

This chapter marks a major transition from the judges to the kings of Israel.

* Israel asking for a king is wrong, not because kings are wrong, but because of the kind of king that they were asking for. Israel asked for the “Wrong Kind of King.”

Question to consider: *Am I seeking and following “the wrong kind of king?”*

I. A SERIOUS PROBLEM (vv1-8)

¹ When Samuel became old, he made his sons judges over Israel. ² The name of his firstborn son was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; they were judges in Beersheba. ³ Yet his sons did not walk in his ways but turned aside after gain. They took bribes and perverted justice. ⁴ Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah ⁵ and said to him, “Behold, you are old and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint for us a king to judge us like all the nations.” ⁶ But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, “Give us a king to judge us.” And Samuel prayed to the Lord. ⁷ And the Lord said to Samuel, “Obey the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them. ⁸ According to all the deeds that they have done, from the day I brought them up out of Egypt even to this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are also doing to you.

* The wickedness of Samuel’s sons (v3) is a warning to us that we must prioritize discipling, and praying for our children to love and fear the Lord.

The serious problem: Israel demands a king “like all the nations” (v5)

- Asking for a king was not wrong in itself.

- Deuteronomy 17:14-15 ¹⁴ “When you come to the land that the Lord your God is giving you, and you possess it and dwell in it and then say, ‘I will set a king over me, like all the nations that are around me,’ ¹⁵ you may indeed set a king over you whom the Lord your God will choose.

God allowed, and always intended for Israel to have a king, but he was to be a God-fearing king, not like the kings around them (see Deut. 17:16-20).

But Israel wants the wrong kind of king (a king like all the pagan kings around them) and thereby rejects the Lord as their King (v7-8).

* *What about us? (ex: money)*

II. A SOLEMN WARNING (vv9-18)

⁹ Now then, obey their voice; only you shall solemnly warn them and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them.” ¹⁰ So Samuel told all the words of the Lord to the people who were asking for a king from him. ¹¹ He said, “These will be the ways of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and appoint them to his chariots and to be his horsemen and to run before his chariots. ¹² And he will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and some to plow his ground and to reap his harvest, and to make his implements of war and the equipment of his chariots. ¹³ He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. ¹⁴ He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards and give them to his servants. ¹⁵ He will take the tenth of your grain and of your vineyards and give it to his officers and to his servants. ¹⁶ He will take your male servants and female servants and the best of your young men and your donkeys, and put them to his work. ¹⁷ He will take the tenth of your flocks, and you shall be his slaves. ¹⁸ And in that day you will cry out because of your king, whom you have chosen for yourselves, but the Lord will not answer you in that day.”

Emphasis on the work “take” (mentioned 6 times: v11, v13, v14, v15, v16, v17)

- The wrong kind of king will take and take and take, leaving the people of Israel (and us) empty and enslaved.

III. A SENSELESS RESPONSE (vv19-22)

¹⁹ But the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel. And they said, “No! But there shall be a king over us, ²⁰ that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles.” ²¹ And when Samuel had heard all the words of the people, he repeated them in the ears of the Lord. ²² And the Lord said to Samuel, “Obey their voice and make them a king.” Samuel then said to the men of Israel, “Go every man to his city.”

Despite the clear warnings from the Lord about this wrong kind of king, the people of God refuse to obey, and demand the king who will take from them.

The right response

- Repent and return to the RIGHT KING, Jesus Christ; the King who has taken ONLY our sins upon the cross, so that He could GIVE, and GIVE, and GIVE.
- And He continues to give even now, by interceding for us, so that unlike the solemn warning in **v18** (where God warns of not answering the cries of His people), God will always answer us when we cry to Him, because Christ is at right hand of God interceding for us.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. In wanting a king like all the other nations, Israel was rejecting God as their king. They simply wanted to be like the “rest of the world” (to fit in with the culture) rather than be holy and set apart as God called them to be. In what ways do you reject God as king, by wanting to be like everyone else? Why do you do this? What practical steps can be taken to repent of this?
2. In this story, God solemnly warns the Israelites about the severe consequences of asking for a king like the other nations (“he will take...”). What are some ways that you have experienced this (where something you thought would make you happy, only ended up leaving you empty?) What have you learned from this?
3. Despite the solemn warning from the Lord about following the wrong kind of king, the Israelites respond foolishly and refuse to listen. In what ways are you refusing to listen to the clear commands in God’s Word? Why are you refusing to listen? What practical steps can be taken to repent of this attitude?