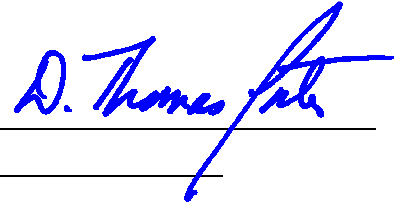


REV. D. THOMAS PORTER, PH.D.
 3422 Fallview Court ♦ Land O' Lakes, FL 34639
<http://PorterHouse.info> ♦ DrTom@PorterHouse.info
 813.962.5758^{Office} 813.728.5713^{Cell}
 Wednesday, June 22, 2016
 See more at <http://DThomasPorter.com/BibleStudies>

LESSON NOTES (EXPLORE THE BIBLE)

GOD HAS HEARD—THE “KING EXPERIMENT” FAILS, FOR NOW—SAUL IN THE WINGS?
 (1 Samuel 8) Lord’s Day, June 26, 2016



OVERVIEW

“Session 4” for this week in the *Explore the Bible Series*

The greatest threat to Truth is what is deemed useful.¹ We will ignore, manipulate, or even destroy evidence of a truth which we deem dysfunctional. God is one such Truth. When we fear the unknown of the afterlife, for example, God is a very useful Truth. When we want to do what is best in our eyes, God is not a useful truth; in fact, God is the bane of existence, the greatest challenge to our sovereignty, our dominance in the heirarchy of nature, and our claim to reified, divine legitimacy.

A QUESTION TO GET YOU THINKING:
 WHY DO WE TOLERATE, IF NOT LOVE,
 FASCISM WHEN FACING UNCERTAINTY?

When we sought to be like all the other folks, we rejected the Lord God. The truth of a king was useful to us; the Truth of a covenant relationship with God and His earthly judge was just too, well, old fashioned. Antiquated. Primordial. Tepid. Passe.

We sought a king, not the King.

¹This is an application of Porter’s First Law of Human Behavior—“Human beings see, hear, remember, understand, and do what they **want** to see, hear, remember, understand, and do.” Porter’s First Law of Human Behavior—Simplified: “People believe what is useful to them.” See <http://TheScoop.DThomasPorter.com/?p=150>

1 SAMUEL

CONTEXT²

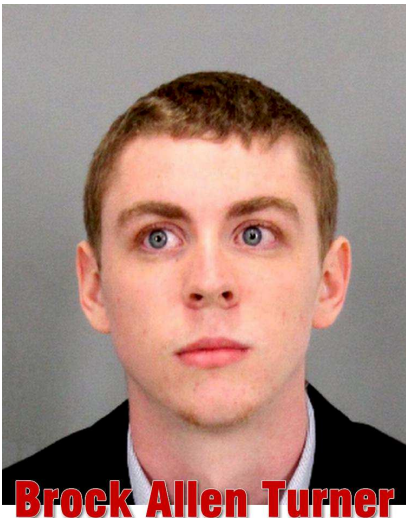
Humans are not all that smart. Nonetheless, we think we are. Such was the case with our first few generations in the land promised to Abraham, and his descendants—us.³ The Lord God gave us clear direction through a variety of judges—from Yeshua (*Yahweh saves*), son of Nun, to Samuel (*God hears*), son of Elkhanah—we decided we knew best. Sure some of the judges were great—Deborah created 40 years of peace. Some were lousy with short hair—Samson loved Delilah more than the Lord God.

In the midst of all this disobedient chaos, the presumably wise among us said we need a king. We had one, of course, but did not recognize Him. We thought His judges were the authority, rather than regents for the real King. Nonetheless, we persisted. We want a king! We want a king! We want a king! We want a king! We want a king! We want a king!



I'm sure the Lord God smiled. Wryly. You know how your father smiled when you told him you were going to climb that elm tree, the tree which had no stepping or holding limbs... And, so the Lord God prepared us for a king. Of course, none of us knew then, we were being prepared for the King.

1 Samuel tells the tale of two of our first kings—Saul from the tribe of Benjamin, the very tribe who had just stolen wives from Shiloh, and David from the tribe of Judah. Even his heritage wasn't pure—his great grandmother wasn't even Hebrew. Yes, the great woman Ruth revered by all as noble was a Moabite. Saul would pretend not to hear sheep bleating. David would murder, tolerate idols in his house, and commit a heinous act of adultery and cover up. And, these were just the first of our two “kings.”



