

Israel Rejects God as King

1 Samuel 8-12

LESSON GOAL

Students will not be self-ruled but will submit to God, who is King.



BIBLE TRUTHS

- Israel did not want God to rule over them, so they asked for a human king.
- Because God is perfect, He is the only king Israel needed.
- God allowed Saul to be the king of Israel.
- God would bless Israel and King Saul if they obeyed.

KEY VERSE

"But you have today rejected your God, who Himself saved you from all your adversities and your tribulations; and you have said to Him, 'No, set a king over us!' Now therefore, present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes and by your clans" (1 Samuel 10:19).

APPLICATION

- Examine your heart to see whether God is your King.
- Trust God at all times
- Praise God for blessing those who obey.

NEXT WEEK

Saul Disobeys God

Read 1 Samuel 13:1–14; 15:1–34.





Craft



Finger Play



Memory Verse



Object Lesson



Game



Visual Aid



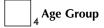
Center



Activity



Q & A



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Teacher Planning Sheet

Objectives/Truths to cover this week

PREPARE

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Personal Application
As a result of my study in this passage, God wants me to
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o
Three ways students need to apply this passage are
<u> </u>
<u> </u>
<u> </u>
POINT
Choose from various ideas to point students to the coming Bible lesson.
<u> </u>
-
PROCLAIM
Choose from various ideas to proclaim the Bible lesson.
Presentation Ideas
Praise/Music Ideas
Praise/Music Ideas
Praise/Music Ideas
Praise/Music Ideas
PRACTICE

PREPARE WITH THE TRUTH

"Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul... You shall teach them to your children" (Deuteronomy 11:18–19).

Please take time to prepare your mind and heart to accurately handle the truths of God's Word (2 Tim. 2:15). Read through the Bible background and study the truths contained in this lesson. Crucial background information is included here to aid you in understanding the Scripture.

Bible Background

In 1 Samuel 1–7, God showed His covenant love by acting on behalf of both individual Israelites and the entire nation of Israel. The Lord heard the cry of Hannah and gave her a son, Samuel. The Lord saw the need of the nation Israel and gave them both the prophetic word and deliverance through the prophet-judge Samuel. God was committed to the welfare of His people. His care was dramatically shown in 1 Samuel 7, when He delivered His people from the Philistines. Throughout the period of the judges, God had been faithful to rescue His people whenever they called on Him. But when Samuel was an old man, the people of Israel became tired of trusting in God for deliverance. Israel rejected God's rule and wanted instead a king like the other nations.

Israel Rejects the Lord as King (1 Sam. 8)

First Samuel 8 does not specify whether Samuel erred when he made his sons, Joel and Abijah, judges over Israel. While Samuel was physically unfit for the office, being too old, his sons were spiritually unfit. They went after "dishonest gain, took bribes, and perverted justice" (1 Sam. 8:3). Samuel's placement of his unworthy sons as judges provided the elders of Israel an opportunity to ask Samuel to replace them with a king "like all the nations" (8:5). Samuel was disappointed with Israel's request and rightly turned to the Lord (8:6). The Lord's response to Samuel indicated that Samuel was "displeased" because Israel had rejected him as judge when they asked for a king (8:7–8). Although Israel had rejected Samuel (8:8), the Lord told Samuel that the greater rejection was of God Himself. Israel no longer wanted God to rule over them (8:7). The Lord told Samuel to give Israel their king but also to warn them what a king would require from his subjects (8:9).

Although Samuel warned Israel that their king would take their sons, daughters, land, servants, and animals for himself, and that eventually they would cry out to God because of the king they had chosen, the people still wanted a king (1 Sam. 8:10–18). Israel's motivation for rejecting their divine King and wanting a human king was made explicit in their answer. They responded, "No, but we will have a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles" (8:19–20). The Lord often had fore-told that Israel would have a king (Gen. 35:11; 36:31; 49:10; Num. 24:7, 9, 17; Deut. 17:14). But Israel's motivation was wrong. Contrary to God's commands that they not be like the nations, Israel wanted to be like the nations! Israel's pride influenced their decision; they wanted to be able to stand up in comparison to the heathens on the heathens' standards. Instead of trusting God to fight for them (Ex. 14:14; Deut. 3:22; Josh. 10:14), Israel wanted to trust in a man to "fight [their] battles" (1 Sam. 8:20). Israel's preference for human rule was an expression of their desire to be independent from God's rule.

The Lord Selects Saul as Israel's King (1 Sam. 9–11)

Although the Lord authorized Samuel to give the people what they asked (1 Sam. 9:22), He remained sovereign over the situation. Chapters 9–11 reveal how the Lord controlled the selection of the first king of Israel. Saul was the perfect match for people who wanted a king like the nations. Saul came from a rich, powerful family (1 Sam. 9:1; wealth is seen in the family's donkeys and servants) and was taller and more handsome than any other Israelite (9:1–2). Unable to find the lost donkeys, Saul was led by his servant (and the invisible hand of God) to the prophet Samuel. God had told Samuel the day before (9:15) that a man was coming whom he was to anoint as the "commander over My people Israel" (9:16). God explained why He was raising up Saul: "I have looked upon My people, because their cry has come to Me" (9:16). Even in rebellion, the Israelites were God's people; God still heard their cry and was going to deliver them. How unfathomable is God's faithfulness and mercy!

