

General Church Education



Israel Demands a King

1 Samuel 8

Lesson 4

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Level 5: The Lord Is King of Kings

For ages 10-11

Israel Demands a King

1 Samuel 8

Teacher Background

For many years local judges ruled over Israel. Samuel was a judge, but he ruled the entire country. Under Samuel's leadership Israel returned to the worship of the Lord and there was peace in the land. Samuel was also a prophet, a messenger for the Lord. But his sons were not like him. They did not walk in the Lord's ways. So the people demanded a king, like the nations around them. This upset Samuel, but the Lord assured him that the people were not rejecting him, but rejecting the Lord's leadership. Samuel warned the people that a king would be a harsh ruler, but they continued to press their request.

Like other prophets, Samuel represented the Word. When "priests and prophets" lead us, we are being led by the Lord's love to live according to His Word. But when "kings", or truth without goodness, leads us we are led by external states. In these states, the love of self and worldly ambitions can take over. In rejecting Samuel, the children of Israel were rejecting the Lord's leadership. Samuel warned them that kings would be harsh rulers, but the people did not listen. They wanted to be like the other nations that lived around them.

Focus Points

- Samuel guided and judged Israel for many years.
- The Israelites eventually rejected Samuel and asked for a king, like the nations around them.
- The Lord told Samuel Israel was rejecting him because the people rejected His leadership.

Readings from the Writings

"Prophets represented the state of their church as regards doctrine from the Word, and living in accordance with that doctrine ." *True Christian Religion* 130

"The kingdom ruled by judges represented Divine Truth emanating from Divine Good, whereas the kingdom ruled by priests, who were also judges, represented Divine Good from which Divine Truth emanates, and the kingdom ruled by kings represented Divine Truth without Divine Good." *Arcana Coelestia* 8770.2

"The Lord as King governs each and all things in the universe from Divine truth; and as Priest, from Divine good.... If Divine truth alone were His, no mortal could be saved, for truths condemn everyone to hell; but Divine good, which is of mercy, uplifts from hell to heaven. These are what the kings and priests in the Jewish Church represented ." *Arcana Coelestia* 1728

Teacher Activity Overview

The lesson offers students the following choices:

Recitation

Learn the Lord's Word by heart.

“And the Lord said to Samuel,
‘Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you;
for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me,
that I should not reign over them.’” (1 Samuel 8:7)

Projects and Activities (see back for answers)

Complete the Sentences

Complete eight sentences by choosing phrases from a box. If you need help, look at 1 Samuel chapters 7 and 8.

Should Israel Have a King?

Samuel had good reasons for being unhappy that the people wanted a king. He knew that they no longer wanted the Lord to lead them. They wanted to “be like other nations” that were ruled by kings (1 Samuel 8:20). Why was Samuel worried?

Additional Project and Activity Choices for Parents and Teachers

Discussion: A Force for Good

Think of yourself as a force for good. In what ways might you be a positive influence on others? In what ways might thinking positively give you perspective on the good or bad choices you are thinking of making?

Discussion: Facing up to Hard Situations

Think of a time when you faced up to a hard situation and made a difficult choice. How did it feel to make a hard choice? Did things feel different after you made the choice? If so, in what ways.

Think of a time when you blamed others and made excuses in a hard situation. What choice would you make if you had a second chance to deal with the situation?

