

(1 Sam. 8:1-8) - Samuel, Hannah's son (whose name means "asked of God"), remained with Eli, the priest and prophet of God, and ministered unto the Lord before Eli (2:11; 3:1). Eli was quite old and had failed to discipline his sons; therefore, God slew them (3:10-14). Samuel became God's prophet and judge in Israel (3:19-21). By God's grace, Samuel was a faithful prophet of God all the days of his life (7:15-17). When he was old, Samuel made his sons judges over Israel; but, like Eli's sons, they perverted judgment, took bribes, and displeased the Lord (8:1-3). The elders of Israel came to Samuel and requested that he establish a king over Israel, like the nations around them (8:4-5). This was not the first time that the people had asked for a king. Recall that they had asked Gideon to rule over them (Judges 8:22), and Gideon wisely refused saying, "I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you; **THE LORD SHALL RULE OVER YOU**" (Judges 8:23). The point that Gideon made was that whatever human instrument the Lord would use to accomplish His purpose in ruling over the nation, their true and only and ultimate King was the Lord Himself. As we will see, because the Lord would grant their request, this marks a turning point in Israel's history. But their desire for a king displeased Samuel, and he knew it was evil. As a faithful prophet of God, he took the matter to the Lord in prayer. The Lord revealed what was really behind their request - "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*" (8:7).

We need to understand that it was not necessarily sinful for the people to desire to have a king. First, consider their state as described at the end of the book of Judges - "In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25). Of course, God had always been their King, but they had rejected Him. He would show them that without Him, they would be destroyed. Secondly, the LORD had already promised and prophesied that there would be kings to rule over them - "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be" (Gen 49:10; cf. Gen. 17:6,16; 35:11; Num. 24:17). Thirdly, provision had been made in the law of Moses for the choice of a king, and directions given concerning the manner in which the king should govern (Deut. 17:14-20). Fourthly, even though most of them failed miserably, God's appointed kings, which would come from the tribe of Judah, were to lead the people in the ways of the Lord, and they were established by God to be types of Christ, the King of all kings. Through these human kings the people were to learn a great lesson - **THE LORD HIMSELF IS THE ONE TRUE AND ONLY KING!**

Their sin in desiring a king was revealed in the kind of king they wanted and the spirit they manifested. Again, they had rejected the Lord as their King. If they had desired a king to be given them according to the law of God (Deut. 17:15), one who would govern them in truth and justice, one who feared God, it would have been fine. But they asked for a king "to judge us **LIKE ALL THE NATIONS**" (8:5). God, therefore, in His good purpose and providence, and in judgment upon the people for forsaking Him, let them have the king of their choice. This was Saul from the tribe of Benjamin, not from Judah. They chose Saul for all the wrong reasons. It was because he came from a wealthy influential family and because of his appearance (9:1-2). This was all well within the scope of God's sovereign will. As we know from the rest of the recorded history in 1 Samuel, King Saul was a failure, but God used him to pave the way for Israel's first godly king, David, from the tribe Judah. Even though as a sinner saved by grace he had his problems, David became the victor for Israel over Goliath and the Philistines, "the sweet psalmist of Israel" (2 Sam. 23:1), and one of the greatest types of Christ found in the Bible. David was the shepherd-king of Israel; Christ is the Shepherd/King of spiritual Israel (cp. 1 Sam. 16:1-11; John 10:11-14; Rev. 19:16). God, having

purposed to raise unto them a king of whose seed the Messiah would come, took this occasion to accomplish His purpose, so turning their evil desire unto a good end, as God can convert the evil thoughts and actions of men to serve for His own glory in the salvation of His chosen people. Christ was *“made of the seed of David according to the flesh”* (Rom. 1:3).

Again, the LORD was the ultimate King over Israel, and, although men and women by nature do not recognize Him as such, He is the Ruler of the whole universe. Also, all the promises and prophecies of a king in Israel were to be fulfilled ultimately by the coming of Christ, the King of kings. Whoever was to be king in Israel was to act in his capacity as a type of Christ, the King of kings. He was to submit to the Lord God and lead the people in serving the Lord and looking forward to the coming of the Messiah for righteousness and eternal life. Most of the time, Israel was ruled by evil kings of whom it is said, *“and he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD.”* There were a few kings of whom it is said, *“and he did that which was right in the eyes of the LORD.”* Throughout the history of the kings of Israel, it was apparent that sinful human kings were failures. The only king who has never failed is our one and only true king, the Lord Jesus Christ. The true people of God (spiritual Israel) have no king but Jesus Christ, the Lord (Matt. 23:8-11). Truly, Christ is King of kings and Lord of lords (Acts 2:36; Rom. 10:9-10; Phil. 2:9-11). Christ is our King by the Father's design and decree. He is our King by His obedience unto death as our Surety, Substitute, and Redeemer. He died that He might be Lord of the dead and the living (Rom. 14:9). He is our King to bring His chosen people into submission to His sovereign rule and to submit to His righteousness as the only ground of their complete salvation (Psa. 45:6; 99:4; Isa. 9:6-7; 32; Jer. 23:5-6; 33:15-16; Heb. 1:8). The mediatorial lordship (kingship) of Christ is based upon His accomplishment of redemption for His people (Matt. 5:3-12; 6:33; 16:13-20; Acts 2:34-36; Php. 2:5-11). Christ is our priest, our prophet, and our king.

(1 Sam. 8:9-18) - The Lord told Samuel to tell the people what to expect when they reject His reign and make a man to be king over them. Notice how many times the Lord says of their chosen king that *“he will take ...”* He would live in plenty while the people went without. This is so different from Christ our King Who gave Himself a ransom for all His people to be testified in due time (1 Tim. 2:6). Christ our King gave His life for us and arose again because of our justification by God's grace in Him (John 10:11-18). The only thing He took from us was our sin-debt as our sins were imputed to Him and became His by the legal act of imputation. He gave us in return His righteousness imputed to us whereby we are sinners saved by grace and justified citizens of His eternal kingdom (Jer. 23:5-6; 33:15-16). He gives us eternal life and all spiritual blessings in heavenly places (John 6:37-45; Eph. 1:3). We are under His reign of grace, and He rules with a sceptre of righteousness to save us, keep us, protect us, and bring us to glory (Rom. 5:21; Heb. 1:8). Christ our King gives us a heart to serve Him and give Him all praise and glory for the great salvation He has accomplished for us.

(1 Sam. 8:19-22) - The blind and foolish people only cried out more, *“Nay. but we will have a king, over us.”* Samuel told the Lord what the people wanted, and the Lord, according to His sovereign purpose and will said, *“Make them a king.”* Within the first two years of his reign Saul usurped the authority of the priests, rejected God's way of atonement, and offered a sacrifice himself to God (13:1, 8-14). Saul was a clear example of man's depravity and failure. He proved that the only hope of salvation for sinners is the grace of God in Christ that REIGNS IN RIGHTEOUSNESS THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD, THE KING OF KINGS (1 Tim. 6:15; Rev. 17:14).