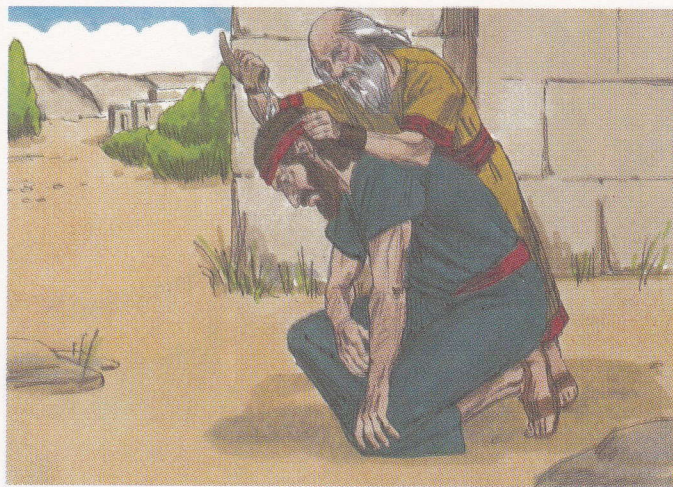


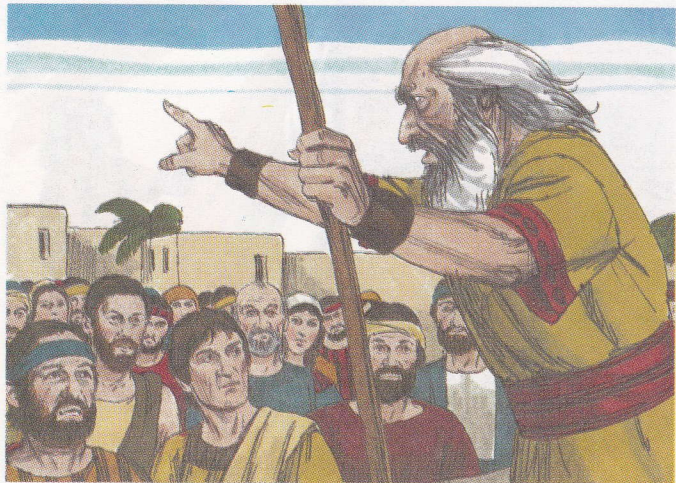
Saul—Israel's First King



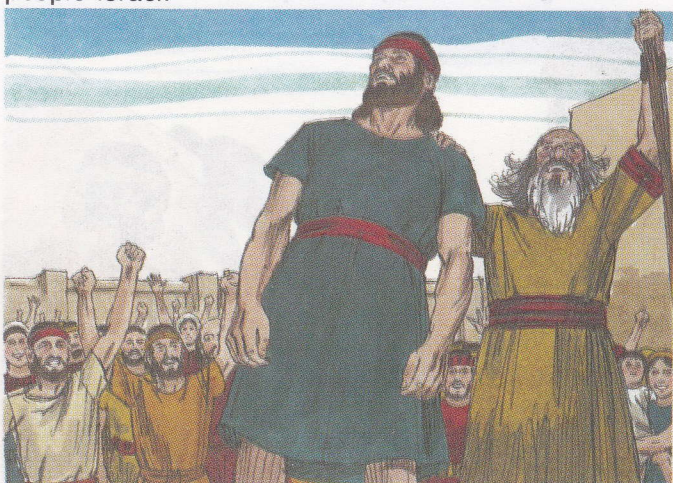
1 While searching for his father's stray donkeys, Saul had met the prophet Samuel. Samuel had surprising news for Saul: something special lay in store for him.



2 The next morning as Saul was leaving, Samuel poured olive oil on his head and kissed him. He said, "Saul, the Lord anoints you as the king of his people Israel."



3 Then Samuel called a meeting of all Israel at Mizpah: "The Lord says, 'I rescued you from Egypt, but you have rejected me by asking for a king. So now present yourselves before me.'"



4 So all Israel passed before the Lord by tribes and by families. From them, one man — Saul, a Benjamite — was selected. Samuel announced, "This is the man whom the Lord has chosen!"



5 After he became king, Saul led the people of Israel in many battles against their enemies, and he was always victorious. Unfortunately, Saul also did some very foolish things.



6 One day Samuel came to Saul and said, "The Lord is going to punish the Amalekites. Go and attack them and destroy them completely — men, women, children, and even their animals."



7 So Saul attacked the Amalekites and defeated them. Although he killed all the people, he did not kill their king, Agag, nor did he kill the best of the sheep and cattle.



8 Samuel angrily went in search of Saul. When they met, Saul said, "I have done what God commanded." But Samuel replied, "Then why do I hear the sound of sheep and cattle?"



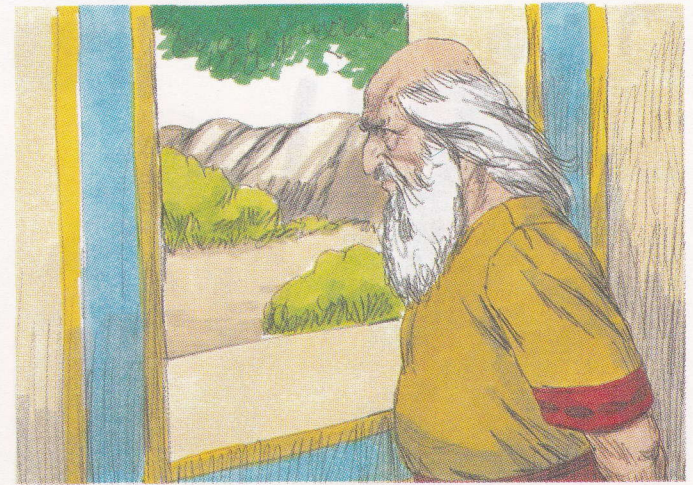
9 "Saul," said Samuel, "you are the leader of Israel! You have been anointed king by the Lord, who gave you orders to destroy these wicked people! Why, then, did you not obey him?"



10 Saul answered, "I did obey God! I went out as he told me to and killed all the Amalekites. But my men did not kill the best sheep and cattle. They brought them here to offer as a sacrifice."



11 Samuel said, "It is better to obey the Lord than to sacrifice even the best sheep to him. Because you have rejected the Lord's command, he has rejected you as king."



12 Saul and Samuel went on to Gilgal, where the prophet himself executed King Agag. After that Samuel never saw King Saul again, but he thought of him with great sorrow.