



GOD'S INCREDIBLE PLAN

Unit 7 • Israel's Kings

UNIT DESCRIPTION

This unit illustrates God's faithfulness and covers the time following the Judges when Israel was united under God's chosen kings (1 & 2 Samuel and 1 Kings). God's chosen kings, Saul, David and Solomon, began with a desire to follow God but all chose the temptations of the world. Saul rejected the word of the Lord; therefore, the Lord rejected Saul from being king (1 Samuel 15:23). David experienced both the consequences of his sin and God's grace. Unlike Saul, David repented, was reconciled to God and God kept His covenant with David. God made Solomon the wisest man in the world and chose him to be David's successor as king of Israel, yet Solomon's heart turned away from the Lord. God's support of Solomon's rich empire depended on Solomon's faithfulness to God. Solomon's disobedience resulted in a divided kingdom.

Saul and Solomon continued on their path of unbelief. David repented and remained "a man after God's own heart." The rejection of God's rule by all three, however, did not stop God from accomplishing His plan. Isn't it amazing how patiently He works with us in spite of our sin and rebellion? How gracious He is to continue to use us.



REBELLIOUS SAUL/SOVEREIGN GOD

God's Incredible Plan • U7#1 1st-3rd Grade • Jan. 4, 2026

Concept

God sovereignly establishes human leadership.

Goal

Students will learn that God is the perfect leader and king and that he wants to lead us.

Passage

1 Samuel 8-15

Key Verse: "And the Lord said to Samuel, 'Listen to the voice of the people... for they have not rejected you but they have rejected me from being king over them.'" 1 Samuel 8:7

Planning Ahead

Lesson Supplies	Craft Supplies
Lesson: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bibles Learning Activity #2 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>God's Highway game</i>• <i>Grace cards</i>• <i>1 large die with #s 1-4 each on a side and "GRACE" on 2 sides</i>• <i>3 different playing pieces</i>	Activity Stations: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Children's Guide to the Bible, Robert Willoughby</i>

*TEACHERS PLEASE NOTE

For clarity, the italicized areas in the Planning Ahead section indicate supplies that are in—and should be returned to—your classroom SHARED SUPPLY bag.

Background Information/Teacher Helps

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For 230 years, the Israelite nation enjoyed God's protection under the Judges sent by God. When Israel strayed, they experienced the negative effects of their unfaithfulness and cried to God for help. He responded time and again by sending a Judge to turn them back to Him in repentance.

The rebellious people of Israel rejected God's perfect leadership in exchange for the leadership of fallen human kings. Israel demanded that Samuel, the last and best judge, provide a king to rule them. This demand followed 20 years of Samuel and Eli's competent, God-fearing, spiritual and political leadership.

Clearly, the people chose a fallen, worldly system over the perfect, gracious rule of God.

Samuel felt personal rejection and pain over Israel's demands. God reassured Samuel that it was His leadership the people were rejecting, not Samuel's (1 Sam 8:7). God heard the people, gave them their way and appointed a king. The rest of the narrative in 1 Samuel 8-13 reveals God's dedication to continue working through human agency to accomplish His plan of salvation. "God was to use even the monarchy for His purpose and His plan. It was through this line of ancestry, through the tribe of Judah, that the King of Kings was to come, demonstrating God's ultimate Sovereignty. God, being Sovereign and also gracious, uses even our mistakes and wrong choices to work together for our good and His glory (see Romans 8:28)."[1]

The kings of the other nations were greedy, selfish, proud, disobedient and demanding. They heavily taxed the people, forced them into hard labor and demanded exclusive allegiance. God clearly warned Israel that this would be their plight if they chose human leadership (1 Sam. 8:10-18). "Nevertheless, the people refused to listen to the voice of Samuel, and they said, 'No, but there shall be a king over us that we also may be like all the nations, that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles'" (1 Sam. 8:19, 20). God chose Saul and had Samuel anoint him to show God's sovereign choice through human agency. Samuel's farewell speech in 1 Samuel 12 condemned Israel's past rebellion against God, recounting their actions from Moses through the Judges. He warned them to "Only fear the LORD and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you. But if you still do wickedly, both you and your king shall be swept away" (1 Samuel 12:24-25).

[1] Martha McCallum, Jane Hamblin, God's Incredible Plan, p. 57.

