sam. 17:45-51).

Session in a Sentence
God wins the victory through His chosen one and is due all glory and honor.

Christ Connection
In David we see a picture of an unexpected warrior and king. David defeated a seemingly unbeatable enemy with courageous faith in God’s power. Jesus is the greater King whom no one expected to win the victory over sin and death, but through His death and resurrection, He is mighty to save.

Missional Application
Because we have been forgiven through the power of the cross, we don’t pursue the nations in judgment but with the message of grace that all may hear the good news and be swept up into the glorious love and grace of God.
**Group Time**

**Introduction**

**EXPLAIN:** Use the paragraph on page 39 in the Daily Discipleship Guide (DDG) to begin a conversation about the reality that we all serve someone or something, most often a *functional* king of some kind.

American singer-songwriter Bob Dylan penned the broad-sweeping lyrics to “Gotta Serve Somebody,” saying everyone sits under the rule of someone or something, and he was absolutely right. No matter the decision we make, big or small, we all look somewhere to give our lives guidance. In fact, it’s safe to say that we all have a *functional* king in our lives. Many of us balk at the idea of an actual king sitting over us on a throne with a scepter and a crown. But when we examine our lives closely, we see that we all have something in our lives that rules us, even if it is somewhat more abstract.

**INTERACT:** Ask group members the following questions.

- What are some functional kings that can rule over our lives? How are these functional kings dangerous and destructive? (relationships; appearance; health; influence; power; career; success; money; possessions; grades; sex; entertainment; man-centered religion)

**EXPLAIN:** Elaborate on what it means for everyone to have a *functional* king: The problem is not that we serve a king but that we serve the wrong king much of the time.

- Instead of serving the Creator God as King, we usurp His authority and put part of His creation on the throne of our lives in His place. These misplaced, illegitimate kings may vary, but the result is always the same—each of these kings leads to frustration, despair, and ultimately to our own destruction.
- We are made for more. Our hearts long for the true King, the One who will secure us and satisfy us in ways that no other king can. Thankfully, God has provided that King for us in His Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus is the King our hearts long for and the only One whose reign over us does not enslave us and lead to destruction but rather frees us and leads us to life.

**SUMMARIZE:** In this session, we will look at David and see how he became the second king of Israel. In David we see the kind of king that God desires while also catching a glimpse of the future King God would one day provide. David won the battle over Goliath, one of the most dangerous enemies Israel ever faced, but Jesus, our perfect King, won the ultimate victory in His battle with sin and death.

*For session-by-session training videos, please visit MinistryGrid.com/GospelProject.*

*For additional teaching options and other resources, please visit GospelProject.com/additional-resources.*
**Point 1:** God’s king is measured by the Lord’s standard, not the world’s (1 Sam. 16:1,6-7,11-13).

**SAY:** Chapter 16 serves as a turning point in 1 Samuel, and in Israel’s history. The Lord had rejected Saul and had a new king in mind (13:14; 15:28). What kind of king would you choose? Someone similar to Saul, only taller, stronger, and even more kingly in appearance? If so, you would be in good company because that’s who the prophet Samuel had in mind.

**READ** 1 Samuel 16:1,6 (DDG p. 40).

1  The **Lord** said to Samuel, “How long are you going to mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and go. I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem because I have selected a king from his sons.”

6 When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and said, “Certainly the **Lord’s** anointed one is here before him.”

**EXPLAIN:** Use the first paragraph in the DDG (p. 40) to highlight the outside-in approach evident from Samuel in this passage and characteristic of ourselves too.

Each of us has a picture in mind, a standard, of what a king is supposed to look like. They need to be good looking or athletic or intellectually inclined or skilled in some particular field. In fact, we’d prefer they have all of these visible qualities and more. Why is that? Because we are quick to judge people strictly by appearance. This outside-in approach to life is often how people measure value and success.

- We all see certain qualities as essential for someone to be successful in leadership. If someone looks good, they must be good. If they look powerful and strong and courageous on the outside, then they must be that way on the inside. The key to a better interior life is seen as a better exterior life.
- We cannot underestimate how important it is to recognize the flaws and dangers of this outside-in approach. Jesus reserved some of His hardest sayings for those who focused on looking good on the outside while ignoring what was on the inside (see Matt. 23:25-28).

