

## The Saul Story

Oh, It's Sin and REPENT, Not Sin and Repeat!

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## Saul Play

-Narrator  
 -Kish  
 -Saul  
 -Ari  
 -Mahlah  
 -Sheerah  
 -God  
 -Samuel  
 -Asa  
 -Caleb  
 -Ner  
 -Nahash

## Scene 1: Seeking What is Lost (1 Samuel 9:1-4)

Narrator: Way, way back in the days of the Bible, things were very different. When the people of Israel first lived in the Promised Land, they didn't have a king. They had judges – women and men who were part prophet, part plain, old-fashioned legal judge. The people were in 12 different tribes that shared in the worship of God, but, for the most part, they were more like friendly islands nearby each other than like a unified nation. The people saw that the other nations had kings and they seemed to be big and strong and powerful. They started to demand their own king so they could be like the cool kids. Enter Kish.

Kish: (*enters*) Hi, I'm Kish. Hmm...what can I say? I'm from the tribe of Benjamin – long time resident of Gibeah. I'm the son of Abiel, son of Zeror, son of Becorath, son of Aphiah. I like long walks on the beach, cold, fruity drinks, and, oh, did I forget to mention? I'm wealthy and powerful.

Narrator: Kish, this is not a dating show.

Kish: Riiiiight...I just thought the people should know that I'm a pretty darned important guy! Besides, I'm not here for myself. (*calls offstage*) Saaaaaul!

Saul: (*rushes in*) You called, father?

Kish: (*to the congregation*) This is my son Saul. Look at him! He's handsome, he's young – no one in Israel is more handsome than he is. And, boy, is he tall! Look at that: head and shoulders taller than everybody else. (*Kish jumps up to try to be as tall as Saul*)

Saul: What is this, a dating show?

Narrator: No, we've already covered that. Get on with it!

Kish: (*to Narrator*) Alright, already. Sheesh! (*to Saul*) My dear boy, you know that I have longed to travel beyond the borders of our sweet home – Gibeah. You know, see the sights!

Saul: The sights? Dad, we're surrounded by enemies in almost every direction. The Philistines, our most hated enemy, have an outpost right in town! And you wanna go on vacation?!

Kish: What? I'm a hard worker! There's bound to be something interesting to explore and I'm gonna find it.

Saul: No. I mean, I guess if that's what you want to do....

Kish: But we have a problem! As you know, we keep a fine flotilla of donkeys in the yard.

Saul: I *don't* think that donkeys come in flotillas.

Kish: Oh? What is that – ships? Whatever. Anyhow, as you know, donkeys make great vehicles and pack animals so I need them for my travels. They're basically like walking suitcases! What a fine time to be alive...

Saul: I never really thought about it like that before, but okay.

Kish: Anyhow, all of the donkeys have wandered off and I can't start my vacation until they're found. Take one of the servants with you and look for the donkeys.

Saul: Can do, pop. (*calls offstage*) Arrriiiii!

Ari: (*enters*) What is it, sir?

Saul: Your mission, Ari, should you choose to accept it is to travel the hill country of Ephraim and Benjamin to find – (*dramatically*) the missing donkeys!

Ari: Missing donkeys. Check, I'm on it.

Saul: As always, should you or any of your Force be caught or killed, the Secretary will disavow any knowledge of your actions.

Ari: Caught...killed? Searching for donkeys?

Saul: This tape will self-destruct in five seconds. Good luck, Ari.

Ari: Wait, you...the, huh?

Saul: I'm just messing with you. I'll come along and help you look.

(*Saul and Ari start to wander the sanctuary*)

Narrator: So, Saul and Ari wandered the hill country of Ephraim and passed through the land of Shalishah.

Saul: *(to a congregant)* Are you a lost donkey?

Ari: I don't think that's one of ours.

*(Saul and Ari continue to wander)*

Narrator: Then they passed through the land of Shaalim.

Ari: *(to a congregant)* Pardon me, ma'am/sir, my humblest apologies. Are you, by chance, a donkey?

Saul: No, the markings are all wrong!

*(Saul and Ari continue to wander)*

Narrator: They traveled through the land of Benjamin.

Saul: *(to a congregant, hopefully a child)* You've gotta be a donkey. Give me your best hee-haw. *(waits for response)*.