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Vocabulary

righteous—person who thinks from principles about what is good

chief priest—the priest with charge over Israel’s religious leaders

perverted—changed from being fair to unfair

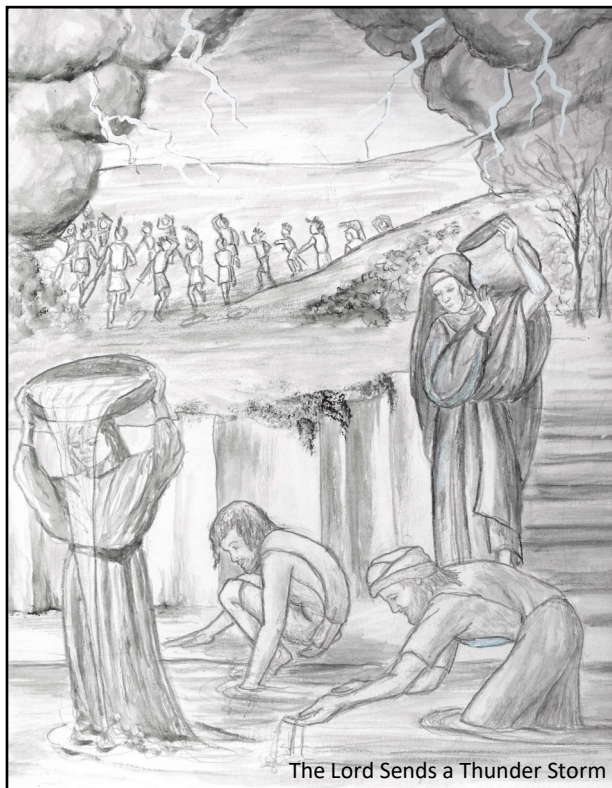
Samuel, the Last Judge

The children of Israel lost the Ark in battle against the Philistines. Eventually, the Philistines sent it back, and it stayed in Kirjath Jearim for twenty years. Israel forgot about the Lord, but the Lord did not forget them. He raised up a new judge, Samuel, to save them from the Philistines and to lead them back to the worship of the one true God. The Israelites returned to the worship of the Lord and stopped worshiping idols. Samuel gathered all the people together at Mizpah. They drew water and poured it out before the Lord, as a sign that they were making

themselves clean from the idols and evil things.

However, when the Philistines heard that the Israelites had gathered at Mizpah they prepared for battle. The children of Israel were afraid of the strong Philistine army. Samuel took a lamb and offered a burnt offering to the Lord. He asked the Lord to save Israel. As the Philistine army marched toward the Israelites, the Lord sent a powerful thunderstorm. The loud thunder confused and frightened the Philistines. The Israelites were able to defeat them and drove them back to their own country.

During the peaceful years that followed the defeat of the Philistines, Samuel united Israel. He continued to be their chief priest and judge. He taught the people and settled their arguments. He was a good man and a right-



Samuel's Wicked Sons

Think back to the story of the Lord calling young Samuel in the night and the difficult message the Lord gave Eli about the consequences that the wicked behavior of his sons would bring. When Samuel grew old, he needed his two sons to help him with his work too. Sadly, they did not follow their father's faithful service to the Lord. Instead they became selfish and greedy like Eli's sons and did not judge fairly.

“But his sons did not walk in his ways; they turned aside after dishonest gain, took bribes, and perverted justice.” (1 Samuel 8:3)

Israel Demands a King

For hundreds of years after Moses and Joshua the Israelites were ruled by judges. But under Samuel, the Lord's chosen prophet and judge, they grew restless. They wanted to be like other nations around them who had kings. They wanted the riches of a royal court and a king who could lead them in war and make them a powerful nation. And so the elders gathered together to give a message to Samuel.

“Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.” (1 Samuel 8:5)



Samuel Is Angry

Samuel was not happy that the people wanted a king. He knew they were rejecting the Lord. If they had a king they would obey the king more than the Lord! As their judge, Samuel always served the people and asked for nothing in return. But a king would be different. The Lord told Samuel to warn the Israelites about all the harsh things that a king would ask of them.

However, even with the warnings, the people still wanted a king, and so the Lord said to Samuel,

“Heed their voice, and make them a king.” (1 Samuel 8:22)

So from this time, the children of Israel were ruled by kings. Samuel would be the last judge of Israel.