**SAY:** Samuel learned quickly the lesson that God sees people differently than we do. After seeing Eliab and thinking he must have been the Lord’s anointed, God spoke to Samuel about the kind of king He had in mind.
READ 1 Samuel 16:7,11-13 (DDG p. 40).

7 But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or his stature because I have rejected him. Humans do not see what the LORD sees, for humans see what is visible, but the LORD sees the heart.”

11 Samuel asked him, “Are these all the sons you have?”

“There is still the youngest,” he answered, “but right now he’s tending the sheep.” Samuel told Jesse, “Send for him. We won’t sit down to eat until he gets here.” 12 So Jesse sent for him. He had beautiful eyes and a healthy, handsome appearance.

Then the LORD said, “Anoint him, for he is the one.” 13 So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully on David from that day forward. Then Samuel set out and went to Ramah.

PACK ITEM 5: THE HEART: Use the Isaac Watts quote on this poster and the second paragraph in the DDG (p. 40) to contrast God’s inside-out approach with our outside-in approach to evaluating a person—the heart matters most to God.

What does it mean that “the LORD sees the heart” (16:7)? God doesn’t merely look at a person, He looks into a person. He takes an inside-out approach, not outside-in like we do. When God looked through Eliab’s impressive exterior, He didn’t see the interior He desired. But when God looked through David’s modest exterior, being the youngest of his brothers, He saw something different, something He desired in the one who would be Israel’s next king.

• Even though David had an attractive appearance (16:12), there was something deeper and much more significant about him. No one who saw David that day imagined they were looking at God’s next anointed king of Israel. Why? Because they all judged him by the world’s standards. They were taking an outside-in approach, one which would have placed Eliab, and even Saul, above David when it came to choosing a king. But the Lord judged David by a different standard, a higher and truer one—He began with his heart.

Commentary: The Bible speaks of the heart as the center of who we are. It’s not less than our emotions, but it’s certainly more than our emotions. The heart drives all that we do. Our motives, intentions, and desires all reside in our heart, which is why we are told in Proverbs to guard our heart above all (Prov. 4:23).

INTERACT: Ask group members the following question.

How can believers evaluate someone with an inside-out approach? (follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit; examine the fruit of someone’s actions and words; evaluate people based on the teachings of Scripture; view people through the lenses of grace and humility; evaluate people based on their expressed heart of devotion to Jesus)
**Point 2: God’s king trusts in the Lord’s deliverance (1 Sam. 17:23,26,34-37).**

**SAY:** Sometime after David was anointed the future king of Israel, he went to a battle against the Philistines. Jesse had sent David not to fight but on an errand to check in on his brothers in the army (17:17-19). For forty days, Saul’s army had been listening to the Philistines’ giant champion, Goliath, shout against Israel in defiance, taunting them to send one of their best men to fight him. Whoever won would win the battle for his people.

**READ** 1 Samuel 17:23,26,34-37 (DDG p. 41).

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23 While he was speaking with them, suddenly the champion named Goliath, the Philistine from Gath, came forward from the Philistine battle line and shouted his usual words, which David heard.

26 David spoke to the men who were standing with him: “What will be done for the man who kills that Philistine and removes this disgrace from Israel? Just who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?”

34 David answered Saul: “Your servant has been tending his father’s sheep. Whenever a lion or a bear came and carried off a lamb from the flock, I went after it, struck it down, and rescued the lamb from its mouth. If it reared up against me, I would grab it by its fur, strike it down, and kill it. 36 Your servant has killed lions and bears; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, for he has defied the armies of the living God.” 37 Then David said, “The Lord who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine.”

Saul said to David, “Go, and may the Lord be with you.”
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**EXPLAIN:** Use the paragraph in the DDG (p. 41) to note the stark contrast in responses to Goliath between Israel’s army, including Saul, and David.

For forty days, the army of the Lord, including Saul, trembled in fear under Goliath’s slander; David heard Goliath once and trembled in holy anger. His immediate desire to take action against the giant demonstrated the depth of his trust in the Lord. From David we can learn two vital components to genuine trust in the Lord’s deliverance:

**Voices from the Church**

“We must learn to be like David and see things with the eyes of faith. We must hear things with ears tuned to the frequency of heaven.”