Ari: *(if they hee-hawed)* No, I think our donkeys are sopranos/tenors. *(if they didn't hee-haw)* This one appears to be mute. I definitely remember our donkeys being very noisy.

Saul: You're right. Let's keep looking.

*(Saul and Ari continue to wander)*

## Scene 2: The Seer Sees Surprising Sights (1 Samuel 9:5-10:8)

Narrator: After all that searching, they came to the land of Zuph.

Saul: Let's go back. After all this time, Dad's not gonna be worrying about the donkeys any more – he's gonna be worrying about us.

Ari: Begging your pardon, sir, but there's a man of God in this town. He's like a really big deal – high honors and everything. Whatever he says always comes true.

Saul: Woah, always?

Ari: Always.

Saul: How come I never heard of this guy?

Ari: I don't know, sir, he's super famous. Everybody knows how great he is: a seer and a prophet. Let's go see him – maybe he'll tell us something about our journey.

Saul: But, Ari, we don't have any gifts for the man! We ate all our bread and we can't just show up empty handed. What do we have?

Ari: See, this is why I'm always telling you to bring your wallet...

Saul: What?

Ari: Nothing. Oh, wouldn't you know it! My last quarter shekel of silver...that I was saving...for a bunch of sweet and tasty pomegranates.

Saul: Wonderful! That should make a fine gift.

Ari: *(sighs)* Yeah, okay. I'll give it the man of God so he can tell us our way.

Saul: Good. Come on, let's go!

Narrator: As they went up the hill to the town, they met some girls coming out to draw water.

Mahlah: Sheerah, why did the well have to be all the way down the hill? Water gets so heavy!

Sheerah: I know, Mahlah, but look at these forearms! *(flexes)* I feel like I could wrestle a bear!

Mahlah: A bear? I'd like to see you try...

Sheerah: *(a little defeated)* I could do it.

Saul: Excuse me, is the seer here?

Ari: We're looking for the man of God. We heard he lives here.

Mahlah: Oh, yes, he's there just ahead of you.

Sheerah: Hurry, he just got to town because there's a sacrifice at the shrine.

Mahlah: And that means GOOD EATS...well, for the ones lucky enough to be invited.

Sheerah: Hush, as soon as you enter the town, you'll find him before he goes up to the shrine to eat.

Mahlah: And no one will eat until he gets there because he's the one who blesses the sacrifice.

Sheerah: Well, don't waste your time chatting with us, go on up there or you'll miss him!

*(Mahlah and Sheerah push Saul and Ari up the chancel. Samuel enters.)*

Ari: (*points to Samuel*) That's gotta be him. He looks so seer-y. Seer-like? Prophet-able.

Saul: (*shakes his head*) Oy.

Narrator: Now, I'm gonna pause things for a minute here. (*turns to cast and waves hand*) Pause. (*they freeze*). Because you should know that the day before Saul and Ari got there, the LORD spoke to Samuel, the last great Judge of Israel.

*(Samuel unfreezes, hears, and kneels)*

God: (*off-stage*) Samuel, tomorrow about this time I will send to you a man from the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him to be ruler over my people Israel. He will save my people from the hand of the Philistines; I have seen the suffering of my people, because their outcry has come to me.

Narrator: Okay, fast forward back to now. Samuel looked up and saw Saul.

God: (*off-stage*) Here is the man I told you about. He is the one who will rule over my people.

Saul: (*comes up to Samuel*) Pardon me, sir, can you tell me the way to the seer's house?

Samuel: I'm the seer!

Ari: Well, that's a mercy! My feet are tired.

Samuel: Both of you, come up with me to the shrine and eat with me. In the morning I will let you go and tell you all that is on your mind. As for your donkeys that were lost three days ago, don't worry about them anymore. They have been found. I don't know why you're fooling with a few stray donkeys – don't you know all of Israel looks to the treasure your family has?

Saul: What? We're not that rich...

Ari: Sure, you're not.

Saul: (*to Ari*) How did he know about the donkeys anyway? Did you tell him?

Ari: (*to Saul*) No, I told you, he's a seer, a prophet – he knows things and what he says comes true.

Saul: (*to Ari, very seriously*) Jeepers.