What gave rise to the patience of the Lord God with us? He had a long, tedious lesson to teach. May we learn it well. The writer of Judges summed it up the lesson to be learned quite well...

Everyone did as he saw fit.

And so do we, when we allow the powerful to ravage the weak.

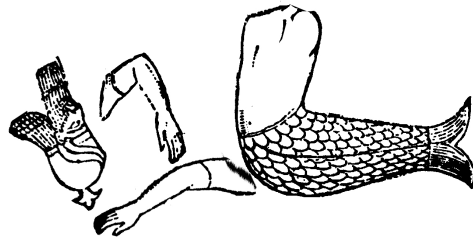
²See <http://DThomasPorter.com/BibleStudies>

³Galatians 3:28-29 reads... “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”

Due to our nonsensical attitude toward the Lord God, He permitted the icon of His presence—the ark of the covenant—to be captured in a battle with the Philistines. Initially, the Philistines were afraid of the “Hebrews” for the ark was known to be in their midst. But, the enemies of the Lord God prevailed—they often do when believers start believing in themselves. Eli’s sons were killed, and about 30,000 of our foot soldiers were killed. When Eli the priest for forty years heard about the news, he fell off his chair and broke his neck. Obesity has its own rewards...

1 Samuel 5:1-6. *Yahweh sends a strong message—do not mess with what I have made holy.* The Philistines took the ark of God from Ebenezer into deeper Philistine territory at Ashdod. Ashdod was the place where the temple of Dagon was located and it was there—stupid, stupid, stupid—they placed the ark of the Lord God.

Early the next morning when they came to the Dagon temple, “he” had *fallen on his face*. They put him back. And, the next morning? There was Dagon, on the floor, *fallen on his face*—this time with his head and hands broken off. What a sad torso.



They were freaked, so much that the writer indicated that as of this writing in 1 Samuel, the Philistines would not even broach the threshold of the Dagon temple.

Yahweh was not happy—the people of Ashdod had all manner of devastation visited upon them, even “tumors.”⁴ While mean, the Philistines were not too stupid, this time. The hand of the god of Israel is heavy, on us, and on Dagon—let’s move the ark to Gath. Again, Yahweh was not pleased—He moved against Gath—panic ensued with tumors of the groin. Next, let’s move it to Ekron. Not so fast, they yelled! We’ve heard about Gath and Ashdod. Send it back. Send it back. It was the right thing to do for those who didn’t die had been afflicted with tumors of the groin. Their “outcry went up to heaven.”

Q What caused the Philistines to change their language from “god of the Hebrews” (chapter 4) to “god of Israel” (subsequent chapters)?

Q What should we do with the ark of the covenant, if found before the Christ returns?

1 Samuel 6:11-16. After consulting their best minds, the Philistines decided to return the ark, but with gifts—models of rats and tumors *in gold*. This god *of Israel* may no longer hurt us if we gift Him back.

So they put the ark and the gifts inside on a cart and went straight to Beth Shemesh.⁵ The cows complained all the way, but they turned neither to the left nor the right. Five Philistine leaders followed the cow cart as far as the border to Beth Shemesh.

⁴tumors. The Septuagint adds... “*And rats appeared in their land, and death and destruction were throughout the city...*”

⁵The termination of the trip at Beth Shemesh is just as much a revelation of the hand of God as the journey itself, because it was one of the towns of Judah assigned to the priests at the time of the conquest (see Joshua 21:13-16).

The inhabitants were harvesting wheat, and looking up, there it was—the ark of the covenant. They rejoiced as the cart came to the field of *Joshua* of Beth Shemesh—it stopped beside a large rock. The cart was broken up for a fire and the cows were sacrificed as a *burnt* offering [holocaust]. The Levites took the gold objects and placed them on that rock. Also, the people also offered burnt offerings, and made sacrifice to the Lord God Yahweh. The Philistines were watching, and returned then back to Ekron.

- Q Why did they think the Lord God would be impressed with golden images of rats and groin tumors?
- Q Why do you suppose the Lord God Yahweh killed seventy citizens of Beth Shemesh for looking into the ark?

TEXT ISSUES 1 SAMUEL 8

1 Samuel 8:1-3. *Samuel's appointments do not follow his legacy.* Samuel had been a good judge—the hand of Yahweh had consistently been against our enemies, the Philistines, and there was a continuing peace with the Amorites. The towns (e.g., Ekron & Gath) where the ark had been placed, where the Lord God had wreaked His justice, were now back in our hands.