–Gbile Akanni and Nupanga Weanzana
**EXPLAIN** the **first** of two vital components to genuine trust in the Lord’s deliverance (DDG p. 41):

1. **Trusting in the Lord’s deliverance means looking back at past victories.**

   - *David:* David was not deterred one bit when Saul tried to talk him out of this challenge (v. 33) because David’s confidence in God did not begin on the day he heard Goliath. Long before, David encountered lions and bears while tending sheep in the wilderness. Before defending the house of Israel, he first learned to defend his father’s flock. On those occasions, David learned to trust in the Lord and to lean on God’s strength, not his own. Even though he was likely a skilled fighter, David never boasted in his own strength. He was clear to credit the Lord as the One who was faithful to rescue him from the lion and the bear (v. 37).

   - *Believers:* This is important for us to remember: As soon as we see an enemy or a trial approaching, before we look forward and develop a battle plan, we must first look backward on what God has done for us in the past.

**INTERACT:** Ask group members the following questions.

- What are some victories you have seen God accomplish in your past? In the recent history of your group and your church? (be prepared to give answers of your own to jump-start the conversation)

**EXPLAIN** the **second** of two vital components to genuine trust in the Lord’s deliverance (DDG p. 41):

2. **Trusting in the Lord’s deliverance means taking action.**

   - *David:* David believed that the same God who delivered him from the bear and the lion would also deliver him from Goliath. But David also knew this would not be automatic; He would have to fight. He would have to gather stones, take a stand before Goliath, and face the giant who mocked his God. This was how it had happened in the wilderness before. Yes, the Lord delivered him, but the Lord’s deliverance came **through** David’s action. That is what trust looks like.

   - *Believers:* Spurred on by God’s faithfulness behind us, we walk in faith and take the initiative in whatever situation we face, knowing that the Lord is going ahead of us and that He will accomplish His plans through us.

**INTERACT:** Ask group members the following question.

- What are some ways past victories have strengthened you for present and future battles? (be prepared to give an answer of your own to jump-start the conversation)
Point 3: God’s king wins an improbable victory for the Lord and His people (1 Sam. 17:45-51).

SAY: Goliath challenged one warrior to face him in a “winner take all” contest, so Saul had a big decision to make. If young David marched out to battle Goliath and he lost, which seemed the certain outcome of the battle, the Philistines would have defeated the Israelites as a whole. But persuaded by David’s faith, Saul allowed David to face Goliath in one of the briefest yet most epic battles in Scripture.

READ: Ask a volunteer to read 1 Samuel 17:45-51 (DDG p. 42).

45 David said to the Philistine: “You come against me with a sword, spear, and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord of Armies, the God of the ranks of Israel—you have defied him. 46 Today, the Lord will hand you over to me. Today, I’ll strike you down, remove your head, and give the corpses of the Philistine camp to the birds of the sky and the wild creatures of the earth. Then all the world will know that Israel has a God, and this whole assembly will know that it is not by sword or by spear that the Lord saves, for the battle is the Lord’s. He will hand you over to us.”

48 When the Philistine started forward to attack him, David ran quickly to the battle line to meet the Philistine. 49 David put his hand in the bag, took out a stone, slung it, and hit the Philistine on his forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell facedown to the ground. 50 David defeated the Philistine with a sling and a stone. David overpowered the Philistine and killed him without having a sword. 51 David ran and stood over him. He grabbed the Philistine’s sword, pulled it from its sheath, and used it to kill him. Then he cut off his head. When the Philistines saw that their hero was dead, they fled.

EXPLAIN: Use the first paragraph in the DDG (p. 42) to describe the imitation approach that people often take with this story.

David defeated the giant. So we should imitate David’s actions and attitude to overcome the “giants” in our lives, right? This is the imitation approach to application. It’s not necessarily wrong, but it is incomplete because David was still a sinner in need of a Savior, and only the Lord saves. Ultimately, the Scriptures are about this Savior, Jesus.