Incorporation Lg. Group

Introduction Lg. Group

Transition

Learning Activity#1 Lg. Group

Lesson Lg. Group

Activity Station

- **Research – Who is Samuel?**
 - **Instructions:** On pages 44-45 of Children's Guide to the Bible read with the students about the judges. Who were they? What did they do? What is the name of a judge we have studied? (Gideon.) Read about Samuel on pages 48-49. Discuss who he was and why he was important to Israel and to God's incredible plan.
- **Missions Prayer**
 - **Instructions:** Talk about and pray for the Oasis Giving campaign.

This week we are going to learn about Israel's first king. The Israelites wanted to be ruled by a human king rather than God. This distressed Samuel, the last and greatest Judge. Our key verse is, "And the Lord said to Samuel, 'Listen to the voice of the people... for they have not rejected you but they have rejected me from being king over them'" (1 Samuel 8:7). God assured Samuel that the people were not rejecting him but that Israel was rejecting God as their leader.

Listen as I read the conversation between God and Samuel from **1 Samuel 8:8-21** in the Bible.

The kings of neighboring countries were greedy, selfish and proud. They heavily taxed the people, forced them into labor and demanded that the people honor and worship them. God warned the Israelites that their king would be the same as all the others, but they rejected God as king anyway.

We're going to get together with the other classes to see a skit by the drama team.

Drama

"A Nation Depends on God – NOT!" skit performed by the drama team

Transition by a teacher: Why was Samuel angry with the Israelites? (They rejected God's leadership and wanted a human king.) Once again we see the Israelites rejecting God's rule and asking for something that would bring trouble rather than good for them. Return to your classrooms.

Grab a bible! Our key verse is "And the Lord said to Samuel, 'Listen to the voice of the people... for they have not rejected you but they have rejected me from being king over them'" (1 Samuel 8:7). God chose Saul to be the first king of Israel. We're going to take a look at Saul's life and see how he gradually allowed self-will (stubbornly doing what one wants no matter what someone else says) to overpower his desire to follow God. And we will also see that in spite of Saul's disobedience, God remained in control of His incredible plan.

Lesson Continued

Listen to what Saul said to Samuel when he was told that God had chosen him to be king. 1 Samuel 9:21, "And Saul answered and said, 'Am I not a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel, and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? Why then do you speak to me in this way?'"

Now turn in your Bibles to 1 Samuel 15 and read verses 1-3 & 7-23 with me.

- How did Saul disobey God? (He did not completely destroy everything.)
- How did Saul respond when Samuel confronted him? (He lied and tried to make it sound like he did it for God.) Samuel wasn't impressed, was he? He said that God is pleased with obedience and hates rebellion. God told him to completely destroy everything and Saul disobeyed.
- Was God's plan stopped because Saul was a disobedient king? (No.) God knew that Saul was no longer willing to do His will so He replaced Saul as king.
- Do you think God was surprised and disappointed that Saul disobeyed Him? Do you think He was worrying and wondering what He would do to get His plan back on track?

Actually, God knew before He created the world exactly what would happen until the end of time. He is never surprised or confused like we are. He has a plan and He will accomplish it through people as He chooses. When the person of His choice rejects His will, God is ready to replace that person with one who will serve Him with all their heart. And that person will experience God's work in their life.

Transition

God's plan will continue even when His chosen leaders reject His leadership. We're going to play a game now to give us a picture of how God's plan continues even when man chooses to reject His leadership.

Learning Activity# 2 Lg. Group

Game -- God's Highway

Instructions: Divide the class into teams. Place the 8½" x 11" game squares on the floor in numbered order according to attached sketch. Put an instruction square at each "no outlet" sign and the "eternal destruction" sign. Give each team a playing piece to mark their location at each turn. Each student will take a turn as the "mover" and "shaker" for their team. To begin the game, the first player from each team rolls the die to see which team starts. Begin on the "start" square. "Grace" or the highest number begins first. The next player will roll the die and move the number of spaces indicated, the third player will roll the die and move the number of spaces from the space of the previous player and so on until the end of the game. No matter what the roll, all must stop at the "stop" sign (f3) square and roll for life's destiny. Each team must roll "Grace" to enter God's Highway.

