

## Who Will Be King?

Dana looked around the bathroom as she wiped her hands on the paper towel. It looked nice and clean as usual, but she was sure that the church wouldn't mind extra hands on the custodial staff.

She would stop working with the technology team. She could clean on her schedule and not necessarily have to coordinate with anyone else. And she loved to clean. Really. It would be better all around.

Still, in her heart, she could feel the fluttering of—what, exactly? It would be somewhat sacrificial of her to want to clean the church. What's wrong with that? Still the butterflies came.

Her mind went unbidden to last month and an offense of one of the brothers on the technology team. He had been abrasive. Dana had realized now, looking back, that he strong-armed people with his way and opinions. He seemed to leave no room for her input or creativity. It was frustrating. It was hurtful.

"I don't want to fight, Lord," Dana prayed in the car. "I want to help out at church and not work with that brother ever again."

Was she wrong? Being temperamental? Did she have unforgiveness toward the brother? There was silence in her spirit.

The next morning, Dana readied herself for her devotion time with the Lord. She was a little apprehensive, but Dana needed to hear from God.

**1.** *In what ways have people forced their opinions on you?*

**2.** *Why do people often want things their way rather than God's?*

**3.** *In what ways is God alone the answer for our problems?*

**LESSON FOCUS:** Examine your desires before you bring them to the King.

## Israel's Request for a King

1 *Samuel 8:4-7, KJV*

4 Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah,

5 And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make 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 unto the LORD.

7 And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.

1 *Samuel 8:4-7, NIV*

<sup>4</sup>So all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah. <sup>5</sup>They said to him, "You are old, and your sons do not follow your ways; now appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have."

<sup>6</sup>But when they said, "Give us a king to lead us," this displeased Samuel; so he prayed to the LORD. <sup>7</sup>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."

Throughout Samuel's life, he continued as Israel's leader, or "judge" (1 Sam. 7:15-17). Then, as he grew old, he appointed his sons to be judges over Israel (8:1-2). Tragically, they were not like their father, for they were greedy and dishonest (8:3). The situation grew so intolerable that Israel's "elders" (8:4) traveled to Ramah to meet with Samuel and discuss the circumstance with him. The elders insisted that Samuel appoint them a king comparable to those found in the surrounding pagan nations, a demand that "displeased" (vs. 6) Samuel, so he turned to the Lord in prayer.

There was nothing wrong with the concept of a monarchy. In fact, God had made provisions in His law for the appointment of a king over His people (Deut. 17:14-15). Yet, when Samuel prayed, he learned that the

leaders of Israel had failed to recognize God as their King (1 Sam. 8:7). The Israelites' forgetfulness of God's gracious acts was similar to their lack of appreciation for Samuel. The Lord told Samuel to grant the people's request. Yet, he was also to forewarn them that a monarch would not solve all their problems (vss. 9-22).

**4.** *What two reasons did Israel's leaders give for their demand to Samuel?*

**5.** *How did the Lord want Samuel to respond to the Israelites' demand?*

## Samuel's Summons

*1 Samuel 10:17-19, KJV*

17 And Samuel called the people together unto the LORD to Mizpah;

18 And said unto the children of Israel, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all kingdoms, and of them that oppressed you:

19 And ye have this day rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations; and ye have said unto him, Nay, but set a king over us. Now therefore present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes, and by your thousands.

*1 Samuel 10:17-19, NIV*

<sup>17</sup>Samuel summoned the people of Israel to the Lord at Mizpah <sup>18</sup>and said to them, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'I brought Israel up out of Egypt, and I delivered you from the power of Egypt and all the kingdoms that oppressed you.' <sup>19</sup>But you have now rejected your God, who saves you out of all your disasters and calamities. And you have said, 'No, appoint a king over us.' So now present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes and clans."

Samuel called the nation together at Mizpah according to their various "tribes and clans" (vs. 19), to tell them the Lord's choice for their king. Samuel reminded the Israelites

that God was their true King. He had redeemed them from slavery in Egypt and enabled them to conquer and settle in the promised land. Also, He had repeatedly rescued His people from their oppressors. But despite the past faithfulness of God to His people, they still demanded a human king, thus rejecting God's reign over their lives.

The Israelites mistakenly thought that a monarch would save them from their troubles. They failed to realize that they were to blame for these "disasters and calamities," especially because they had followed pagan gods. God had confirmed to Samuel that he should anoint Saul (1 Sam. 9:15-17; 10:1). Yet, at the same time, God wanted Samuel to declare that His people could not escape judgment if they disobeyed His laws.

**6.** *What important historical reality did Samuel reiterate to the Israelites?*

**7.** *How did the current generation of Israelites respond to their Redeemer?*

## Saul's Selection

1 Samuel 10:20-24, KJV

20 And when Samuel had caused all the tribes of Israel to come near, the tribe of Benjamin was taken.

21 When he had caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families, the family of Matri was taken, and Saul the son of Kish was taken: and when they sought him, he could not be found.

