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The Request for a King
First Samuel 8: 1-22



Probably twenty or twenty-five years elapsed between the events recorded in **Chapter 7** and those in **Chapter 8**. **Samuel** was now an old man, about to walk off the pages of the Bible, and a new generation had emerged in **Isra'el** with new leaders and new ideas. Life goes on, and circumstances change, but **God's people** must have the wisdom to adapt to new challenges without abandoning old convictions. Like other great leaders, **Samuel** in his old age faced some painful situations and had to make some difficult decisions. Unfortunately, **he** left the scene convinced that **he** had been rejected by the very people **he** had served so faithfully. **Samuel** had obeyed **ADONAI**, but **he** was a man with a broken heart.

God had chosen **Moshe** to lead the nation of **Isra'el** and **Joshua** to succeed **him** (see the commentary on **Deuteronomy, to see link click Fu – The Tent of Meeting**), but **Joshua** wasn't commanded to lay hands on any successor.[182] **Ha'Shem** then raised up **judges** to lead, and **the people** tried to make at least one of **them king**. **Gideon**, however, rejected this offer, reminding **them** of the privilege of having **the LORD** as **their** only **king** when **he said to them, "I will not rule over you, nor will my son. ADONAI will rule over you" (Judges 8:23).** As a result, unfortunately, during the period of **the judges**, **the people** followed **the idols** of **the land** (see the commentary on **Judges As – Cycles of Disobedience and Deliverance**). **In those days there was no king in Isra'el; everyone did what was right in their own eyes (Judges 21:25,** see

17:6,18:1, and **19:1).** It seems that **the Kingship** of the invisible **God** strained **the people's** faith, so through **Samuel**, **YHVH** provided **a** human **king**, by which **He** ultimately established **His** sovereign rule over **His people**.

Today, the congregations of **God** often suffer from a crisis of leadership, especially during times of transition. Like **the Israelites** of old, believers must learn that **ADONAI** has appointed the means of governing **His people** and **He** provides the leaders to do **His** will. In addition, relying on **the Lord's** provision may inspire us to take biblical qualifications more seriously and devote more effort and energy to prayer.[183]

The eight speeches in **Chapter Eight** constitute a remarkable chiasm in which the second element in each pair reverses the roles of the speaker and recipient:

A The people to Samuel (8:5)

B Samuel to ADONAI (8:6)

C ADONAI to Samuel (8:7-9)

D Samuel to the people (8:10-18)

D The people to Samuel (8:19-20)

C Samuel to ADONAI (8:21)

B ADONAI to Samuel (8:22a)

A Samuel to the people (8:22b)