Ari: (*to Saul*) Jeepers, indeed.

Saul: *(to Samuel)* Man of God, surely you're mistaken. I'm just a Benjaminite – we're the smallest, weakest tribe in all of Israel. And my family is the humblest of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin.

Ari: For the record, disagree.

Saul: *(to Ari)* Hush! *(to Samuel)* Why have you said these things to me?

Samuel: Never you mind. Come on up to the shrine with me.

*(Mahlah, Sheerah, and Asa sit. Samuel, Saul, and Ari sit in front of them.)*

Mahlah: Would you look at that? They found Samuel.

Sheerah: Not only that, he's letting them sit at the head of the table – the seat of greatest honor!

Samuel: Oh, cook!

Caleb: *(enters)* Yes, sir.

Samuel: Bring the portion of meat that I gave you – the one that I asked you to put aside.

Caleb: You mean the thigh and the good stuff?

Samuel: Right.

Caleb: Coming right up! *(Caleb grabs a cut of meat and is about to bring it to Samuel, but he points to Saul and Ari)*

Asa: *(to Mahlah and Sheerah)* What?! Samuel's not eating the best cut of meat? 'Cause you know Caleb can cook! Why is it going to that stranger? Who are these new guys anyway?

Samuel: *(stands)* See, I set aside a plate for you and now it has been set before you. Eat! Now is the appointed time to eat with these guests.

*(Everyone eats)*

Saul: *(to Samuel, sheepishly)* It's very good, thank you.

Narrator: So everyone ate and drank and had a fabulous time – even though the townsfolk were incredibly curious about what was going on. *(everyone exits except Samuel, Saul, and Ari)* After the dinner, Samuel had a bed laid out for Saul on the roof and he went to sleep. *(Saul lies down to sleep on the front chairs and Ari sleeps on the chairs behind them.)* Then, at the break of dawn....

Samuel: *(loudly)* SAUL! Wake up!

Saul: Wha?

Samuel: I need to send you on your way.

Saul: Oh, sure, fine. I was having the best dream, though... Ari? Time to go! (*Samuel, Saul, and Ari go to the front step together.*)

Samuel: Hey, Saul, tell your boy to go on ahead and then we can stop and talk for a while. I want to make known to you the word of God.

Saul: Hey, Ari! Umm...why don't you go, umm, see if you can find a faster route home. I'll catch up to you in a bit.

Ari: But there's only one road.

Saul: Well, what is a road REALLY? Think about that while I catch up to you.

Ari: You're the boss. (*Ari goes down the center aisle.*)

Samuel: (*holds anointing oil and tries to anoint*) Hear me now, Saul, son of Kish, the LORD has anointed you ruler over the people Israel. Hmm...you're very tall, aren't you? (*Samuel reaches up, but can't reach Saul's head*). If you could just...or I could. Hold on a second. (*Grabs a chair and stand on it next to Saul and anoints him with confetti.*) You shall reign over the people of the LORD and you will save them from their enemies all around.

Saul: Reign...ruler...enemies? Are you kidding me? Did my father put you up to this? That joker...

Samuel: God has chosen you and I speak the truth. You will have three signs from the LORD that you are to be ruler over Israel. When you leave me, you'll meet two guys at Rachel's tomb at Zelzah and they'll tell you that the donkeys have been found and your Dad has decided that you've probably been kidnapped by bandits or broken your leg in a ditch.

Saul: That sounds like Dad...

Samuel: Then, when you're by the oak of Tabor, three guys who are going up to the shrine at Bethel will be carrying three goats, three loaves of bread, and a skin of wine. They'll say hi and give you two loaves of bread, which you should take.

Saul: That's really specific, but not much of a miracle.

Samuel: (*glares for a moment*) THEN you'll come to Gibeah where the Philistine outpost is and when you come to town you'll meet a band of prophets in a prophetic frenzy. The spirit of the LORD will possess you and you'll be in a prophetic frenzy, too.

Saul: Me?! A prophetic frenzy? That's impossible! I can't sing, I can't dance – that's just not me.

Samuel: God will turn you into a different person. Now when these things happen, you can do whatever you see fit to do. Remember that God is with you. God will guide you so open your ears and be led. Go on to Gilgal ahead of me and I'll come down and make burnt offerings and offer sacrifices of well-being. Wait for me for seven days and I will come and show you what you should do next.