The Lord Gives Israel a king

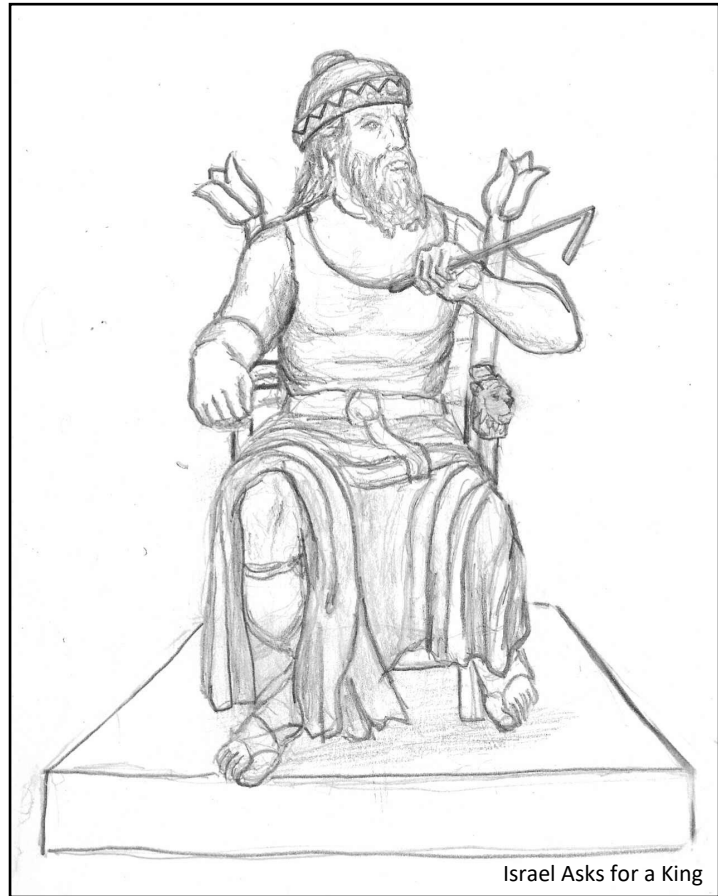
You may wonder why the Lord allowed the Israelites to have their way when they wanted a king, even though He knew it was not a good thing. The Israelites should have been willing to be ruled by Him and to follow the judges and prophets that He raised up for them. Instead, they wanted their own way, and rejected Samuel, the prophet and judge chosen by the Lord. The Lord knew the Israelites would make terrible choices if they did not have a leader they were willing follow, so He gave them a king.

Choose This Day Who You Will Serve

Do you sometimes want your own way, despite the good advice of parents and teachers? Have you ever decided to go ahead and do something, even when you have been warned that it will be bad for you? Does the Lord let you make mistakes? Yes, He leaves you in freedom to make choices in your life, just as He let the Israelites choose a king.

The Lord always does the best He can for you, but when you refuse to listen to Him, you will make mistakes. Still, remember that the Lord is always with you, working to help you understand what is true and right. When you let Him, He can even use your mistakes to help you learn to trust His judgment more than your own.

It might seem as if it would be easier to follow your friends, doesn't it? You don't want them to laugh at you or reject you. You don't want to be "different". Those feelings are like the Israelites wanting to be like the nations around them. But choosing to do wrong hurts other people, and it also hurts you.



Activity Overview

Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

“And the Lord said to Samuel,
‘Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you;
for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me,
that I should not reign over them.’” (1 Samuel 8:7)

Projects and Activities (answers at back)

Choose one or two.

Complete the Sentences

Complete eight sentences by choosing phrases from a box. If you need help, look at 1 Samuel chapters 7 and 8.

Should Israel Have a King?

Samuel had good reasons for being unhappy that the people wanted a king. He knew that they no longer wanted the Lord to lead them. They wanted to “be like other nations” that were ruled by kings (1 Samuel 8:20). Why was Samuel worried?

Complete the Sentences

Turn to I Samuel chapters 7 and 8 to complete the sentences. Try to find the answers on your own.

other nations around them	greedy and took bribes
the last judge	weak and helpless
all the harsh things a king would do	a great thunderstorm
rejecting the Lord	stop worshipping idols

1. Whenever the Children of Israel turned away from the Lord they became _____.
2. Samuel told the people to _____ and to return to following the ways of the Lord.
3. The Lord helped the Children of Israel defeat the Philistines by causing _____ to confuse them in battle.
4. Samuel's two sons became judges, but they were _____.
5. The Children of Israel wanted to be like _____ who all had kings.
6. When the people went to Samuel and demanded a king, Samuel was not happy. He knew they were _____.
7. Samuel tried to convince them not to have king by telling them _____.
8. Samuel was _____ of Israel.

Should Israel Have a King?

Samuel had good reasons for being unhappy that the people wanted a king. He knew that they no longer wanted the Lord to lead them. They wanted to “be like other nations” that were ruled by kings (1 Samuel 8:20). Why was Samuel worried?

1. Name one good thing might happen if Israel gets a king.

2. Name one bad thing that might happen if Israel gets a king:



3. Which of these things is the most important?

4. Predict what could happen when Israel chooses to be like other nations.

5. What BIG idea can be like having a king to rule over you?

Answers

Lesson 4

Complete the Sentences

1. weak and helpless, 2. stop worshiping idols, 3. a great thunderstorm, 4. greedy and took bribes, 5. other nations around them, 6. rejecting the Lord, 7. all the harsh things a king would do, 8. the last judge.