

**1 Samuel 8:4-22 ESV (Pg. 132)** 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. **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.” **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.”

- I. We’re returning to a series we started a few months ago, looking at the roles of prophet, priest and King in the Old Testament, and seeing how Christ perfectly fulfilled each of these roles. Today we’ll look at the role of the king in Israel’s history.
  - A. When Israel became a nation at the foot of Mount Sinai after the Exodus, they had no King but God himself. On the basis of God’s nearness to his people, no commandment was given to them to crown an earthly sovereign for themselves.
    1. **Deuteronomy 4:7 ESV** For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the Lord our God is to us, whenever we call upon him?
    2. When God opened the Red Sea for them to walk through on dry ground, and after he drowned Pharaoh’s army, the people came out on the other side of the flood singing, **Exodus 15:18 ESV** “The Lord will reign forever and ever!”
  - B. At its beginning, Israel was a true Theocracy - a government directly ruled by God. While God communicated his will through prophets like Moses, and gave a priesthood to mediate and offer sacrifices, God alone was absolute ruling King.
    1. Even “Lord” in the Bible can mean “ruler”, “master” or “owner”. God intended to be completely in charge. His authority was never in question.

2. But unlike earthly rulers, God never oppresses us with his rule. Instead, he blesses us, and causes us to flourish as we submit to his Lordship. **Exodus 19:4 ESV** “You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. **5** Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine.”
    - a) Here is a picture of the way God loves his people. “You shall be my treasured possession”. But we are nevertheless his and not our own.
    - b) His right to call us his own is made clear as well - “all the earth is mine.”
- II. An offer of relationship with Almighty God was made to Israel, but they abandoned that privilege, and pursued gods of the nations the Lord had displaced before them. Moses and Joshua (his successor) died, and the people cycled through idolatry, judgement and repentance over and over. Yet a merciful God sent judges to deliver them from their oppressors, but many of the judges were not fully devoted to God.
- A. At the end of this period, God raised up a judge (who was also both a prophet and a lay-priest for Israel) named Samuel. He was miraculously born, wholly devoted to God, and revered by the people. He judged Israel all his days, and likely assumed that the ministry of the judges would continue on to help Israel.
    1. Tragically, his sons, who should have succeeded him, were wicked. They “turned aside after gain”, “took bribes and perverted justice”. The people demanded change! Instead of looking to the God of their Fathers, they wanted a king so they could be like other nations - ones rejected by God!
    2. Broken-hearted Samuel wondered how the people could ask for someone better than the God who had delivered them from Egypt, split the Red Sea, rained down bread from heaven and caused water to flow from a rock? How could they reject the One who had brought them into the promised Land, defeating all of their enemies before them, and giving them a lasting inheritance?
  - B. Samuel prayed about what they were requesting, and the Lord answered: **“they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them”**. He told Samuel to warn them about their desired king. As is often the case, what they wanted and what they’d get would be two vastly different realities.
    1. Samuel told them their king would be oppressive, taking their children to fight in his wars. Additionally, they would till his ground, work in his factories, and be servants in his palaces. He would help himself to their crops and livestock. Ultimately, Samuel warned, **“you shall be his slaves”**.
    2. But the people stuffed their fingers in their ears and demanded a king even more loudly. So God gave them their desire. How do you think that went?
- III. Their first King was named Saul. From the day of his coronation, he proved to be insecure and lacking the respect of the people. Later, he blatantly disobeyed God’s instructions. When God raises up a giant-killing champion for Israel named David, Saul is so jealous that he begins a decade long terror campaign to kill him! Near the end, he was dabbling in the occult. He eventually took his life in national defeat.
- A. The next King was David, who mostly ruled in faithfulness, following God with his whole heart. But David wasn’t perfect. He famously committed adultery and murder. His children were out of control. When he counted the people, (which was forbidden) a deadly plague from God resulted in which 70,000 people died.