- We know the Scriptures are not primarily about David, nor us. We are not followers of David but followers of Jesus. Because Jesus is our greatest treasure, the perfect One into whose image we want to be molded, we must learn from but press beyond the imitation approach to applying the Scriptures.

Commentary: The Book of Hebrews devotes an entire chapter to Old Testament saints and how we should follow their example (Heb. 11; see also 1 Cor. 10:1-14). So we should learn what to do from David’s example here, just as we should learn what not to do based on what he would do later (see 2 Sam. 11).
INTERACT: Ask group members the following question.

What are some of the dangers of applying Scripture using only an imitation approach? (we set a standard for ourselves that we can never live up to; we rely on our own wisdom and strength to do what we think God wants; we will strive for holiness without concern for the gospel that grants righteousness and holiness to us through faith in Christ)

EXPLAIN: Use the second paragraph in the DDG (p. 42) to explain the imputation approach to this passage that points to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

David’s victory was imputed, or attributed, to his nation. And this points to what Jesus did for us. On the cross, Jesus defeated the ultimate giants of sin, death, and Satan. While we cowered in sin, He stood in our place and won the victory for us. This is the imputation approach. Believing that the final victory has already been won in Christ is what empowers us to face the giants in our lives with courage and faith.

• If we admire David’s finer moral qualities but stop there, we will miss the redemptive forest for the moral trees. We will fall into the works-based trap of trying to muster from within ourselves the attributes God says He is looking for. In doing so, we will experience nothing but failure and frustration. We will miss the better way of faith—God sent the true King who did for us sinners what David did for Israel, and just like David, Jesus won an improbable victory on behalf of His people.

Commentary: Ultimately, we are to find Jesus in the stories of the saints. David offers us a great model of faith in this moment, but we know he was far from the perfect king we need. We have the luxury of knowing in full what the author of 1 Samuel knew only in part. We are aware that a greater “David” would come one day. Many years later, David’s descendant, Jesus, came into the world to accomplish our salvation from sin.

FILL IN THE BLANKS: Provide group members with the answers for the call-out in their DDG (p. 42).

Christ as King: To restore His broken world, God promised a King who would deliver His people and restore all of creation. The promise of a coming King finds its fulfillment in Jesus Christ and looks forward to its perfection when Jesus returns for His bride, the church.

Essential Doctrine “Christ as King”: God has always been King over His creation, whether in heaven or on earth. Yet some of His creatures in both realms have rebelled against Him, leaving destruction in their wake. To restore His broken world, God promised a King who would deliver His people and restore all of creation. The promise of a coming King finds its fulfillment in Jesus Christ and looks forward to its perfection when Jesus returns for His bride, the church.
EXPLAIN: In this session, we have seen a picture of the kind of king God desires. He wants one whose heart is fully devoted to Him, one who trusts His deliverance and who will show how God Himself fights for His people. David exemplified these traits like no other king in the history of Israel. He not only provided us with an example to learn from but also points us to our true King, Jesus Christ, who died for us and rose again. Jesus is the One God put forth to rule and reign over us and grant us the salvation and freedom we long for. We have experienced a glorious victory through Him, and the world desperately needs to hear about His victory. May we be diligent to spread this message of victory and deliverance through faith in Jesus Christ.

READ the following missional application statement in the DDG (p. 43), and encourage group members to choose at least one of the options below as a way to respond to the truth of God’s Word.

Because we have been forgiven through the power of the cross, we don’t pursue the nations in judgment but with the message of grace that all may hear the good news and be swept up into the glorious love and grace of God.

- Does your life reflect the truth that Jesus has gone before you and won the victory? Why or why not?
- What are some opportunities for your group to serve and share the message of grace with those in your community?
- How will you share the good news of your victorious King Jesus with someone who is facing a giant in his or her life?

CLOSE IN PRAYER: Father, You see the heart and do not merely look on outward appearance, so left to ourselves, You know our enemies would defeat us. Therefore, we thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus, to conquer the giants of sin, death, and Satan through His life, death, resurrection, and ascension. Confident in the victory You have given us, strengthen us to proclaim the gospel of an unlikely Warrior-King to those in need of a Champion. Amen.

