

Do you want a king?

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[0:00] I liked playing football, but I don't think I was particularly good, and I wanted to be like him. He was the best. I wanted to be like Danny Baker. He was good at maths and science, the two subjects that I was not good at.

I wanted to be like him. Plus, he was pretty good looking and had all the girls in the class after him. I wanted to be like Danny Baker. And I guess that kind of feeling of wanting to be like someone else or wanting to have something that somebody else has is something we've all had in different ways over our lives.

Maybe even this morning, maybe we looked at Phil's guitar playing and thought, I wish I could play the guitar like him. Or I wish I could even play the guitar. Maybe we look at someone's haircut this morning and think, I wish I had hair like them.

Or maybe we as a church, we look at another church and think, if only we had what they had. And then we'd have hundreds of people here every Sunday morning.

[1:17] I don't know where we'd put them all, but we'd have hundreds of people here every Sunday morning. If only we had that. But this morning, as we look at 1 Samuel 8, we're going to see that Israel wanted to be like all the nations around them.

They wanted something that they hadn't got. They looked at the other nations. They looked at maybe the Philistines and saw they were big, they were strong, they were mighty.

And what's the difference between them and us? They have a king. We want a king. That's going to answer all our problems.

They wanted a king who was going to come and help them win all their battles. And do all they want the king to do. Going to give them the best life ever in Israel.

But whilst they do that, they forget that God is the one who's king. And God is the one who sits on his throne. Now, how did this all start?

[2:30] Well, have a look at chapter 8, verse 1. When Samuel grew old, he appointed his sons as Israel's leaders.

The name of his firstborn was Joel. And the name of his second was Abijah. And they served at Beersheba. But, and here's where the problem starts.

But his sons did not follow his ways. They turned aside after dishonest gain and accepted bribes and perverted justice.

It started with these troublesome sons of Samuel. And if you've been paying attention in our series in One Samuel so far, you will have been, may be reminded that there's, there was some troublesome sons in the past.

Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas. And they caused Israel all sorts of issues. And so Israel are looking at their situation.

[3:33] They look at these two sons of Samuel. See, they're pretty bad. They're bribing people. They're not acting justly. They're not following Samuel's ways.

If they're not following Samuel's ways, they're not following God's ways, are they? And so sensibly, they speak up and say something needs to be done.

Because we know the trouble that Israel got into with Hophni and Phinehas. The glory ended up departing Israel, didn't it? We saw. So, what did the elders of Israel come and say to Samuel?

Verse 4. So all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah. 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. They're looking for an alternative, an alternative leader.

[4:39] We've had enough of these judges. We want a king. Now's the time to get a king. We're so far behind everyone else, so far behind all the other nations.

We need a king like they have. And so that's what they suggest. And it seems to be a sensible idea in lots of ways. Samuel's two sons are pretty bad.

They need some form of leadership. Why don't we ask? Ask for a king. But as they ask for a king, we see that they are actually rejecting God as king.

We're going to see that as we work through this passage together. So let's see how we get there. Because asking for a king, I don't think is the big bad thing that Israel did.

Actually saying, we want a king, wasn't the biggest problem here. You can read back in Deuteronomy where God said, made provisions for his people to have kings.

[5:51] And even to have kings like other nations have kings. But to have kings like other nations have kings. To have kings like other nations have kings. To have kings like other nations have kings. To have kings like other nations have kings.

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To have kings like those brothers. To have kings like those brothers. To have kings like those brothers. What's wrong here? See, back in the past when Israel were in problems, when they were in Egypt and in slavery in Egypt under Pharaoh, they cried out to God. They said, God, have mercy on us, help us. And the Lord rescued them. He provided Moses, didn't he? And in other places, they cried out to God and God sent them rescuers, deliverers.

[6:53] You can read that in the book of Judges. People like Samson and Gideon and others. But here, there is no turning to God.

There is no talking to God. There is only talking to Samuel. See, they think they know better than God does. It's like if you were to ask your mom and dad on a Saturday night, I want to go to the beach tomorrow.

Asking to go to the beach isn't a bad thing. Your mom and dad might say no. They might say yes.

