

Israel Asks for a King

1 Samuel 7:3 – 8:22

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Samuel gathered the people of Israel at Mizpah. They dedicated themselves to the Lord. At the same time the Philistines mobilized their army and advanced. The Israelites were frightened, so Samuel offered a sacrifice to the Lord and asked for help. At that moment the Philistines attacked. But the Lord sent a powerful thunderclap that exploded among the Philistines sending them into such confusion that the Israelites routed them. It was a glorious victory.

Samuel set up a large stone as a monument. He called it Ebenezer, which means "the stone of help" and said, "This is the place where the Lord helped us!"

For the rest of his life Samuel served as a judge – a military, political, and religious leader of Israel. Land the Philistines had previously taken was restored to Israel. And there was peace under Samuel's leadership.

As Samuel grew old, he appointed his sons to be judges for Israel. But they weren't like their father; they accepted bribes and perverted justice. So the people said to Samuel, "Give us a king so we can be like all the other nations."

Samuel was displeased, but the Lord said, "They're not rejecting you. They're rejecting me. Do what they ask, but warn them about how a king will treat them."

Samuel warned the people, "A king will take advantage of you, abuse you, steal from you, and treat you like slaves. You will beg for relief, but the Lord will not help you."

The people refused to listen. "Even so, we still want a king."

And the Lord told Samuel, "Do as they say; give them a king."