

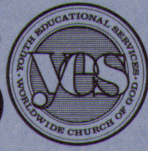
YOUTH



LEVEL 5

BIBLE

LESSONS



LESSON 10



Saul Becomes King of Israel

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# SAUL BECOMES KING OF ISRAEL

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Samuel was displeased that Israel's leaders wanted a king. He warned them that having a king would only bring them more problems. But the people insisted despite Samuel's warnings. They wanted to be like all the other nations around them.

## A KING IS CHOSEN

In Israel there lived a young man named Saul. He was a strong and handsome man from the tribe of Benjamin. He was also the tallest in Israel (I Samuel 9:1-2).

One day, Saul and a servant went to find his father's donkeys. They searched for many days, but could not find them. Finally, Saul suggested they return home. "Let us return home before my father begins to worry about us instead of his donkeys," Saul said.

"There is a man of God who is in a nearby town," Saul's servant replied. "Let us ask his help in finding your father's donkeys."

"But we have nothing to give him,"

Saul said. "We have already eaten all of our bread."

"I have some silver," said the servant. "We can give that to him."

Saul and his servant then went to see the prophet Samuel. As they came near the town, they met a group of young women going to draw water from a well (I Samuel 9:11).

"Do you know where we could find the prophet Samuel?" Saul asked the young women.

"He is in the town for a feast," they replied. "You will find him there."

God had told Samuel the day before that a young man from Benjamin would be coming to see him. God also instructed Samuel to anoint Saul as king over all Israel.

"And when Samuel saw Saul, the \_\_\_\_\_ said unto \_\_\_\_\_, Behold the \_\_\_\_\_ whom I \_\_\_\_\_ to thee of! this \_\_\_\_\_ shall \_\_\_\_\_ over my \_\_\_\_\_" (I Samuel 9:17).

As Saul came near to Samuel he said, "Do you know where I may find the prophet Samuel?"

"I am the one you are looking for. Come with me to the feast," Samuel replied to Saul.

"Do not worry about your father's

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## ABOUT OUR COVER . . .

The ruins of Gibeath in Israel. King Saul and his men camped here during the Philistine invasion.

Photo by J.A. Ubieta

donkeys. They have been found,” Samuel continued. “As for you, I want you to stay until tomorrow. I have many important things to tell you.”

Later that evening, Samuel took Saul to the roof of the house. Samuel explained to Saul that God had chosen him to be king of Israel.

Early the next morning, Samuel told Saul that he should now return to his home. As the three men were leaving the town, Samuel asked for the servant to go on ahead. Samuel then took a small vial of oil from his pocket and poured it on Saul’s head (I Samuel 9:26-27; 10:1).

“The Lord has anointed you to be king over His people, Israel,” Samuel said.

Samuel then gave Saul further instructions: “When you leave here, you will soon meet two men with news about

your father’s donkeys. Later, you will meet three men going to worship at Bethel. They will give you two loaves of bread. After this you will meet a group of prophets. These things will happen as a *sign* to you that you may know that God is with you.”

Then Saul and his servant began their journey home. And just as Samuel had prophesied, Saul met each of the people Samuel talked about (I Samuel 10:9).

### SAUL MEETS THE PEOPLE

Samuel called the people to Mizpeh to witness the choosing of their king. As the people drew near, Samuel said to them, “God is the One who brought you out of the land of Egypt and saved you from your enemies. But now you have rejected Him by asking for a human king!”

After drawing lots to determine



Saul and a servant search for his father's donkeys.



Embarrassed and nervous, Saul hid himself among a large pile of equipment.

which tribe and family their king would come from, Saul was chosen. The people became excited. They waited with suspense for Saul to come forward onto the platform.

But Saul did not appear. He could not be found anywhere (I Samuel 10:20-21).

What did Samuel do next? (I Samuel 10:22) \_\_\_\_\_

After being discovered, Saul reluctantly went to stand before the people. Embarrassed and nervous, Saul followed Samuel onto the platform.

“And \_\_\_\_\_ said to all the \_\_\_\_\_, See ye \_\_\_\_\_ whom the \_\_\_\_\_ hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the \_\_\_\_\_? And all the people \_\_\_\_\_, and said, \_\_\_\_\_”

(I Samuel 10:24).