Saul: This is unreal.

Samuel: Go with God, my son.

*(Samuel departs and Ari enters)*

Ari: Sir, are you alright? You look like you've seen a ghost.

Saul: Samuel said...he, uh.... It's time to go home.

Scene 3: On the Road Again (1Samuel 10:9-27)

Narrator: And so they walked on as far as Rachel's tomb at Zelzah and they bumped into two men.

*(Caleb and Asa enter from the fellowship hall)*

Caleb: Saul, son of Kish! The donkeys that you were looking for have been found!

Asa: Yeah, but now your father isn't worrying about them anymore – he's worrying about you. He's saying, "What shall I do about my son? He's been captured by bandits!"

Caleb: Yeah, either that or you're lying in a ditch somewhere with a broken leg.

*(Saul stares at them blankly with his jaw dropped.)*

Ari: Sir? Saul? Hellooooo? *(to Caleb and Asa)* Well, as you can see, he's fine – we're fine. Thanks for the message. I guess it's a good thing we decided to go home!

Asa: Safe travels and God's blessing on you both. Shalom.

Saul: *(weakly)* Shalom.

Narrator: Then they journeyed on to the oak of Tabor and happened upon three men.

*(Saul and Ari walk stage left; Asa and Caleb stay still)*

Asa: Did he/she/they say three men?

Caleb: Yeah he/she/they did, Asa.

Asa: (*calls off-stage*) Mahlah!

Mahlah: (*still off-stage*) Yeah?

Asa: We need three men.

Mahlah: (*pokes her head in from the fellowship hall door*) You know I'm not a man, right?

Caleb: We noticed – I think we can make it work, just come out here.

Mahlah: (*carrying goats, bread, and wineskin*) Alright. Here, there's some for you, some for you, and some for me! (*passes out various items*)

Narrator: As I was saying, three men...

Asa: (*as a greeting*) Peace be with you.

Saul & Ari: And also with you.

Mahlah: Say, you guys look hungry.

Ari: Yeah...Saul was in such a rush this morning, we didn't get any breakfast.

Saul: (*weakly*) Breakfast?

Ari: Don't mind him, he's been like that all day.

Caleb: Why don't you have some food?

Mahlah: We were headed up to the shrine to make a thank offering, but you look like you could really use this bread (*gives them the bread*). Here, a loaf for each of you.

Ari: Thank you so much for your generosity.

Saul: (*blankly*) Yes, we're supposed to take the bread.

Ari: Saul, I did. We can eat it now. See? (*takes a bite*) It's good!

Saul: Yes, thank you.

Ari: Peace, y'all.

Asa: Peace.

*(Saul and Ari walk stage left; Asa, Caleb, and Mahlah stay still)*

Narrator: They went on from there to Gibeah and met a band of prophets.

Asa: *(to the Narrator)* So, how many prophets in a band?

Narrator: As many as you can muster!

Caleb: *(to the fellowship hall)* Come on everybody!

*(Remainder of the cast comes out with tambourines and other portable instruments and joins Asa, Caleb, and Mahlah)*

Narrator: They were indeed caught up in a prophetic frenzy, and before too long, Saul was filled with the spirit of the Lord and he started singing and dancing, too!

*(Whole cast sings Siyahamba. Narrator joins in, too.)*

Siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos'  
 Siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkos (x2)  
 Siyahamba, hamba, siyahamba, Oh!  
 Siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos. (x2)

We are marching in the light of God  
 We are marching in the light of God. (x2)  
 We are marching, marching, we are marching. Oh!  
 We are marching in the light of God. (x2)

Narrator: Well, can you blame me? It's a catchy song!

*(Band disperses except for Caleb and Sheerah)*

Ari: *(grinning)* What just happened?

Saul: That was amazing, glorious, beautiful! I feel like a whole new man! Praise the Lord!

Ari: The Lord's name be praised!

Narrator: But not everyone thought this was an awesome development. Some people from Saul's hometown were shocked – shocked!

Caleb: What's gotten into the son of Kish?

Sheerah: No kidding? What does he think – he's a prophet now?

Caleb: Saul thinks he's a prophet – ha, ha!