1 SAMUEL 8:1-3

When Samuel grew old, he appointed his sons as judges for Israel. ²The name of his firstborn was Joel and the name of his second was Abijah, and they served at Beersheba. ³But his sons did not walk in his ways. They turned aside after dishonest gain and accepted bribes and perverted justice.

But Samuel grew old and he passed on his position as judge to his sons, Abijah and Joel. They worked from Beersheba. His sons, however, did not walk in the ways of their father. They sought dishonest gain, accepting bribes as if it were standard operating procedure, and when called upon to decide according to the Law, they perverted justice.

- Q What elements of instruction would you have given Joel and Abijah?
- Q What's the significance of their work being centered around Beersheba? [Hint: Samuel always "went home" (Ramah) after going from town to town to decide what was just and unjust.]
- Q What bribes do our leaders accept to pervert justice?



1 Samuel 8:4-9. Samuel's appointments provide an excuse for ignoring the Judge. All the big wheels got together, and came to Samuel at his hometown Ramah.

Hey, you're old. And, your sons do not walk in your ways. Now whatcha gonna do? Appoint a king to lead us—our neighbors all have kings. We want a king. We want a king. We want a king. We want a king. We want a king. We want a king.



1 SAMUEL 8:4-9

So all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah. ⁵They said to him, "You are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways; now appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have."

⁶But when they said, "Give us a king to lead us," this displeased Samuel; so he prayed to the LORD. ⁷And the LORD told him: "Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king. ⁸As they have done from the day I brought them up out of Egypt until this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are doing to you. ⁹Now listen to them; but warn them solemnly and let them know what the king who will reign over them will do."

This was not exactly what Samuel wanted to hear—he was livid. Being who he was, he prayed to the Lord God Yahweh. Yahweh told him—

"Listen to what all the folks are saying; remember, it is not you they have rejected. They have rejected Me as their King. Just as they've done from the beginning, the very day I brought them out of Egypt until now... They forsake Me. They serve other gods. And now they are forsaking you. Sure listen to them, but warn them solemnly, seriously, formally—let them know what a king will do who reigns over them."

- Q To what extent was Samuel's age and sons an excuse for a king versus a rationale for a king?
- Q What are the advantages of a king over a judge in those days? Today? Which would you prefer? Why?
- Q What was the Lord God's rationale for encouraging Samuel during this period of rejection?
- Q What were Yahweh's instructions to Samuel regarding the appointment of a king?

1 Samuel 8:10-18. *Samuel's warnings about a king over us*. Samuel did as God instructed... Samuel noted a king who reigns over you will:

1. Take your sons & make them serve as foot soldiers, to run *front* of his chariots and horses.⁶
2. Other sons will be assigned to be commanders of thousands, and fifties.
3. Other sons will plow his ground and reap his harvest.
4. Other sons will be charged with making weapons of war and equipment for his chariots.
5. Your daughters will be forced to become bakers, cooks, and perfumers.
6. Your best fields, vineyards, and olive groves will be given to his attendants.
7. A tithe of your grain and wine will given as a tax to support his officials and attendants.
8. Your male and female slaves, and the best of your herds, will be taken for his use.
9. He'll take a tithe of your flocks—and you will become his slaves.

1 SAMUEL 8:10-18

Samuel told all the words of the LORD to the people who were asking him for a king. ¹¹He said, "This is what the king who will reign over you will do: He will take your sons and make them serve with his chariots and horses, and they will run in front of his chariots. ¹²Some he will assign to be commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and others to plow his ground and reap his harvest, and still others to make weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. ¹³He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. ¹⁴He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive groves and give them to his attendants. ¹⁵He will take a tenth of your grain and of your vintage and give it to his officials and attendants. ¹⁶Your menservants and maidservants and the best of your cattle [the *LXX* reads *your young men*] and donkeys he will take for his own use. ¹⁷He will take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will become his slaves. ¹⁸When that day comes, you will cry out for relief from the king you have chosen, and the LORD will not answer you in that day."

So? When that day comes, you'll cry out for relief from the very king you wanted, the very king you've chosen. Most importantly, the Lord God Jehovah will not answer your cries for relief. That day will come. Are you really ready for Yahweh to ignore you?