Then Samuel sent all the people back to their homes. Saul also went home to his father’s house in Gibeah.

### SAUL BATTLES THE AMMONITES

After Saul became king, Nahash the Ammonite came with a powerful army and surrounded the Israelite town of Jabesh-gilead. The terrified leaders of the town, realizing it was hopeless, tried to make an agreement with Nahash.

“Let us live and we will be your servants,” the town leaders said.

“I will let you live,” Nahash scorned. “But I will take out the right eye of every man in your town!”

The Israelite leaders were shocked. In desperation they came up with a plan. “Give us seven days that we may send messengers for help,” they said.

“If no one comes to save us, then you may do as you wish,” the Israelite leaders added.

Soon messengers from Jabesh-gilead were traveling all over Israel with a plea for help.

When the news reached Saul, he became furious. He immediately took two oxen, cut them in pieces, and sent

them by messengers to all parts of Israel (I Samuel 11:6-7).

“Whoever does not come to follow Saul and Samuel will have his oxen cut up just as these!” Saul shouted to the messengers.

The people responded to Saul’s message. The number of those who came to help was 330,000 men.

Saul divided his army into three parts and marched for Jabesh-gilead. The next morning, the Ammonites awoke to discover that they were surrounded. Nahash had no other choice but to face Saul’s army.