Ari: Just ignore them, sir. I thought your singing was lovely.

Saul: Thanks, Ari.

Narrator: So Saul finally arrived home.

Ner: Saul, it's so wonderful to have you home!

Saul: Father!

Ner: No, I'm your uncle Ner, silly!

Saul: *(to Ari)* It's not easy having a father with a twin, ya know.

Ner: Where were you? I've missed you!

Saul: Oh, we went out to find the donkeys and when we couldn't find them, we went to see Samuel.

Ner: Ooh, man of God?

Ari: Yup.

Ner: Intense, beady little eyes?

Ari: Yup.

Ner: Terrifyingly accurate predictions of the future.

Ari: You got it.

Ner: So, what did Samuel say to you?

Saul: Oh, he, umm, he said the donkeys were found.

Narrator: But he didn't say anything about the kingship – at all. Seriously, Saul? Seriously? Moving on, Samuel summoned all the people of Israel to Mizpah.

*(Whole cast enters, Samuel stands on the chair and the people sit around him. Saul hides.)*

Samuel: Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: I brought you up out of Egypt and rescued you from the hand of the Egyptians and from all the kingdoms that were oppressing you. But today you rejected God and said, "Give us a king!"

Sheerah: Yeah, give us a king!

Caleb: *(waving a pennant)* Go monarchs!

Samuel: So now, present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes and by your clans so that you can see who God has chosen to be your ruler.

*(Samuel calls two different people to stand in front of him, throws down large, fuzzy dice, and chooses one. He does this several times while Saul speaks.)*

Saul: *(pops up from his hiding place)* Hey, don't tell anyone I'm over here, okay? I don't know what Samuel's thinking, but I am nobody's king. I'm just really tall and really, really good looking! That's not enough to rule over all the tribes of Israel. I mean, I'm a farmer not a poli sci major! *(looks over at Samuel)* Ooh, he's getting closer to me, he's already chosen Benjamin and he's gotten down to my family! *(shuts his eyes and crosses his fingers)* Not me, not me, not me! *(Hides again)*

Samuel: We have searched this family man by man and Saul son of Kish has been chosen. Hey, where's Saul?

*(Whole cast starts to look around in ridiculous places.)*

Ari: Oh, dear. Saul? Sir? Everyone's looking for you. Saul!

Samuel: Let us pray together and ask the Lord. *(Everyone bows their heads in prayer.)* O LORD, did the man you have chosen come here?

*(Someone walks in with a very large finger on a stick and points to where Saul is.)*

God: See, he has hidden himself among the baggage.

*(Everyone looks up at the sign)*

Asa: *(pulls Saul up)* Found him!

*(Person with the sign starts poking Saul with it.)*

Samuel: Do you see the one who the LORD has chosen? There is no one like him among all the people.

Everyone: Long live the king! Long live the king!

Samuel: Wait – guys! That's not necessarily a compliment! Guys?

Everyone: Long live the king! Long live the king!

Samuel: Alright, settle down now. (*The people sit down.*) You all have got to understand that there are rights and responsibilities to being a king and having a king. A king can take your sons and make them his soldiers and he can demand the best of your crops and your crafters. He'll take your money and make a fancy living for himself.

Mahlah: But we'll have a king just like all the other countries. We'll be so hip!

Samuel: Mahlah, no one says "hip" any more. Besides, this is serious. A king has a lot of power and it's important that he doesn't get too big for his britches. He needs to listen to God and obey God just like the rest of us. Now, I'm gonna write this down for you so you don't forget. Go on home, y'all. There's some hard times coming.

Asa: Wow, a rich and powerful king! As a wealthy man myself, his strong hand and demand for fun toys can only make me richer! I will fight alongside him.

Mahlah: Look at how tall he is, though. Surely he's an amazing warrior. I will be his loyal soldier for the rest of my days.

Narrator: But not everyone liked the idea of Saul as king.

Sheerah: They think he's a warrior? He's a farmer for goodness sake! I bet he's never even held a sword.

Caleb: Yeah, and as someone who's already barely scraping by, I can't afford to give some guy taxes to live a life of luxury.

Sheerah: How can this man save us?

Ari: (*to Saul*) Don't listen to them. I'm sure you'll be a great king.