When Samuel saw Saul, the Lord told Samuel that he was the one He had chosen (1 Sam. 9:17). Saul stayed with Samuel that night. The next morning he anointed Saul as king (10:1). Samuel gave three signs as proof that Saul had been chosen by God: at an exact location he would meet two men who would tell him that his father's donkeys had been found; he would be given two loaves of bread by three men on their way to offer a sacrifice; and when he met a group of prophets, the Lord's Spirit would prophesy through him (10:2–14). The signs happened as Samuel had said. Saul knew he was going to be king.

Samuel gathered all Israel together and again rebuked them for despising God's reign. He said, "You have today rejected your God, who Himself saved you from all your adversities...and you have said to Him, 'No, set a king over us!'" (1 Sam. 10:19). Although the method is not clear (perhaps by casting lots), Saul somehow was selected as king over Israel (10:20–21). When he came up missing, the Lord's control over the process was exalted as the people asked the Lord where Saul was, and He told them that Saul was hiding in the luggage (10:22). When tall Saul was brought in front of the people, Samuel announced him as the one "whom the LORD has chosen" (10:24).

The beginning of Saul's reign also demonstrated the Lord's choice of him. When the Ammonites threatened the tribes of Israel east of the Jordan, "the Spirit of God came upon Saul" (10:5). As He had empowered Gideon, Jephthah, and Samuel, God's Spirit empowered Saul. He rallied over 300,000 Israelites who subsequently defeated the Ammonites. Saul humbly attributed the victory to the Lord (11:13). Although there had been some people who were opposed to Saul's reign (10:27), all Israel now met to affirm Saul's kingship and offer sacrifices before the Lord (11:14–15).

Samuel Rebukes Israel (1 Sam. 12)

Although he was "old and grayheaded" (1 Sam. 12:2), Samuel was not ready to quit his prophetic duties. God had given Israel the king they had asked for, but Israel had not yet repented of their wickedness in rejecting God. For the glory of the Lord and the good of Israel, Samuel knew that Israel had to repent of their rejection of God and submit to His Word.

To prevent anyone from discounting the message he was about to give, Samuel challenged the people to bring against him any charges of misusing his authority (1 Sam. 12:2–5). When no one was able to say anything, Samuel began his message. He reminded the people of God's ability to deliver them (12:6–12). Whether Israel was enslaved in Egypt or oppressed by the nations surrounding her during the times of the judges, the Lord always heard their cries for deliverance

and answered by raising up deliverers, such as Moses and Samson. But a change had come across Israel. When the Ammonites threatened them, the people looked for a human king who would deliver them instead of the Lord (12:12). Now that God had given Israel their king (12:13), Samuel called the people to fear, obey, and serve the Lord (12:14). If they and their king obeyed God's commandments, they would be blessed with the privilege of continuing to follow Him. If the people and their king rebelled, God's hand would be against them (12:15). Having a king did not mean Israel could disregard God's law; both king and nation would be held responsible for their obedience.

To help Israel perceive their great wickedness (1 Sam. 12:17), Samuel prayed to God to send thunder and rain on the wheat harvest (12:16–18). Rain not only was unusual at this time of year, but it also would damage the ripe harvest. The miracle had its effect on the people. They "greatly feared the LORD and Samuel" (12:18) and admitted their wickedness: "For we have added to all our sins the evil of asking a king for ourselves" (12:19). Only after a mighty revelation of God's power did the people listen to Samuel's rebuke.

Samuel had good news for the people after their repentance. Although Israel had been changed forever and now had a king, God had not changed. He still expected the same obedience He did before their rejection of Him. The Lord would "not forsake His people, for His great name's sake, because it has pleased the LORD to make [Israel] His people" (1 Sam. 12:22). The Lord chose Israel as His special people to reveal His glory; He would continue to bless obedience and punish disobedience to make the greatness of His attributes known. In conclusion, Samuel called on the people to (1) fear the Lord; (2) serve Him in truth with all their hearts; and (3) consider what great things He had done for them (12:24). The positive commands were accompanied by a stern warning. Samuel said, "If you still do wickedly, you shall be swept away, both you and your king" (12:25). Israel may have thought a king would be able to fight against their enemies, but a king would be impotent against God's wrath.

Conclusion

God often had told Israel that they would have a future king, but Israel wanted a king for all the wrong reasons. The people hoped that having a king would allow them to escape from submitting to and depending on God; they wanted to be like the nations instead of being God's holy people. Israel's desire to be independent did not change God's sovereign choice of Saul. God even graciously used King Saul to deliver His people. Although Israel had sinned in their ill-intentioned request, God did not forsake them. God called both king and people to fear Him, serve Him, and consider the great things He had done. For Israel to be blessed, both king and the people needed to obey God (1 Sam. 12:14–15). King Saul's downfall becomes even more disastrous in light of such strong warnings.