Asking to go to the beach is a fun thing. It's good to be at the beach.

It's fun to go swimming in the sea, isn't it? It's fun to eat ice cream. It's fun to play with friends on the beach. It's a good place to go.

But if you ask your mom and dad on a Saturday night if you can go to the beach on Sunday morning, because maybe you don't want to go to church.

[8:02] Maybe you don't want to worship God. Maybe you don't want to honor God as king. You'd rather go to the beach because everybody else is going to be there. Then you're asking for the wrong reasons.

And that's really what is happening in this chapter. As they ask for a king. They're looking at the Philistines and they're thinking they're big.

They're strong. They're mighty. We want to be like them. We want to be like everyone else. We don't want to bother following God as king. And so all this has made Samuel rather displeased.

And understandably so. And so we're about to see him go and pray to God. Before we do, I wonder if you realize. However you're feeling.

Even if you're feeling displeased about something. You can go and talk to God about it. Maybe if somebody said something you're not happy about. You can go and you can talk to God about that.

[9:08] God knows. He knows what's best in every situation. And we see Samuel. He turns and prays to God. So have a look there.

In verse 6. God replies to Samuel and says, Samuel, don't be offended.

It's not you. They've rejected. It's me. That's what God says. They've rejected me as their king. The people, by asking for a king, are trying to be like everyone else and rejecting God as king.

We don't want you as king. We want our own king. Our own king to reign. And so God says to Samuel, this is what Israel seemed to be like.

They've been like this for a long time. Have a look in verse 8. As they have done from the day I brought them out of Egypt until this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are doing to you.

[10:43] God is saying, ever since God, the great king of heaven, who has chosen Israel to be his, ever since he's rescued them from the hand of the Egyptians, they've often been turning away from me, rejecting me as king.

That's what they keep doing. You see, what God says about his people here is kind of true of all of us. See, all of us, it's like all of us have a throne in our hearts, and someone is reigning as king. And here we can see God is king. But all of us end up worshipping something. It might be God, but it might be something else.

We might knock God off his throne with other things. So, I've got lots of things, and watch what happens as they're put on. So, popularity, homes, shopping, games, cars, you're watching what happens to God, sports, fashion, family, money, all those things, all those good things, but they can end up becoming God things.

And what happens to God? Can you see God there, really? Gracie, can you see God there? No. It's like God's being knocked off his throne, and other things are appearing on them.

[12:34] And that's what's kind of going on here in the hearts of the people of Israel. God is being knocked off his throne. They're rejecting him. They're saying, no, God. That's what's going on.

And that can happen in our lives, too. We make these good things become the most important things. We live to try and get people's popularity, rather than seeking to honor God.

We live to try and get as much money as we can, rather than seeking to honor God. And all of this happens because we want to be like other people.

Be like everyone else. See, we might look at someone else's lives, like I looked at Danny Baker's life, and I wanted this and that, rather than trying to honor God with the life that he's given me, the person he's created me to be.

I'd like to have what he has, what God's given me. Because what we all need, what all of us need, what is best for each one of us, what is best for Calvary Church, here in Brighton, is that all these things, although they're good, all these things come off the throne.

[14:06] And God reigns as king alone on the throne. That's what each one of us needs. We all need God on the throne, reigning as rightful king in our lives.

And we're going to see what happens in a moment, what warnings there are for God's people, if they choose to continue to reject God as king.

But before we do that, we're going to sing. And we're going to sing a song, which is a second thing, really a question to Israel that we're asking here. Do you really want this king?

Do you really want this king? We've seen that the people want one. We see that they want to be like the rest of the world around them. And we see they are choosing here, it seems, to reject God as king.

Now they're going to hear of the consequences. If you're going to choose this king, this is what's going to happen. That is what God wants to say to them. So, verse 9, God says to Samuel, God's being very kind in many ways to the people.

[15:35] He's saying to Samuel, listen to them. Listen to what they're saying. If they want a king, maybe we'll give them a king. But, we need to warn them.