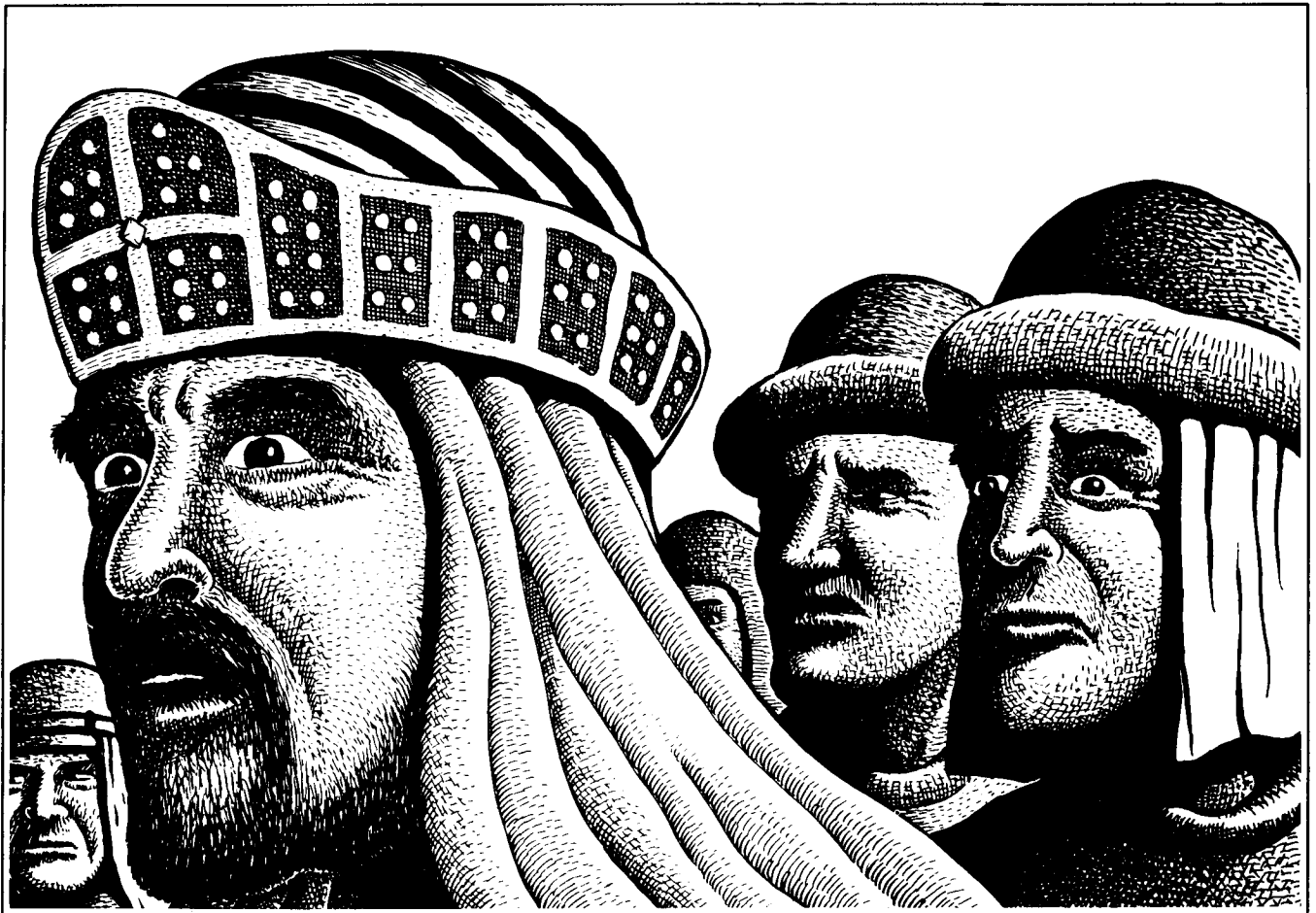
The Ammonites fought hard, but it

was no use. It became obvious that God was helping the Israelites. By the middle of the day, the Ammonites had either been killed or had run away in fright.

After the battle, Saul and his men returned with Samuel to Gilgal for a victory celebration.

### Do You Remember?

1. Saul was from the tribe of \_\_\_\_\_.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ anointed Saul king of Israel.
3. The people of Israel came to \_\_\_\_\_ to witness the choosing of their king.



Nahash is alarmed to discover that he has been surrounded by Saul’s army.

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4. True or False. Saul was afraid to appear before the people.
  5. Who was the Ammonite king who attacked the Israelite town of Jabesh-gilead? \_\_\_\_\_.

### **SAMUEL WARNS THE PEOPLE**

Samuel again warned the people at Gilgal that God was displeased that they had chosen a human king. "I have listened to you and given you a king. He stands before you now. And now I am old, and have faithfully served you from my childhood. Have I ever done anything wrong to any one of you?"

"The Lord is a witness against you that I have not done you any wrong. Therefore, respect the Lord and obey Him. If you rebel against God, many evils will come upon you.

"And to show you how wicked you have been for wanting a king as the other nations, I am going to ask God to send a thunderstorm upon you," Samuel concluded.

Then Samuel prayed and asked God to send rain. Suddenly the sky became dark. Large black clouds formed directly over the anxious crowd, followed by jagged streaks of lightning. Thunder cracked, causing the crowd to cover their ears. Then torrents of water came raining down upon the people.

The terrified, drenched people pleaded with Samuel to ask God to stop the storm. "We have sinned by asking for a king!" they cried to Samuel.

Samuel prayed and asked God to stop the rain. Then as suddenly as it came, the rain ceased. "Do not turn away from

God," Samuel told the people. "If you do, you and your king will be destroyed" (I Samuel 12:17-25).

### **SAUL DISOBEYS GOD**

While in Gibeah, Saul's son, Jonathan, took a small group of men and captured the Philistine garrison at Geba. The Philistines soon discovered the raid, and brought a large army to fight against Israel (I Samuel 13:3-5).

When Saul's men saw the mighty Philistine forces, they panicked. Thousands ran away and hid in caves, behind rocks and in holes in the ground. Some even fled across the Jordan River. Saul was left with only a few hundred unarmed men (I Samuel 13:15).

While the Philistines controlled much of Israel, they had not allowed the Israelites to make instruments of war. The Israelites even had to go to the Philistines to have their farm tools sharpened (I Samuel 13:19-22).

Before going to battle, Saul was instructed to wait seven days until Samuel arrived to offer sacrifices.

Seven days passed. Samuel had not yet arrived. Saul became impatient and decided to offer the sacrifices himself. This was breaking one of God's laws.

"Bring hither a \_\_\_\_\_ to me, and \_\_\_\_\_. And he [Saul] offered the \_\_\_\_\_" (I Samuel 13:9).

Samuel arrived just as Saul finished the sacrifice. "What have you done?" Samuel asked Saul. "Why have you disobeyed by performing the sacrifice yourself?"

