Lesson 1: Introduction and Selection of Saul (I Samuel 8-12)

**Background**

The United Kingdom follows the period of the Judges and covers ~120 years across 3 kings:

* Saul: 40 years (1051-1011 BC)
* David: 40 years (1011-971 BC)
* Solomon: 40 years (971-931 BC)

Since the period of the United Kingdom covers ~88 chapters within parts of I Samuel, II Samuel, I Kings, I Chronicles, and II Chronicles, this will not be a textual study. Instead, we will study the various events that happened in the lives of these 3 kings, discuss how those events inform their character, and consider the applications that can be made to our lives today. Our goals for the class are as follows:

* To obtain a better understanding of the United Kingdom as part of Israel’s history
* To study what made Saul, David, and Solomon different as leaders and to gain a better appreciation for how God used each man in accomplishing His purposes
* To make the lives of these 3 men more real by identifying lessons that can be learned and applied to our lives

**Questions**

1. What are the reasons why Israel demanded a king (8:5, 20)?
2. What was Samuel’s reaction to the people’s request for a king (8:6; 12:1-5)?
3. What was God’s reaction to the people’s request for a king (8:7; 12:12; 12:16-21)?
4. If God was displeased with the people’s request for a king, then why do you think He allowed it (9:16; 12:13-15; 12:22-25)?
5. Before the people asked for a king, God knew they would do so. What was to be the criteria for Israel’s king, and what was the significance of each rule (Deuteronomy 17:14-20)?
6. How was the people’s request for a king in keeping with their history and pattern of behavior (8:8; 8:19)? Provide some examples.
7. What prophecies did God give through Samuel that would result from the people having a king (8:10-18)? Give some examples of where the prophecies were fulfilled.
8. How is Saul physically described, and how did those attributes lend themselves to him being a king (9:2)?
9. What traits of character did Saul demonstrate in
   1. Searching for his father’s donkeys (9:3-14)
   2. His reaction to Samuel in his selection (9:18-21)
   3. His answer to his uncle (10:14-16)
   4. His introduction to the people at Mizpah (10:17-27)
   5. His rescue of Jabesh Gilead (11:1-15)
10. What signs did Samuel give Saul and what do you think was the purpose of those signs for Saul (10:2-8)?

**Topics for thought, discussion, and application**

1. The importance (and challenge) of raising godly children
   1. How does my responsibility as a parent to raise godly children go beyond the scope of my family?
   2. Is it possible to do everything right as a parent and still have children who do not grow into godly adults (Proverbs 22:6)?
2. The desire to be like all the other nations/the rest of the world – why do you think the things of this world are so attractive to Christians today?
3. The failure to trust God – what are some of the ways in which we fail to trust God?
4. The sinister nature of pride – why is pride a trap so easy to fall into (I Corinthians 10:12)?
5. Leadership – what are some of the qualities of a godly leader as seen initially in Saul?