They need to hear what the consequences will be if they are to choose to have a king in this way. And so, God's very kind, warning them of what will happen.

You make the choice based on this. So, let's have a look. I'm going to read verse 10 to 18. Lots of verses. But I want you to spot, particularly if you're younger, there's a word which comes up, I reckon, six times.

Okay? So, have a listen, and then I'll ask you what you think the word is. So, Samuel told all the words of the Lord to the people who were asking him for a king.

He said this, this is what the king who will reign over you will claim as his rights. He will take your sons and make them serve with his chariots and horses and they will run in front of his chariots. [16:47] Some, he will assign to be commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties and to others to plow his ground and reap his harvest.

and still others to make weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers.

He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive groves and give them to his attendants. He will take a tenth of your grain and your vintage and give it to his officials and attendants.

Your male and female servants and the best of your cattle and donkeys. He will take for his own use. He will take a tenth of your flocks and you yourselves will become his slaves.

When that day comes, you will cry out for relief from the king you have chosen but the Lord will not answer you in that day. Does anyone know Samuel, maybe your hand was up first, what word do you think came up again and again?

[17:59] Take. You are right. Is that what you're going to say Bethany? Take. Well done. Take. That's what the king, they're going to choose to reject God as king and have a different king over them.

The king is going to be a king who is going to take and take and take and take. He talks about your sons, they'll be taken off, they'll be sent to serve in different ways the army.

Your daughters, they'll be taken off to serve the king as cooks, as bakers, as perfumers. I don't know if the king wore perfume but that's what it says.

Your land will be taken whenever he pleases. He sees a good field and thinks oh, that looks like a nice field over there. I'm going to take it. you'll be taxed on your grain, your servants, your cattle, the best of it.

He'll look at them and think well that's a good servant over there, I'm going to take him for myself. That's a good cow. I'll take that cow and put it as part of my flock of cattle.

[19:11] He'll tax your sheep, he'll take some of your sheep. He's going to take, he's going to take, he's going to take. And he says you yourselves are going to become his slaves.

This is going to be a hard thing, you're going to become slaves to this king. That's what this king is going to be like, he's going to take and take and take.

And so if you heard that, if you heard what this king was going to be like, what would you say, boys and girls particularly, what would you think you would say to that? Isaac, what would you say?

Yeah, no thanks, I don't want a king like that. I think that's absolutely right. Thank you, Isaac. That's what you would imagine. What a silly suggestion this was of us. We've made a mistake.

Of course we don't, we definitely want God as king. Well, have a look in verse 19. But the people refused to listen to Samuel.

[20:18] No, they said, we want a king over us. Then we shall be like the other nations with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles.

They refused to listen. Like a grumpy person, stamping down their foot and saying, no, I am not listening to you.

I want a king. We want a king. They say in this, in verse 20, they want a king who's going to lead us and go before us and fight our battles.

And they're not talking about them being God's battles. They've forgotten that the Lord has promised them that he would go before them and fight their battles.

Deuteronomy 20, verse 4, for the Lord your God is the one who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies, to give you victory. That's the king they're rejecting.

[21:25] With the Lord on their side, they can win battles, but they forget that. They forget what the Lord has done. This comes after Samuel laid a stone called Ebenezer saying, thus far the Lord has helped us.

They'd forgotten that. Do you really want a king? Yes, they say. We do want a king. We do. What they're really doing is taking God off the throne and putting themselves on the throne. Now, I think someone in this room has self.

Isaac Rayfield, is that you? Self. Can you come and stick that on the throne for us? I know you've been itching to do that all day.

There we go. Good work. Good work. Let's make sure it stays up. There we go. Oh, no. It's fallen off. But we get it, don't we? God's been knocked off, literally, and self has been put on the throne. [22:33] They're saying, we want a king who is not God. That's what they're saying. We want to sit on that throne, not God.

That's what they're saying. And it reminds me, it reminds me of what sin is. It reminds me of what we've said this kind of last year or so together, what sin is.

Sin is when we say, shove off God. Shove off your throne. I'm in charge, not you.