Saul: I hope so.

Narrator: And so, everyone went home.

Scene 4: Evil's in the Eye Beholder & What Did You Learn From This? (1 Samuel 10:27-12:25)

Narrator: Now, at this time, there was a man named Nahash who was king of the Ammonites. He looked at the land where the tribe of Gad and the tribe of Reuben lived and he wanted it for himself and his people. He attacked them mercilessly and when he captured them, he would gouge out their right eyes.

Nahash: (*enters*) Bwa-ha-ha. Baw-ha-ha. That land shall be mine! No one can stand against me – especially not these puny tribes of Israel... They can't even make their own swords! They go into battle with bow and arrow and (*chuckles to himself*) farming equipment! Soon all their land will be mine – mine – mine!

Narrator: Soon, there was no one left across the Jordan whose eye hadn't been gouged out by king Nahash. But, 7,000 men had escaped from the Ammonite troops and were hiding in Jabesh-gilead. After a month, Nahash began attacking that city, too and so the men came to him.

Caleb: Come on, Sheerah, that's us.

Sheerah: Really? Again? Fine, I'll be one of the "men."

Caleb: Shh. *(they kneel)* King Nahash, we beg you to make a treaty with us. We'll serve you willingly – just please stop!

Nahash: Oh, I'll make a treaty with you – on one condition. Let me gouge out everyone's right eye so that you are a walking, talking, living, breathing disgrace on all your people.

Sheerah: Erm...give us seven days to send messengers through all of Israel. Surely someone will come to our rescue. But, if no one comes to save us, we will give ourselves up to you.

Nahash: A week? I could give you a month and you wouldn't find anyone who could stand against my great and fierce army. Fine, take your piddling little week and spread news of your shame to all your people.

Narrator: So messengers went out to all the land and they came to Gibeah where Saul lived and told people there, too.

*(Saul is in front of the pulpit filing his nails. Ari, Mahlah, and Asa are gathered together on the opposite side of the chancel. Sheerah and Caleb run to them and pantomime telling them the news.)*

Ari, Mahlah, and Asa: No! *(dramatic crying)*

Ari: I've gotta tell Saul about this.

Narrator: So, Ari gave Saul the news. *(Ari pantomimes, Saul looks angry and marches over to the still crying townspeople.)*

Saul: What is the matter with you people? Why are you weeping?

Narrator: And the spirit of God came upon Saul in power and he was very, very angry. *(dramatically)* You wouldn't like him when he's angry. *(Saul ducks off stage.)* So he went out and he took a yoke of oxen and cut them into twelve pieces.

Saul: Hear me now. I am sending one piece of these oxen to each of the twelve tribes of Israel. Any of you who don't follow Saul and Samuel into battle – the same will happen to your oxen.

Mahlah: Holy crap!

Narrator: And the fear of the Lord came upon the people and they went into battle as one. (*Saul leads everyone out off stage*). Saul told the messengers from Nahash to tell the king that they would surrender to him the very next day, but instead, Saul led the army in battle at dawn. Those who survived were scattered and the people were safe. And the people were so glad in their victory.

(*Everyone comes back in cheering and waving pennants*)

Asa: Woo! We are the champions!

Mahlah: Yeah, but SOME people said mean things about Saul. SOME people didn't want him to be king. Hey, Samuel, who was it that dared to question Saul. Bring them out and we'll strike them down ourselves! (*Sheerah and Caleb hide behind Saul*)

Saul: No one should be put to death today. Come on, guys. The LORD saved us – let's all just be happy together!

Everyone: Long live the king! Long live the king!

Narrator: So they went to Gilgal and Samuel offered sacrifices to the LORD. The people rejoiced.

Samuel: Alright everybody, you know that I'm old. I've been at this a long time and you know I've never done you wrong.

Caleb: Yeah, go Samuel!

Samuel: Thank you. Just make sure you remember God in all that you do. Today we were victorious because we trusted in God and we listened to God. But when we forget God and disobey, things don't go well. You have chosen to call for a king and God is gracious so today you have a king. But please remember that if you disobey God, there will be consequences. Now, let heaven and earth witness to what I have said. You know that it is the wheat harvest today.

Sheerah: Yes, and it hardly ever rains during the wheat harvest.