1. David's son Solomon was next. He was a man who was gifted by God with tremendous wisdom, and who built a magnificent Temple for God, but one whose sexual hang-ups were his undoing. Solomon had 700 wives and 300 mistresses, many of whom seduced his heart to worship their false idols.
  2. His son Rehoboam succeeded him. He was a man of arrogance and foolishness which led to David's vast kingdom being divided and locked in decades of civil war in his lifetime. The kingdom was never restored again.
- B. The kings of Israel (northern kingdom) were all desperately wicked. The kings of Judah (southern kingdom) fared a little better, with both good and evil kings.
1. But even the best of them failed in some tragic way. Like the prophets and priests, they fell very short of God's perfect rule over his beloved people.
  2. The Northern Kingdom fell to Assyria in 722 BC. The 10 tribes that comprised Israel were dispersed, and no one knows exactly what became of them. The kingdom of Judah was taken into exile to Babylon in 587 BC because of their idolatry, and remained there, punished by God, for 70 years.
- IV. There are 2 things we should learn from our text and from the demand of God's people to be ruled by a king "like all the other nations". First, is the folly of trusting ourselves, our lives in the present, and our futures to anything but God's rule.
- A. it's easy for us to look at the Jews in the age of the judges and shake our heads at their foolishness for demanding a king to rule them. But that's short-sighted because God has also called us to forsake everything we have, and all we trust in, and trust alone in his unfailing promise to be everything we need: our salvation, our defender, our hope, and our supply. Many may say "we have no king but God!" But what do you look to for strength, comfort, and provision?
1. Money is a lousy king! It can be lost or stolen. It can be cut off at the source (i.e., jobs) with no warning. Who can be rich enough to buy his way out of God's holy judgement on the last day? Money will be worthless on that day!
  2. What about power? Power is great until you face someone with more of it (you always will!). **Isaiah 4:30 ESV** *Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted.* Power is always expended or superseded.
  3. What about fame or influence? **Isaiah 40:6b ESV** *All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field. 7 The grass withers, the flower fades when the breath of the Lord blows on it; surely the people are grass. 8 The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.*
  4. Wisdom also is a pitiful king. One generation's wisdom proves to be foolishness in the next! If that weren't the case, doctors would still bleed people with leeches and still advertise the health benefits of cigarettes as spokesmen! **1 Corinthians 3:19 ESV** *For the wisdom of this world is folly with God. For it is written, "He catches the wise in their craftiness," 20 and again, "The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile."*
- B. If you are afraid to place all your trust in God today, remember that he is not a tyrant! He rules not with whips and armies, but by promises to the hungry, the thirsty, the broken-hearted and rejected, the confused and miserable. He promises all who believe abundant life! Money, power, fame influence and wisdom may make similar promises, but they ultimately cannot deliver (as I've

demonstrated). Yet generations who have trusted Christ as King, even to the point of their deaths, have found him benevolent and faithful to his word.

- C. Second, we should learn that in spite of our desire to be ruled by things as silly as money and power, God has promised to return those who trust in him to all the benefits of his direct rule. His rule begins when we trust in Christ, and lasts forever, without end. The first benefit is everlasting, perfect, overflowing life.
1. When David was King, he wanted to build God a house, but God shocked David with his reply to this idea. **2 Samuel 7:11 ESV** “I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house. **12** When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. **13** He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. **14** I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, **15** but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. **16** And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.”
  2. This promise was first fulfilled in Solomon, who built the Temple David desired to build. But Solomon died, as all of David’s heirs did. The Kingdom went into exile and had no kings when they returned. But 500 years after the exile, a baby was born in a manger who was a descendant of King David.
    - a) While Solomon built a physical temple for God to dwell in, this Baby would prove that he was Israel’s long-awaited Messiah, Savior, and Deliverer, who would defeat all her enemies and who would fulfill the ancient prophecy by making a dwelling place in God for all who believe.
    - b) He is the King who is not only David’s heir, but the one who has ascended to his throne, and rules even now from Heaven, and will soon return to reign on earth forever, placing all of his enemies under his feet. For those who trust in him, he still rules with promises, not oppression!
- D. What is keeping you from believing in him today? Perhaps you have something else you want to rule your life, so you can be like everyone else, not the people you perceive as “weird” or religious. But what will that gain you? How will you overcome your feelings of guilt? How will you know your sins are forgiven?
1. Do you want to entrust yourself to your own best thinking? Be honest with yourself if you can dare to. How often has your best thinking failed you? How often has your wisdom and your best laid plans fallen like a house of cards?
  2. “What if Christ doesn’t accept me?” The Bible promises that he will never cast aside anyone who comes to him! “What if I can’t be good enough to be a Christian?” I promise, you cannot! But God’s love has never been based on the goodness or morality of any of us - it is based on Christ’s perfection.
    - a) He lived the life we could never have lived, and died the death we deserved to die. He did it for you to make you into what you could never be on your own. All you have to do to be accepted is to believe that.

- b) Is there any reason why you shouldn't place your trust in the King of Kings today? He is waiting with open arms to receive you, to transform you and to bless you far beyond what you can imagine.
- E. He doesn't promise you a perfect life, but a life of peace for your storms and power for your weakness, and forgiveness for the things of which you are ashamed. He promises to deliver you even from the power of death forever.
  - 1. Jesus is King. He will be King forever. We will explore what that means in more detail next week. We only have the right to reject him as king in this life. But a day is coming when that right to resist his Kingship will be removed.
  - 2. **Philippians 2:9b ESV** God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, **10** so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, **11** and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (King!), to the glory of God the Father.
- V. **Benediction: 1 Timothy 6:15b** (To) the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, **16** who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.