- Q If you were facing this challenge from Samuel, which of these warnings would scare you the most?
- Q Why do you suppose we were so willing to give up so much to have "a king?"
- Q At what point, if at all, will the Lord God stop answering us when we call for relief from the "king" in our world and time?

⁶Chariots were the tanks of their day. In modern warfare, infantry deploy tanks as cover, if accompanying tanks at all. A king was thus more concerned about the valuable chariots than the individual foot soldier—they were to be used as a "fodder" shield and protection for the expensive chariot, its driver and horses/mules.

1 Samuel 8:19-22. *Samuel's warnings are ignored—the truth is not useful.* We ignored Samuel of course.

We want a king over us. Then we'll be like all the other cool nations. We'll have a king to lead us, a king to go out in front and fight our battles.

Samuel was not impressed, nor was he surprised. As directed by the Lord God, he listened to all the people. Then he turned to the Lord God and told Him what they said. Yahweh answered...

Listen to them and give them a king.

Samuel told all the knuckleheads to go home.

- Q Why did we refuse to listen to Samuel?
- Q To what extent was our rationale for a king warranted, given the neighboring agonistic forces?
- Q Why did the Lord God tell Samuel to “give us a king?”
- Q What do you suppose happens next?

1 SAMUEL 8:19-22

But the people refused to listen to Samuel. "No!" they said. "We want a king over us. ²⁰Then we will be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles."

²¹When Samuel heard all that the people said, he repeated it before the LORD. ²²The LORD answered, "Listen to them and give them a king."

Then Samuel said to the men of Israel, "Everyone go back to his town."



5:1 *Ashdod.* One of the five major cities of the Philistines (Jos 13:3), it was located near the Mediterranean coast about 35 miles west of Jerusalem.

5:2 *Dagon.* In Canaanite mythology the son (or brother) of El and the father of Baal. He was the principal god of the Philistines and was worshiped in temples at Gaza (Jdg 16:21,23,26), Ashdod (here) and Beth Shan (31:10-12; 1Ch 10:10). Veneration of this deity was widespread in the ancient world, extending from Mesopotamia to the Aramean and Canaanite area and attested in non-Biblical sources dating from the late third millennium B.C. until Maccabean times (second century B.C.; in the Apocrypha see 1 Maccabees 10:83-85). The precise nature of the worship of Dagon is obscure. Some have considered Dagon to be a fish god, but more recent evidence suggests either a storm or grain god. His name is related to a Hebrew word for "grain."



5:5 *this day.* The time of the writing of 1,2 Samuel. *step on the threshold.* Apparently the threshold was considered to possess supernatural power because of its contact with parts of the fallen image of Dagon. Zep 1:9 appears to be a reference to a more general and rather widespread pagan idea that the threshold was the dwelling place of spirits.

5:6 *The LORD's hand was heavy.* Dagon's broken hand lay on the ground (v. 4), but the Lord shows the reality and strength of his own hand by bringing a plague (see note below on 6:4) on the people of Ashdod and the surrounding area (see vv. 9,11). God would not be manipulated by his own people, nor would he permit the Philistines to think that their victory over the Israelites and the capture of the ark demonstrated the superiority of their god over the God of Israel.

5:8 *rulers.* Of the five major cities of the Philistines (see 6:16; Jos 13:3; Jdg 3:3).

Have the ark of the god of Israel moved to Gath. Evidently the leaders of the Philistines did not share the opinion of the Ashdodites that there was a direct connection between what had happened in Ashdod and the presence of the ark; they seem to have suspected that the sequence of events was merely coincidental (see 6:9). The removal of the ark to Gath put the matter to a test.

5:10 *Ekron.* The northernmost of the five major Philistine cities, located 11 miles northeast of Ashdod and close to Israelite territory.

5:11 *Send the ark of the god of Israel away.* After three successive towns had been struck by disease upon the arrival of the ark, there was little doubt in the people's minds that the power of the "God of Israel" was the cause of their distress.

6:2 *priests and . . . diviners.* The experts on religious matters (priests) and the discerners of hidden knowledge by interpretation of omens (diviners) were consulted (see Dt 18:10; Isa 2:6; Eze 21:21).

6:3 *guilt offering.* The priests and diviners suggest returning the ark with a gift, signifying recognition of guilt in taking the ark from Israel and compensation for this violation of the Lord's honor (see v. 5). For the guilt offering in Israel see Lev 5:14-6:7.