Learning Activity# 2 Continued

With a roll of 1, 2, 3, or 4, they must turn left onto Man's Highway to eternal destruction and wait there until they roll "Grace." With each turn they will try to roll "Grace." When they roll "Grace," they will enter God's Highway at the U square. Once on God's Highway, they will follow any directions on the space on which they land. If there are no directions stop on that space and wait until their turn to roll again. To return to God's Highway from one of the side streets, they must roll "Grace," pick a "Grace" card and a teacher will read it to the class. If they reach the "No Outlet" space, they must wait there until they roll "Grace," pick a "Grace" card, a teacher reads it to the class and they return to God's Highway. If the "Grace" cards are all read, turn them over and use them again. If they roll "Grace" while on God's Highway, they move ahead four spaces. The first team to make it to "Eternal Life" is the winner. Attached at the end of the lesson is a summary table for easy reference.

Debrief:

- You all began on Man's Highway to eternal destruction. What did you have to do to get on God's Highway? (Roll "Grace.")
- Who knows what grace is? (It is a gift given that is not deserved.) What is the greatest gift of grace we can receive? (It is God's acceptance.)

Good News

The truth is that some of you may not be interested right now in walking on God's Highway because you do not have a relationship with Him. God wants to have a relationship with all people. The problem is that He is perfect and we are sinners, and because of that he cannot have a relationship with us. To fix the problem, God came to live on earth as a man named Jesus. He lived a sinless life in perfect obedience to God. Because of His sinless life, His death took away all the sin in the world, allowing us to relate to God. To receive this gift of grace, the forgiveness of sins, we must admit that we are sinners and believe that Jesus paid for our sins by His death on the cross. If you tell God that you accept Jesus' death on the cross for you, you will be immediately accepted by God. That's what was meant on the sign to God's Highway – accept God's forgiveness through Christ's death. You will be on God's Highway to eternity with Him and God will give you the desire to walk with Him.

Once on God's Highway, if you turned onto one of the side streets did you lose the opportunity to get back on God's Highway? (No.) What did you have to do to get back on God's Highway? (Roll "grace.") Did any team stay on God's Highway all the time? What was the message on the grace cards? (God is always ready to bring us back to His truth. The truth is that we are very sinful and easily stray from God's will. But God is always working to bring us back and move us ahead on His Highway.)

Learning Activity# 2 Continued

In real life we don't roll a die to get on the road to heaven; we choose to accept His gift of forgiveness. But once we begin a relationship with God, we will still sin and choose not to stay on God's highway all of the time. And when we mess up there are often painful consequences we have to pay. But the amazing thing is that even though we reject God's plan for us, His plan continues and He continues to love and pursue us. God is in control, and His plan will continue into eternity. Because He is in control, He continues His plan through willing people. Saul is an example of a chosen leader who rejected God's will and continued on the wrong road until he died. In the next couple of weeks, we will learn about David who went off onto a side road and sinned terribly, but confessed his sin and was used mightily by God. Similarly to the "grace" side of the die in the game, it is God's grace that enables us to be used again when we rebel and reject God's leadership in our lives.

Transition

Let's get into small groups.

Learning Activity# 3 Sm. Groups

- What is the first thing you do when you mess up or make a mistake? (Suggestions to get started: Try to cover it up, lie about it, pretend you didn't do it, admit you were wrong and receive God's grace.)
- What happens when you aren't honest about your mess up? (Feel guilty, don't want to be with people or talk to God, afraid, angry, get in trouble.)
- What happens when you are honest about your mess up? (May get in trouble, but know I deserve it; experience forgiveness; feel free.)
- Why do you think God wants you to follow good leaders?

When you do anything but admit that you were wrong, you build a wall between you and God. You might not want to talk to Him or you might think He's angry at you. But He never stops loving you and is always glad for you to come to Him and tell Him you want to do things right the next time. The amazing thing is that you will experience closeness with Him.

Let's pray now. Let's thank God that even though we are very sinful, He wants to have a relationship with us and work through us to accomplish His Incredible Plan. Let's pray that He will strengthen us to do His will so we will less and less frequently get off on those side roads of confusion, despair, loneliness, anger, anxiety. Let's also pray that He will remind us that if we let Him lead us, He will work through us in amazing ways to accomplish His great plan for this world.