Samuel: Right, but I will call upon the LORD and God will send thunder and rain so that you will know that God is with you and that your actions have consequences. Holy LORD, show yourself in the storm.

(*Storm sounds. Saul opens an umbrella and the people huddle up to him to try to stay dry/safe.*)

Asa: Samuel, Pray to the LORD on our behalf. If it was a sin to demand a king, pray mercy on all of us.

Samuel: Don't be afraid, just keep following the LORD and serve the LORD with all your heart. Don't go chasing after useless things that won't do you any good or save you. God loves you and will stick by you. Know that I will never stop praying for you and trying to teach you. Just don't forget...

Mahlah: We know, if we do bad things, there will be consequences.

Samuel: For you and for your king.

Everyone: Amen.

#### Scene 5: Saul Screws Up Big Time (1 Samuel 13:1-15)

Narrator: Some time passed and Saul reigned as king. He rallied soldiers to fight the Philistines and because he was following God, he was starting to gain ground against them.

Saul: Let the Hebrews hear! Victory is ours!

Ari, Mahlah, Sheerah, Caleb, and Asa: Huzzah! Huzzah!

Narrator: The Philistines did not like losing so they mustered to fight with many warriors and chariots and way better weaponry and armor than the people of Israel had. The Israelites got scared. They hid in caves and in holes and in rocks and in tombs and in cisterns. (*The people hide one by one as the different locations are mentioned.*)

Saul: Ari? Where'd you go?

Ari: (*pops up from hiding*) Here, sir.

Saul: We should go fight before all of the troops have abandoned me.

Ari: Well, we're waiting for Samuel to come and offer a sacrifice to God.

Saul: We've been waiting for seven days, Ari.

Ari: Yeah.

Saul: And he's not here yet.

Ari: Well, no, he's not, but we should have faith – we should ask for God's blessing.

Saul: Well, what good will the blessing do if we don't have any troops left?

Ari: What are you saying?

Saul: I'm just gonna make the sacrifice myself.

Ari: Sir, no! You can't!

Saul: Why not? I'm the king! I can do anything I want to!

Ari: But you're not a priest – let's wait for the priest.

Saul: I don't care. Get out of my way. (*Saul starts to make the sacrifice. Samuel enters and watches with shock.*) I've seen him do it a hundred times. This goes over here. That goes over there. Holy, holy, something or other. God is good or whatever. Done. Sacrificed.

Ari: Look, I see Samuel coming!

Saul: (*goes over to Samuel*) Peace be with you, Samuel!

Samuel: What have you done? What have you done?

Saul: What're you talking about? The people were slipping away from me and YOU were late. The Philistines were going to attack us so I did what I had to do – I FORCED myself to make the burnt offering.

Samuel: You fool! You are the king – you are not all powerful. You do not speak for God and you cannot do whatever you like. Don't you know what blessings you could have had if you had known the limits of your power and trusted God to act and to save? But since you claimed all power and glory for yourself, your kingdom will not continue. Your son will not reign over Israel. The Lord will give us a new king who will follow God's own heart. (*Saul hangs his head in shame.*)

Narrator: And you would think at this point Saul would hear the word of the LORD that came to him through Samuel. You would think that he would repent and look for the path that God laid out for him – to be a person of faith, but no longer king. But he didn't do that. He wouldn't step down. He held onto the throne with every ounce of strength that he had. He grew sad and angry, paranoid and violent. He lashed out against God's chosen king, David, and descended into madness.

Ari: I tried to stop him.

Samuel: Power is a dangerous temptation. That's why all of us need to listen for God's word from other sources, other voices than our own. Sometimes in our calling we have potential for great things, but we don't always live up to our potential. Even though we know that we can repent and be forgiven, we also know that our actions have consequences. Sometimes those consequences mean a loss of position or status or power, but God never abandons us. We have to trust that, let go, and move on for our own good and for those around us.

Ari: Samuel, are we going to be okay?

Samuel: Yes, good and faithful servant, the spirit of the Lord will keep touching and changing hearts, keep moving through the people in song and in hope and in deed. So, let us all come together as the people of God (*cast comes for bow*) and remember that living into grace is our strength and our joy.

Everyone: (*bows*) Hallelujah! Amen!