“My soldiers ran away and I was afraid you would not come in time. The Philistines are ready to attack us at any moment and we are outnumbered. So I forced myself to offer the sacrifice,” Saul replied.

“You have been foolish!” Samuel retorted. “If only you had obeyed God, He would have made your descendants kings over Israel forever. But now God will choose another man to take your place.”

Samuel then went to Gibeah, followed by Saul and his men. The Philistines, however, remained where they were. Later they began to move across the countryside, stealing whatever they pleased from the people in small towns.

## JONATHAN ROUTS THE PHILISTINES

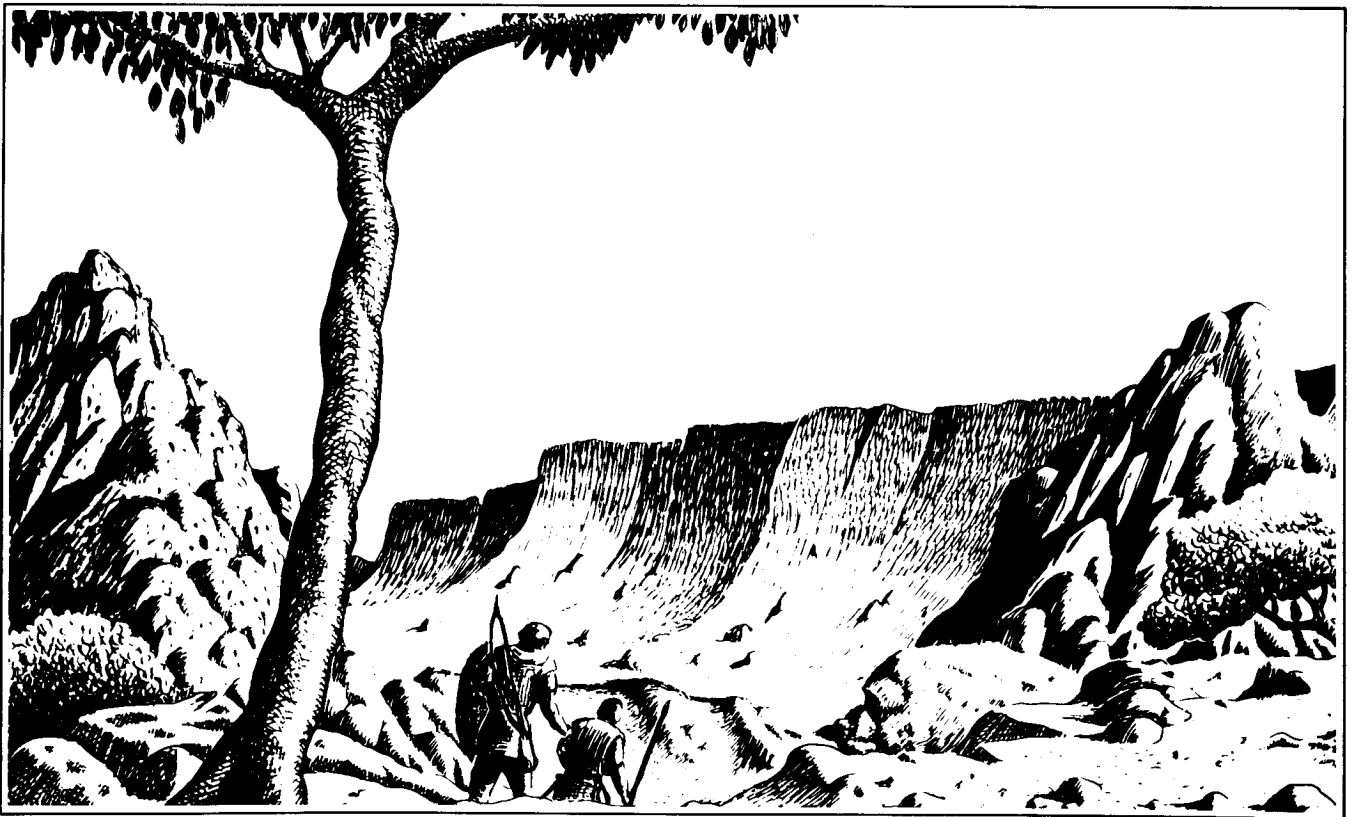
One day Jonathan and his armor-bearer secretly crossed the valley to the Philistine camp. At that time only a few of the Philistine soldiers remained at the garrison (I Samuel 14:1).