INSTRUCT: As your group departs, encourage group members to read and respond to the Daily Study devotions in their DDG (pp. 44-46), which build and expand upon the group study. Also advocate for small groups or families to use Encourage One Another (p. 47) for mutual accountability and fellowship grounded upon the foundation of God’s Word.
Daily Discipleship

Throughout the week following the session, use the ideas below to remind and encourage your group members to live as disciples of Jesus Christ. The Daily Study devotions in the DDG (pp. 44-46) will help group members get into God’s Word and study it for themselves. Encourage One Another (p. 47) will help group members and families fellowship with one another with purpose.

Daily Study

Brief daily devotions in the DDG (pp. 44-46) will help group members take initiative in their own discipleship.

- Make sure all group members have access to a Bible to read. Have some Bibles available to give to guests who may need one, or offer to get one and arrange a time to meet to give it and show how to navigate it for the devotions.

- Share the following idea from the devotion for Day 5 as a part of point 3 in the session: We don’t strap on our spiritual armor and pick up our spiritual weapons to win the victory; Christ has gone before us and already secured it. Instead, like the Israelite army, we charge forward in victory, not for it.

Consider leading by example and reading the daily devotions yourself with your own DDG. Based on your study, use brief messages throughout the week (group text, email, social media) to encourage your group to keep up with their daily time in God’s Word and to live it out. Here are a couple of examples you can use:

- Day 1: “God delights in taking those who are outwardly unspectacular but inwardly humble and doing amazing things through them for His glory.”

- Day 4: “Jesus was the unlikely hero who stepped forward to face off against the enemy of sin and death and defeated them in the power of God.”

Visit www.GospelProject.com/Blog for additional content and resources you can use to help group members gain more insight into their daily studies. Send group members a link or a portion of a blog post or other content that you believe will be helpful and encouraging for their time in God’s Word.

Encourage One Another

This brief plan for fellowship and accountability in the group member’s DDG (p. 47) will help groups of 2-4 people to meet sometime during the week to reflect on the session and to share how God is working and they are responding. It could also be used for family discipleship with students and children who are using The Gospel Project in their groups.

- Encourage group members to remind one another of God’s past acts of provision in order to instill confidence in His faithfulness for the future.

- See yourself as a member of the group who also needs encouragement in the faith, and participate in such a group this week.
Additional Commentary

**Point 1:** God’s king is measured by the Lord’s standard, not the world’s (1 Sam. 16:1,6-7,11-13).

“Having rejected Saul, the Lord takes the initiative to anoint the one who is ‘better than’ Saul (15:28). Samuel is roused from his mourning with a reproof (16:1). Since the Lord has made his decision regarding Saul, nothing will be gained by dwelling on the past. Samuel is to look ahead to the new thing the Lord will do.”

“When David, the youngest of the sons in Jesse’s family (cf. 1 Chron. 2:13-15), was selected as the Lord’s anointed, he joined a venerable crowd of Torah patriarchs selected by God in a way that confounded social norms. Other men who were not firstborn but who were selected by the Lord over their more socially powerful older brothers include Seth, Noah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Ephraim, Moses, and perhaps Abraham. It seems that the biblical record deliberately creates the impression that Yahweh prefers to use disenfranchised members of society—earlier in 1 Samuel the barren woman Hannah and the child Samuel—to do his most significant work (cf. Mark 10:31; 1 Cor. 1:27).”

“How many sons did Jesse have? In 1 Samuel, Jesse had eight sons (see also 17:12); however, in 1 Chronicles 2:13-15 only seven are mentioned. It is possible that one of David’s older brothers died early in life and was therefore not counted in the writer’s reckoning. Differences in the Bible regarding the names of Jesse’s sons amount to normal variations, roughly equivalent to nicknames today—Eliab = Elihu (1 Chron. 27:18); Shammah = Shimea (1 Chron. 2:13). These could be dialectical variants, as well.”

**Point 2:** God’s king trusts in the Lord’s deliverance (1 Sam. 17:23,26,34-37).

“This chapter is not so much about Samuel and David as it is about God. It portrays the Lord’s infinite and effortless superiority to all things human. The ways of the Lord confound even the greatest spiritual intellects and frustrate all earthly forces that would stand in his way. This chapter provides one of the most fascinating examples of the Lord’s inclination to choose ‘the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are’ (1 Cor. 1:28).”

