

“Give us a king!” It had been 400 years since our people had left slavery in Egypt. The Creator had brought forward one leader and **judge** after another to try and get us on the right track. There had been **brief** moments of faithfulness, but overall we were a mess. Samuel was the current judge that the Creator had appointed to help keep us faithful. Samuel had been a special boy, born to a faithful woman named Hannah who was unable to have children. Hannah had prayed to the Creator, begging for a child. Hannah promised that if she received a child, then that child would belong completely to the Creator. Hannah understood the Creator better than anyone else at that time. She said, **“There is no one like our Creator. Do not be arrogant! The Lord brings death and creates life. He buries and he resurrects. The Lord sends poverty and wealth. He humbles and he lifts up. He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ashes. It is not by strength that one succeeds.”**

Hannah’s faith and connection to the Creator was unique because during that time **“the Creator’s Word was rare and there were few visions”** of the truth among us. We were so far from the Creator that we had even lost the Ark of the Covenant. We had arrogantly gone to war against the Philistines thinking that the Ark of the Covenant would guarantee us victory. But we were easily defeated in our **arrogance** and the Ark of the Covenant containing the Ten Commandments, the manna, and the staff of Moses was lost. It was symbolic of the fact that we had lost the Creator’s Word, provision, and protection in our lives. As one woman among us lamented, **“The Creator’s glory has departed from Israel.”**

But thankfully Hannah’s son, Samuel, grew up into a man connected to the Creator. Samuel helped us to regain the Ark of the Covenant. And the Creator’s Word came to us once again through Samuel. Under his leadership we destroyed our **idols** and stopped living like the **nations** around us. But as Samuel aged, we wandered from the Creator’s ways again. We listened to Samuel’s sons, who were not like their father. They perverted the truth and turned us away from the Creator. So all the elders of our people approached aging Samuel one day and said, **“Give us a king, just like all the other nations have!”** We wanted stability. The last 400 years had been chaotic for us, a rollercoaster of ups and downs. There was no unity and common direction among us. Every person and every tribe of our people seemed to be doing their own thing—**“everyone did what was right in his own eyes.”** And we believed the reason for this was because **“there was no king in Israel.”** And we were absolutely right about that—we had **“no king.”** And we saw the other nations around us and they all had kings. Yes, the Creator had called us to be **“holy”** and different than the nations around us, but that was **not** working for us. We were not experiencing the success we **wanted**. Life was not turning out the way we thought it should for us. We saw how the nations around us lived. Their armies were big and strong. They had grand palaces, temples, and cities. They had great wealth and storehouses of food. And it was their kings who led them in acquiring and building all that. We wanted what the **nations** had. We wanted a **king** like the nations around us.

Samuel was heartbroken and crushed by our request. He had worked so hard to bring us back to the Creator and his **“holy”** ways. And now we were undoing all of that in a moment. The Creator said to Samuel, **“They have rejected me as their king, just as they have done from the day I brought them out of Egypt.”** The reason there was **“no king”** among us was because we had rejected the **Creator** as our king. The Creator wanted us to have a king—he wanted to **be** our king. He had led us out of slavery in Egypt, he had provided for us, he had protected us. But none of that had happened in the way **we** wanted. The Creator’s ways were not our ways. And so for 400 years we had been rejecting him as our king. Every time something didn’t go the way we wanted, we complained, whined, and walked away from the Creator.

The Creator told Samuel to warn us what would happen if we chose this path of having a human king over us. He said, **“This is what your king will do…”** And then the Creator revealed to us the dark underbelly of **all** human kings and rulers—he told us the truth that we did not want to hear. He warned us about what our king would do to us. Our king would send our sons to die in his wars. Our king would take our daughters for himself. Our king would take our best lands. Our king would tax us. Our king would take our best servants and animals. The Creator said to us, **“You yourselves will become his slaves.”** We were always afraid of the other nations around us enslaving us, like Egypt had. How could we be slaves to our own king, to the king we chose for ourselves? Then the Creator gave us his final warning, **“You will cry out for relief from the king you have chosen and the Lord will not answer you.”** It felt like the Creator didn’t answer us anyways, so what was the difference?

We had already made up our minds. We were convinced we knew what was **best**. We weren’t stupid—we weren’t dumb. The nations around us had it right. So we responded to the Creator, **“No! We want a king so we can be like the other nations! We want a king to lead us to war!”** We were defiant like immature children who were convinced they were right. So the Creator did **exactly** what we asked. He told Samuel, **“Listen to them and give them a king.”** The Creator indeed gave us a king. Saul was first the human king that we had. He was tall and handsome. We loved what we saw. And we initially loved how it went. But it did not take long for us to realize how wrong we really were. We had sinned and been stupid by asking for a human king. Our ancestor Israel whom we were named after had **“wrestled with the Creator”** and the Creator had let Israel win. Here we were again, wrestling with the Creator and he was letting us **win**. We were begging him for a human king and he gave us **exactly** what we asked for. We were learning the hard way that we needed to be very careful about what we asked for, as the Creator might give it to us.

“Give us a king!” Our prayers and demands of the Creator tend to be very **arrogant** and **selfish**. We think we know what we **need**. We think that our desires and wants are a **good** thing. But we are truly **ignorant** about what we really need. Only the Creator knows what we need. We think we need success and money, we think we need comfort and entertainment, we think we need weapons and armies, we think we need governments and rulers, we think we need technology, we think we need electricity and hot showers, we think we need food every moment of every day, we think we need to live and not die, and on and on and on. The Creator does not **want** to give us things that are **bad** for us, but the Creator is **not** a tyrant and if we stubbornly demand to get our way, he will eventually give us what we ask for, even if it hurts us.

What are you asking the Creator to do in your life? What are you demanding of him? What is it you think you **need** in your life right now? Be **very careful** what you ask for. Do not be so arrogant, thinking you know what is **good** for you and what you **need** in your life. Jesus thought it would be good to avoid the cross and death. The cross was such a terrible, hurtful, and awful thing. Why would it be **good** for Jesus to go to the cross and die? Why would he **need** to go to the cross and die? Thankfully, Jesus **surrendered** to the mysterious will and wisdom of our Creator. Jesus did not stubbornly do what **he** wanted. Instead Jesus did what his **heavenly Father** wanted and went to the cross and died. And because of that we have all been **saved**. So yes, we need a king. Yes, **“give us a king!”** But the king we need and the king that is **good** for us is **only Jesus** and no one else. The Creator has **already** given us the king we need. We do not need another king. We have Jesus as our king and he is **enough**. If we have Jesus, then we do not need anything else. **Amen.**