“Perhaps God will work through us. I know that God is not limited by numbers,” Jonathan told his armorbearer.

Jonathan and his armorbearer boldly climbed the hill that led to the Philistine garrison.

“If they tell us to wait here until they come to us, we will not go up to the garrison,” Jonathan said. “But if they tell us to come up, that will be a sign that God will fight for us!”

Just as the two men neared the top of



Jonathan and his armorbearer secretly cross the valley to the Philistine camp.

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a cliff, the Philistine guards said to them, "Come up here! We will show you the strength of our army."

That was the sign that Jonathan and his armorbearer were hoping for. Quickly they climbed to the top of the cliff.

At the top, Jonathan drew his sword and began striking the guards. His armorbearer followed closely behind and felled those who remained. Before the Philistines could defend themselves, about 20 of them lay dead (I Samuel 14:13-14).

Some of the Philistines panicked and began running through the camp. They thought the Israelites were mounting an attack.

The camp fell into a state of confusion. Soldiers ran in all directions. In their haste to flee from the imaginary Israelite army, they began fighting each other. Soon a battle was raging in full fury right in the middle of the Philistine camp.

What happened while the Philistines were fighting among themselves? (I Samuel 14:15) \_\_\_\_\_

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### **SAUL ENTERS THE BATTLE**

The sounds of battle reached across the valley to Saul and his men. Saul quickly took his men and crossed the valley to the Philistine camp. And there, through the dust, Saul witnessed the Philistines fighting each other.

Saul's small band of men crept up to take needed swords and spears. Then they began fighting the Philistines, who

only continued fighting among themselves. Soon, Saul and his men were chasing the entire Philistine army.

Saul rashly ordered his men to keep fighting and not to eat anything until sundown. Although the soldiers became weak from hunger, not one of them dared to eat.

"But Jonathan \_\_\_\_\_ when his father \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ with the \_\_\_\_\_" (I Samuel 14:27).

As Jonathan passed through the woods, he picked up and ate some honey that was on the ground.

One of the soldiers saw him eat it and said, "Why did you eat that honey? Your father has pronounced a curse on anyone who eats before sundown!"

"But I feel so much better," Jonathan replied. "If we would all eat, we could better fight the enemy!"

When sundown finally arrived, the hungry men hastily butchered many of the captured animals. They were so hungry they began to gorge themselves. Some ate the flesh half-raw, leaving much of the blood in the animals, something God forbids (Leviticus 17:10-13).

When Saul was told what was happening, he commanded that a large stone be rolled to him. He ordered all animals to be bled on that spot.

Later that evening, Saul decided to attack the remaining Philistines while it was still dark. But the priest suggested that they ask God first (I Samuel 14:36).

Saul knew it would not be wise to ignore the priest, and agreed to first ask God. But God did not answer.





Saul's men hastily gorge themselves on the raw meat of the butchered animals.

## JONATHAN IS FOUND GUILTY

“Bring everyone here,” Saul announced. “God has not answered because someone has sinned. When I discover who he is, he will surely die—even if it is my own son Jonathan!”

Lots were drawn to find the guilty person. Sadly, Jonathan's lot was drawn (I Samuel 14:42).

“Tell me what you have done!” Saul blurted.

“I ate some honey that I found in the woods,” Jonathan replied. “I did not learn of your orders until after I had eaten.”

“You must die for this!” Saul exclaimed.

“We cannot let him be killed,” the soldiers said to Saul. “For it was

Jonathan who brought us this great victory over the Philistines. We shall not allow one hair of his head to be hurt.”

Saul stared at the people as the moments passed. Then Saul's voice broke the stillness, “Let him go!”

