

## ***FPFWC Christian Development***



## **Out of Slavery to Nationhood**

October 2022

Fall Quarter

**October 22, 2022**

**Lesson #4 – Who Is King?**

SCRIPTURE TEXT – 1 Samuel 8:4-7; 10:17-24

***Key Verse – “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.”—1 Samuel 10:19a***

**ICE BREAKER –**

- 1. In what way is the desire to be like the people around us more of a hindrance than a help to our spiritual lives?*
  
- 2. How should Christians relate with unbelievers?*

**LESSON BACKGROUND**

In the Christian arrangement of the books of the Old Testament, 1 and 2 Samuel are included with the 12 historical books (Joshua–Esther). They record the transition from theocracy (being governed by the Lord) to monarchy (being governed by an earthly king). The books of 1 and 2 Samuel can be divided into these sections:

- I. End of judges’ period (1 Samuel 1–8)
- II. God’s selection and rejection of Saul (1 Samuel 9–15)
- III. God’s selection of David and Saul’s fall (1 Samuel 16–31)
- IV. Establishment of David’s throne (2 Samuel 1–10)
- V. David’s sin and flight from Jerusalem (2 Samuel 11–18)
- VI. Reestablishment of David in Jerusalem (2 Samuel 19–20)
- VII. David’s legacy (2 Samuel 21–24)

The period of the judges lasted more than 300 years, from 1380 to 1050 BC (see lesson 7 Lesson Context). The judges administered justice and served as God’s chosen military leaders when the people were oppressed by foreign invaders. This is told briefly in Judges 2:6–19 and recorded in detail in the rest of that book (see lesson 7). Samuel’s prophetic ministry began during the latter part of those deplorable years, in 1067 BC; this was a time when Israel had no king (Judges 18:1; 19:1). This was also a time when moral conditions among the people were chaotic: “every man did that which was right in his own eyes” (21:25).

In his transitional role, Samuel is sometimes referred to as the last of the judges (1 Samuel 7:6, 15–17) and the first of the prophets (3:20; Acts 3:24; 13:20). Samuel was one of the greatest of Israel’s judges. After freeing the country from oppressors, he established a circuit court to administer justice (1 Samuel 7:16). His decisions were respected, for they were according to the law.

## LESSON COMMENTARY

**8:4–9.** The intolerable situation of Samuel’s ungodly sons brought action on the part of Israel’s elders, older men who were the heads of tribes, clans, and families, and thus were invested with leadership in the nation (Unger, *The New Unger’s Bible Dictionary*, 343). Speaking on behalf of the people (they were **the voice of the people**, v. 7), the elders had a solution for the negative leadership of Samuel’s sons. They asked for a king. But the elders’ solution would be worse than the problem. The Lord told Samuel to do what the people asked, even though their request for a king in place of the Lord meant that Israel was rejecting the Lord himself. This was the disturbing element in the people’s request. Israel already had a perfect King, the only true God. Not only did their request involve rejection of the Lord’s rulership; it also was made for perhaps the worst of reasons. Israel wanted to be **like all the nations** around them. The people’s behavior was tragic, but all too typical. The Lord, however, instructed Samuel to tell them what kind of king would **reign over them** (v. 9).

**10:17–19.** Previously Saul was privately selected by Samuel as king. Now the people publicly chose Saul as their king. Samuel opened his message with the prophetic introduction, **Thus says the LORD**. Samuel declared that in response to the Lord’s ongoing care, love, and protection, Israel nevertheless rejected God, who delivered her from all her calamities and distresses, and insisted on having a human king in the place of God. This rebuke was a reminder that the people’s insistence on having a human king was not God’s plan for them. Indeed, no king would be able to deliver Israel from slavery, as the Lord did in Egypt, and from all their **calamities** and **distresses**. But since the people were determined to have a king, Samuel said, in effect, “Let’s get on with it,” and began the process of identifying the king whose name was unknown to everyone but him.

**10:20–24.** So the Israelites presented themselves before the Lord by their **tribes** and **clans** in a process of elimination that would bring them to Saul. The tribe was the first and largest organizational division in Israel, and the clan was the next subdivision. Clans were subdivided into families. **The tribe of Benjamin** was chosen **by lot**. Casting a lot was a means of ascertaining God’s mind about various concerns (cf. Nm 26:55; 33:54; Jos 7:14–26; 1Ch 24:5; Pr 16:33; Lk 1:9; Ac 1:24–26). Though people cast the lot, the Lord determined the result (cf. Pr 16:33). Therefore the decision was not questioned. The casting of lots is no longer a valid practice for Christians today to determine God’s will. There is no verse that commands Christians to engage in this practice to ascertain God’s specific will. Instead, since the giving of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Ac 2), He enlightens the believer’s mind to see how Scripture bears on one’s decisions. The lot is no longer needed.

Saul was identified as the king. But ironically the people had to inquire of God about the whereabouts of their chosen. Saul was hiding among the **baggage**, strange behavior for the new king. Saul was the tallest man in Israel, standing head and **shoulders** over every one in Israel. He looked like a king, but the real issue was whether he was above everyone in his devotion and commitment to the **LORD**.

**LESSON NUGGET** – It is possible to be faithful in ministry and yet close your life in disappointment. This is what happened to Samuel. He was disappointed in his sons. They were not able to carry on their father’s ministry because they did not follow their father’s godly example. They yielded to the lusts of the flesh. (1 Samuel 2:12-17). Samuel was also disappointed in the nation, for they wanted a king. They used Samuel’s sons as their excuse, but the real reason was their lack of faith in God. Much that Samuel worked for and prayed for seems to have turned out differently from what he expected, and yet he remained faithful to the Lord to the end. Leaders who are faithful to God may not always appear successful to men.

**Sources:** *Moody Bible Commentary, Standard Lesson Commentary, Wiersbe Study Bible and The Essential Everyday Bible Commentary*