22 Therefore they enquired of the LORD further, if the man should yet come thither. And the LORD answered, Behold he

1 Samuel 10:20-24, NIV

<sup>20</sup>When Samuel had all Israel come forward by tribes, the tribe of Benjamin was taken by lot. <sup>21</sup>Then he brought forward the tribe of Benjamin, clan by clan, and Matri's clan was taken. Finally Saul son of Kish was taken. But when they looked for him, he was not to be found. <sup>22</sup>So they inquired further of the LORD, "Has the man come here yet?"

And the LORD said, "Yes, he has hidden himself

hath hid himself among the stuff.

23 And they ran and fetched him thence: and when he stood among the people, he was higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upward.

24 And Samuel said to all the people, See ye him whom the LORD hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people? And all the people shouted, and said, God save the king.

among the supplies.”

<sup>23</sup>They ran and brought him out, and as he stood among the people he was a head taller than any of the others. <sup>24</sup>Samuel said to all the people, “Do you see the man the LORD has chosen? There is no one like him among all the people.”

Then the people shouted, “Long live the king!”

“All Israel” (vs. 20) presented themselves to the Lord. Out of the 12 tribes, Benjamin was chosen, then Matri’s clan. At last, Saul son of Kish was chosen from Matri’s clan. But rather than come forward, Saul hid himself among the “supplies”(vs. 22), perhaps a secluded place in the camp where the military supplies, cooking equipment, and food was kept. When the people asked where they could find Saul, the Lord disclosed his location.

Why did Saul hide? One option is that it reflected his modesty. Another option is that Saul was filled with hesitancy and self-doubt over becoming Israel’s new king.

With the information given by the Lord, the people quickly found Saul and saw he was an impressive figure, standing head and shoulders above everyone else. Though Samuel had his misgivings about the Israelites’ desire for a king, he submitted to God’s will in the matter. The phrase “the man the LORD has chosen” (vs. 24) indicates that God ultimately was the one who had selected Saul to be the nation’s first monarch. This is true even though the Israelites had insisted on having a king.

**8.** *What problem arose as the selection process unfolded?*

**9.** *What prompted the Israelites to be so enthusiastic about selecting Saul?*

## Examining Motives

During the time Samuel served as Israel's judge, the Israelites asked for a king. Their request troubled Samuel, and he turned to God for guidance. Even though the law made provisions for a king, Israel rejected God and didn't acknowledge Him as their true King. Sometimes the things we ask God for might be allowed according to Scripture, but they're not the most beneficial for us. When in doubt, Samuel's example encourages us to examine our motives and seek God's will in prayer.

Samuel heard Israel's request for a king, which was really a demand that arose out of an ungrateful attitude toward God. The people of Israel had reasons—some more legitimate than others—for wanting a king at this time. They said Samuel was too old to rule effectively and his sons didn't follow Samuel's moral ways. They also thought a king would save them from troubles and afflictions and provide stability and safety against the Philistines. In the same way, often our requests of God arise out of desires to escape hardship and receive God's protection. When we forget all God has done for us, it's easy to demand our own way, thinking our plan is better than God's.

Samuel submitted to God's will and called Israel before the Lord to hear His choice for king. Although the Israelite's plea for a king revealed ungratefulness and rejection of God's role as sovereign in their lives, God remained in control and chose Saul to be their king. In the midst of Israel's disobedience and sinful ways, He gave them a man uniquely qualified to rule the nation at that time.

**10.** *What "desires" might we bring before the King of kings?*

**11.** *What motives drive our requests of God?*

**12.** *How does God show His goodness and faithfulness even when we ask from wrong motives?*

## Come Before the King

Samuel's response to Israel's request for an earthly king demonstrates his relationship with God. Even though Samuel didn't like the idea, he talked to the Lord about it in prayer. God reassured Samuel, and Samuel submitted to God's will. Samuel serves as an example for us when we come before the King with our requests.

► *Think about your motives and desires for a particular request you are bringing to God, the King of kings, at this time. Here or on an index card, write at least one way you can submit to God as your perfect King as you bring your request to Him.*

### KEY VERSE

And ye have this day rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations;

—1 Samuel 10:19a, KJV

"But you have now rejected your God, who saves you out of all your disasters and calamities."

—1 Samuel 10:19a, NIV

### DAILY BIBLE READINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S LESSON

Week of October 24 through October 30

(See *The Quiet Hour* and *Cross devotionals* on these passages.)

- Mon.** 1 Samuel 15:1-11—God Rejects Saul.
- Tue.** Romans 11:13-24—God's Kindness and Severity.
- Wed.** Psalm 2—God's Begotten Son.
- Thu.** Acts 13:21-31—Jesus the Heir of David.
- Fri.** Revelation 22:12-17—The Bright Morning Star.
- Sat.** Psalm 89:20-29, 34-37— God Keeps His Covenant.
- Sun.** 1 Samuel 16:1-13— A Higher Perspective.