## Do You Remember?

1. Samuel asked God to send a \_\_\_\_\_ to show the people He was displeased that they had chosen a human king.
2. The \_\_\_\_\_ controlled much of Israel at the time Saul became king.
3. Saul was instructed to wait for \_\_\_\_\_ days before going into battle.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ and his armorbearer brought a great victory against the \_\_\_\_\_.



Samuel prayed all night after learning that God no longer wanted Saul to be king of Israel.

5. Saul pronounced a curse on anyone who \_\_\_\_\_ before \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Why do you think God did not answer Saul? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

### SAUL IS TESTED

One day Samuel came to see Saul with special orders from God. "God has an important task for you," Samuel said to Saul. "God remembers the evil way Amalek treated Israel when He called them out of Egypt. God wants you to destroy the Amalekites. Do not leave anything alive—including their animals."

Saul quickly gathered 210,000 men and marched toward the city of the Amalekites. The army waited in a nearby valley, then made a surprise at-

tack against the city. The Amalekites were quickly defeated (I Samuel 15:7).

"But \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_ spared \_\_\_\_\_, and the best of the \_\_\_\_\_, and of the \_\_\_\_\_, and of the \_\_\_\_\_, and the \_\_\_\_\_, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing that was \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, that they destroyed \_\_\_\_\_" (I Samuel 15:9).

God, of course, knew that Saul had disobeyed. That night God told Samuel that He was sorry that He had chosen Saul to be king (I Samuel 15:11).

The next morning Samuel met with Saul. "You will be happy to know I have done everything that God has commanded," Saul said to Samuel.

"What is all that noise I hear?" Samuel asked.

"Those are the animals that the people wanted. They spared the best of the

animals to sacrifice them to God,” Saul nervously replied.

“Listen to me!” Samuel said. “When you were a humble man, God made you king over all of Israel. He told you to destroy all of the Amalekites and all of their animals. You have disobeyed!

“Do you think God cares more about sacrifice than He does about obedience? To obey is better than sacrifice! Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as the sin of idolatry. Because you have rejected God, God has rejected you as king” (I Samuel 15:22-23).

“I have sinned,” Saul said. “Please go with me to offer sacrifices to God.”

“I cannot,” Samuel said. “I have already asked God to forgive you. But He has rejected you as king!”

As Samuel turned to walk away, Saul grabbed his coat to prevent him from leaving. The coat that Samuel was wearing suddenly ripped. Saul stood there holding part of Samuel’s torn coat in his hand.

“Just as you have ripped my coat, God has ripped the kingdom from you,” Samuel said to Saul. “He will give it to another man who lives nearby. Nothing will change God’s mind.”

“I have sinned. Please come and worship with me,” Saul said.

“For the sake of the people, I will appear with you,” Samuel told him.

Later, when Agag was brought before Samuel, he quickly ended Agag’s life. Afterward, Samuel returned to the town of Ramah. Samuel did not see Saul again until the day he died.

There is no end to the amount of excuses a person can have. The best thing to do is to admit when you are wrong, and make up your mind to change for the better. Saul made excuses for his actions and did not really change his attitude.

Samuel felt sorry for Saul and did not give up on him. One day God said to Samuel, “How long are you going to sorrow for Saul? His days as king will soon come to an end. Take your vial of oil and go to a man named Jesse in Bethlehem. There you will anoint one of his sons to be the next king of Israel.”

#### MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. God wanted Saul to destroy all
  - A. the Ammonites.
  - B. the Israelites.
  - C. the Amalekites.
2. Saul disobeyed by sparing king
  - A. Nahash.
  - B. Agag.
  - C. Jonathan.
3. Rebellion is as the sin of
  - A. stubbornness.
  - B. witchcraft.
  - C. idolatry.
4. To obey God is better than
  - A. idolatry.
  - B. sacrifices.
  - C. both A and B.
5. The next king of Israel was a son of
  - A. Jesse.
  - B. Saul.
  - C. Jonathan.

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**BIBLE MEMORY**

Psalm 1:1-6

## MAZE OF OBEDIENCE

Draw a line through the "Maze of Obedience" from **START** to **FINISH**. As you go through the maze, look up each scripture in your Bible as you come to it. If the scripture talks about obedience, you are on the right track! If the scripture talks about disobedience, you must stop and try another way.