6:4 *Five gold tumors.* Corresponding to the symptoms of the plague (see 5:6). *five gold rats.* The disease was accompanied by a plague of rats (v. 5). The Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures (the Septuagint) includes this information earlier in the narrative. It is likely that the rats were carriers of the disease, which may have been a form of the plague.

⁷Adapted, corrected, and revised by D. Thomas Porter from Compton's Interactive NIV © 1996.

6:5 *Make models . . . and pay honor to Israel's god.* The golden models were an acknowledgment that the disease and the rats were a judgment from the hand of the "God of Israel" (see note on v. 3).

6:6 *the Egyptians and Pharaoh.* The plagues that God inflicted on the Egyptians at the time of the exodus made a lasting impression on the surrounding nations (see 4:8; Jos 2:10).

6:7 *have never been yoked.* Have not been trained to pull a cart. *take their calves away.* Normally cows do not willingly leave their suckling calves.

6:9 *Beth Shemesh.* A town near the Philistine border, belonging to Judah (see Jos 15:10). Its name means "house (or sanctuary) of the sun(-god)."

6:13 *harvesting their wheat.* The time of wheat harvest is from mid-April until mid-June.

6:17 *guilt offering.* See note on v. 3.

6:18 *witness.* A kind of monument to the event. *this day.* The time of the writing of 1,2 Samuel (see Introduction: Literary Features, Authorship and Date).

6:19 *seventy.* The additional 50,000 in most Hebrew manuscripts is apparently a copyist's mistake because it is added in an ungrammatical way (no conjunction). Furthermore, this small town could not have contained that many inhabitants.

looked into the ark. The men of Beth Shemesh (Levites and priests among them) were judged by God for their irreverent curiosity. Because God had so closely linked the manifestation of his own presence among his people with the ark, it was to be treated with great honor and respect (see 2Sa 6:7; Nu 4:17-20). This attitude of respect, however, is quite different from the superstitious attitude that led the elders to take the ark into battle against the Philistines, thus treating it as an object with magical power (see 1 Samuel 4:3).

6:20 *To whom will the ark go up from here?* The inhabitants of Beth Shemesh respond to God's judgment in much the same way as the inhabitants of Ashdod, Gath and Ekron (see 5:8-10).

8:1-12:25 *When Samuel grew old.* Probably about 20 years after the victory at Mizpah, when Samuel was approximately 65 years old.

8:3 *accepted bribes.* Perversion of justice through bribery was explicitly forbidden in the Law. See Exodus 23:8—"Do not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds those who see and twists the words of the righteous." Also, Deuteronomy 16:19-20—

"Appoint judges and officials for each of your tribes in every town the LORD your God is giving you, and they shall judge the people fairly. Do not pervert justice or show partiality. Do not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous. Follow justice and justice alone, so that you may live and possess the land the LORD your God is giving you."

8:7 *Listen to all that the people are saying to you.* Anticipations of kingship in Israel are present already in the Pentateuch (Ge 49:10; Nu 24:7,17; Dt 17:14-20); Samuel is therefore instructed to listen to the people's request (see vv. 9,22).

it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected Me as their king. Cf. Jdg 8:23. The sin of Israel in requesting a king (see 10:19; 12:12,17,19-20) did not rest in any evil inherent in kingship itself, but rather in the kind of kingship the people envisioned and their reasons for requesting it. Their desire was for a form of kingship that denied their covenant relationship with the Lord, who Himself was pledged to be their savior and deliverer. In requesting a king "like all the other nations" (v. 20) they tried to break the covenant, rejected the Lord who was their King (12:12; Nu 23:21; Dt 33:5) and forgot his constant provision for their protection in the past (10:18; 12:8-11). Of course, any covenant made by the Lord God can not be broken—there was a King to come who would not only not

deny the lordship of the Lord God, but would be manifested by the Lord God Himself—Yahweh on earth, Yeshua the Christ.

8:11 *what the king . . . will do.* Using a description of the policies of contemporary Canaanite kings (vv. 11-17), Samuel warns the people of the burdens associated with the type of kingship they long for.

8:15 *tenth.* This king's portion would be over and above the tenth Israel was to devote to the Lord (Lev 27:30-32; Nu 18:26; Dt 14:22,28; 26:12). In fact, the demands of the king would mimic all that Israel was to consecrate to the Lord as her Great King (persons, lands, crops, livestock)—even the whole population (v. 17).

8:18 *cry out for relief from the king.* See 1Ki 12:4; Jer 22:13-17.