That's what sin is. That's what we do. And that's what the people are doing. Here, they're saying, no God, shove off God. I'm in charge, not you.

sin is like that. Sin is like the king that God is warning them they'll get.

[23:36] Sin takes from us. It takes. It looks so attractive. It looks so attractive to have a king like the other nations. Sin can look attractive to us.

It's a bit like when I was shopping the other week, I saw a jam donut. And I thought, I haven't had a jam donut in ages.

So I went to the bakery section, I looked at this jam donut and I thought, yeah, I'm going to have a jam donut. It looks really attractive. So I put it in the bag and then I thought, this is not big enough. It's quite a small jam donut. And so I want another jam donut. And so suddenly I'm taking it and I'm putting it in the bag. And then not just two, but three.

And that's when it all got bad. And I shoved it in the bag and I went to the till and I paid for it and I shoved it in my bag so nobody would see.

[24:40] And then I got back and I ate the one and thought, it's fine that I've bought three because I can have the other two, one tomorrow, one the day after.

Perfectly sensible plan. And one donut was consumed and then another and then another, all on the same day. And it left me feeling full and tired and disappointed.

If only I kept to just the one. And that's how sin leaves us. It takes from us. It looks so appetizing. It looks so good. saying that lie, it's just going to get us out of a bit of a trouble. Sin looks attractive and yet it takes.

It takes from us. And the king that God is saying they'll have is going to take. He's going to take.

[25:42] And yet God has rescued his people from Egypt. God has been faithful and kind to his people over many years. And they've forgotten that.

And what we're really seeing in this chapter is a bunch of people who are human and sinful.

Samuel's two sons, they're corrupt. They're sinful. And Israel, they're corrupt and sinful.

They probably wanted a king for years. Now's their opportunity. Now's the time to get God off his throne and put ourselves on it. And say, we want a king, not God as king.

It's a sad rejection of God. That's what's going on here. And so the question I think we have left to answer is could there be a better king?

Could there be a better king? We'll see in the next few weeks Saul being installed as this king that they want. Saul does well at times, but he's not really a very good king in all sorts of ways.

[26:54] And we're kind of left crying out for better. But we'll see as we go through one, probably not until later this year or next year, we'll see David, that shepherd boy being appointed as God's anointed king.

king. And in many ways he does well, but in many ways he fails too. And then we'll see Solomon as king. And in many ways I think Israel has some of their best years under Solomon, but also some of their worst.

As Solomon fails. We're human, we're sinful, and we prefer to put self on the throne rather than God's as number one in our lives.

And so who do we look to as king? That's what we're left to wonder. Well, as the Bible goes on, as history goes on, we see someone else appears.

Isaac has the answer, don't you? It's Jesus. Do you want to come stick Jesus on his crown whilst I take this off my foot? Good work.

[28:08] God's that's the king we need. That's the king who comes. A king who comes who doesn't come and takes and takes and takes from us.

He's a king who comes and serves. A king who says, come unto me and I will give you rest. A king who gives.

A king who gives up his life for us. That's the king we need. A king from outside of the human race. A king from somewhere else, from God above.

Jesus said this before he went to the cross. As he was put on trial, he said, my kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders.

But now, my kingdom is from another place. We have to look outside of our sinful human beings and we look to God, who's provided Jesus as our king.

[29:19] And the only thing Jesus really takes from us is our sins on the cross, that when he dies for us, so that he can give us life. And that's a wonderful life that he gives us.

And we're called to serve this king, but hopefully that's a privilege, because he's not like a king that these people are going to get. Not like a king who's going to take and take and take.

He's a king who gives. He served us by giving his life up on the cross. And so we'll gladly serve this king.

This is the king we all need. Is he your king this morning? I'm going to pray and then we're going to sing.

Father God, we thank you. We thank you that as we see this sad rejection of you as king, we thank you that there is hope in your words, in the wonderful promised king, the Lord Jesus Christ.

[30:34] We thank you for him and we pray that you would help us to honor him as king, that you would help us to have him firmly at the center of our lives, on the throne of our hearts, reigning and ruling as king.

and we ask this father for your glory and your honor. Amen.