

1 Samuel 8: 4 – 11, 13 – 14, 17 – 20

Israel asks God for a king!

Samuel, born in about 1100 B.C., was the divinely ordained leader who called the nation of Israel to repentance and renewed dedication to the Lord, after the times in which the nation had been in a covenant relationship with the Lord and governed by judges. Under Samuel's leadership, the Lord had given them victory over the Philistines, and the people prospered.

“So all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah. They said to him, ‘You are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways; now appoint a kind to lead us, such as all the other nations have.’ But when they said, ‘Give us a king to lead us,’ this displeased Samuel; so he prayed to the Lord. And 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. As 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. Now listen to them; but warn them solemnly and let them know what the king who will reign over them will do.’

Samuel told all the words of the Lord to the people who were asking him for a king. He 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 . . . He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. He will take the best of your fields and vineyards . . . He will take a tenth

of your grain and of your vintage and give it to his officials and attendants . . . he will take . . . he will take . . . !! When 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.’

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

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Today, do we want a “king” to reign over us? Do we want a king just because everyone else has a king? We have to be careful what we ask for, because the Lord might just let us have it! And one more thought about kings and governments, remember that a king or government that is strong enough to give us everything we want is also strong enough to take it all away!

[Return to website](#)

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