

April 11 Answers

- 1) Saul's defeat of the Ammonites, Samuel's farewell speech and Saul's first sin. Saul passed the first **challenge** to his kingship with flying colors. The fact that he was still out working in the fields shows that he was **humble** and **hardworking**. The Spirit empowered him, gave him wisdom and helped him lead the people into battle. God gave him a decisive victory, and instead of seeking **revenge** on those who had rejected him as king, he was merciful and **forgiving**. Saul seemed to be everything a king should be. Samuel took the opportunity of the kingship renewal at **Gilgal** to warn the people not to forget God. Their request for a king had been an attempt to gain **deliverance** from their enemies without true **repentance** (1 Sam 12:12), but now that they had a king, they should **recommit** themselves to following God. This teaches us that God's will for our lives is **dynamic**. Sinful choices in the **past** need not keep us from getting back into the **center** of His will. At each decision point, we have the ability, through God's grace, to "**fear** the LORD and **serve** him and **obey** his voice" (1 Sam 12:14–15). Sadly, Saul **failed** the next challenge to his kingship. This shows us that a person's true character is only revealed under intense **pressure**. Instead of repenting, Saul **justified** himself to Samuel (1 Sam 13:12), [*he excused his sin by pointing out all the extenuating circumstances*] and his refusal to humble himself cost him the perpetuation of his kingly **dynasty**.