“David’s words indicate he had not heard the announcement from Saul’s assistant (v. 25). The word disgrace is related to defy (vv. 10,25-26,36). Uncircumcised denotes someone outside God’s covenant. David saw the threat as not merely political (cp. v. 8) but theological. The armies of the living God, ironically, were terrified, but to David, God’s honor was at stake.”
Point 3: God’s king wins an improbable victory for the Lord and His people (1 Sam. 17:45-51).

“After a lengthy anticipation of the battle in the narrative, the battle was over almost as soon as it began. The words fell facedown describe Goliath falling face-forward. The force of the stone’s impact likely rocked him backward initially, but then he either lurched forward again to complete his fall or spun around face first as he continued to fall back (away from David) to the ground. Ironically, the same words, ‘fell facedown,’ are used to describe showing respect to superiors (20:41; 2 Sam. 9:6) and worshiping the Lord (Num. 20:6; Josh. 7:6), which Goliath had refused to do during his life.”

“The Bible never calls Goliath a ‘giant,’ nor designates him as one of the Nephilim nor Rephaim. Rather, 1 Samuel 17:4 simply records his height. The record of Goliath’s height, however, is not consistent among all the ancient versions of 1 Samuel. The Hebrew text records that Goliath was ‘six cubits and a span.’ A cubit is the distance between the elbow and the tip of the fingers (roughly 18 inches), while a span measures the distance between the thumb and the little finger of a spread hand (about 9 inches). Using this measurement, Goliath would be about 9 feet 9 inches tall. Other ancient versions differ in describing Goliath’s height. The Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament) lists Goliath at ‘four cubits and a span,’ which would make Goliath closer to 6 feet 9 inches in height. The ancient Jewish historian Josephus echoes a height of 6 feet 8 inches in his Antiquities of the Jews. Even if this lesser height were reliable, Goliath would still be counted a giant among the Hebrew people, whose average height was 15 inches shorter. However, the description of Goliath’s armor seems to demand a much larger man than even a 7-feet-tall individual. Goliath’s armor, weaponry, and personal stature indicate the physical presence of the man was indeed impressive. First Samuel 17:5-7 records his military equipment. The strength required to wield such weaponry seems evident. Goliath’s bronze coat of armor weighed 5,000 shekels—an astounding 125 pounds! The head of his spear weighed 600 shekels, or about 15 pounds. The strength and stamina necessary to carry and use these weapons, in addition to the other equipment, would require a huge man. Even though the height of Goliath at more than 9½ feet seems remarkable, only a man of similar size could handle this array of battlefield armaments.”

References
2. Menno Simons, A Christian and Affectionate Exhortation to All in Authority; in The Complete Works of Menno Simon (Elkhart, IN: John F. Funk and Brother, 1877), 81.
In this volume of *The Gospel Project*, we cover the roughly one hundred and twenty years of Israel’s heyday: the united monarchy. After decades of the devastating cycle of sin and deliverance and being ruled by a series of judges, the Israelites called on Samuel to appoint a king for them—one like those of the nations around them. God warned His people that what they were requesting would lead to heartache and trouble, but they insisted. So God, in His kindness, gave them what they wanted in order to teach them to trust Him.

What followed was a series of three kings: Saul, David, and Solomon, each ruling for about forty years. In some ways, these kings provide us with examples to follow: the fierce determination of David not to stand for anyone impugning God’s character; the mercy and kindness David showed to a foe and his family; the wisdom of Solomon. But we also discover that each of these three men fell woefully short of being the king God’s people wanted and needed, each one proving God’s warnings true. Bookending God’s people crying out as one for a king at the start of this volume, by the time we finish, we encounter God’s people being divided into two kingdoms.

Our takeaway is clear: The hope of humanity does not rest in any human king or leader but is fixed solely and securely in the King of kings, Jesus Christ. But at the same time, we see that God delights in using His people despite their failings. God would fulfill His covenant with David, even though he committed adultery and murder. This reaffirmed the promises God had made to Abraham generations before. And though Solomon would succumb to polygamy and idolatry, God used him to build the temple, a place for God’s people to worship and be in relationship with God.

So consider as you study: What might God do through us?