POINT TO THE TRUTH

"Give ear, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth" (Psalm 78:1).

This section includes questions to review last week's lesson and ideas to prepare students for this week's lesson. Choose from the following ideas to point to the truths of this lesson.



Review Questions

Use these questions to review and reinforce key truths.

In the Old Testament, whom did God use to speak to the people? God used men called prophets to tell the people His message.

What was so special about Samuel?

Samuel's mother was not able to have children. She prayed to God that she would have a son, and promised that if God blessed her with a son, she would give him back to the Lord. God gave Hannah a son, and she did as she promised.

Whom did God call in the night?

God called to Samuel while he was lying down. God had a message for Samuel to tell Eli. The message was hard for Samuel to tell because it was bad news, but he faithfully obeyed the Lord and gave the message to Eli.

What was the job that God had for Samuel?

God made Samuel both a prophet and a judge over Israel. His job was to give the people messages from God and to lead them according to God's words.



What Is a King?

Most students will know a little about kings, but not many will have a biblical understanding of what a king should do. Ask the students for some examples of what a good king would do and what a bad king would do. Explain that God is the King of kings (1 Tim. 6:15). He places kings in charge of nations or countries (Rom. 13:1–2). A good king will serve God and His people by making sure that the people understand and obey God's law and by protecting and providing for them. A bad king will be selfish and sinful and will expect to be served rather than to serve (Luke 22:25).



A King—Good or Bad?

In today's lesson, Israel demands a king from Samuel. Although asking for a king was not wrong in itself, God warned Israel about the dangers of having a king. Like many other things, a king could bring both good and harm. Bring a number of objects to class and ask the students whether they are good or bad (knife, medicine, food, stick, money, matches, handcuffs, etc.). These things can be either helpful or harmful, depending on who uses them and how they are used. In the same way, God warned Israel that their kings would ultimately bring them harm rather than good.



God's Warning about a King

Choose a boy from the class to be a bad king. Ask him what he would choose to have the others do for him. If needed, coach him. Who will wash the dishes? Who will clean up after him? Who will bring him candy or other items? Ask the rest of the students whether they would choose this boy as king. The children of Israel had God as their ruler until they wanted a human king like the other nations had. When God warned them that the king would oppress them, they still wanted a king.



How Tall Was Saul?

Invite a tall man to come to the class and lie down on a piece of butcher paper. Trace his body onto the paper, color in clothes, and tape the image up on the wall. Discuss the characteristics of Saul. The students could decorate a crown and put it on his head. God made Saul king of the Israelites.



Making Choices

Set out cars, trucks, or toys for the students to use. Ask the students how they chose the toy they played with. Life is full of choices. In today's lesson, God chooses a man named Saul to lead the people of Israel. We choose things that look good to us and make us feel good. God chooses differently. He chooses people and things to glorify Himself.



What Is a King?

Younger students may not fully understand kings or kingship. This is an important concept for them to grasp, since many kings will follow Saul throughout the rest of Scripture, including Christ. Also, understanding kingship will help the students to better understand God's character. To introduce this topic, ask the students what a king is and what he does. Ask if there are kings today, and explain that in some parts of the world kings still rule. Help the students to understand that a king rules over a kingdom and that a kingdom consists of people who obey and serve the king. The students should understand that God was the king of Israel and that He used men and women called judges to communicate His will and rule to the people. But Israel wanted to be like all the other nations and have a physical, human king. Explain to the students the idea of submission and obedience to the king. To illustrate this, a student can be chosen to play the role of king. He can be given a crown and scepter and instruct the rest of the class to do something, such as build a block castle.

PROCLAIM THE TRUTH

"Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done" (Psalm 78:4).

This section includes the Bible lesson, lesson questions, and praise and worship ideas. Song suggestions are included that you can use to proclaim your worship to God. Use the lesson questions to check the students' understanding. This section also includes various presentation ideas to use during the teaching time. Read the Bible passage several times before you read these pages. All teaching should be done directly from the Bible.

Bible Lesson

From the time of Moses until Samuel, a human had never ruled the Israelites. They had leaders such as Moses and Joshua, they had elders, and they had judges, but they had always had God as their final authority and their king. He had judged them, led them, and fought for them. But the people of Israel were not satisfied with God as their king. They wanted to be like the other nations around them, who had human kings. The Israelites again returned to their sinful ways by rejecting God as their king and asking for a human king instead.

Even while the Israelites had been living in sin by worshiping idols, God had provided them with Samuel as their prophet and judge. God showed the Israelites that He cared for them and loved them again and again. But the Israelites chose not to trust God when Samuel became too old to be their judge. Samuel had made his sons the new judges, but his sons were dishonest, they took bribes, and they were not just. The elders of Israel saw that this was not good for the Israelites, and so they decided that they would ask for a king. Instead of trusting that God would care for them as He had in the past, they rejected God as their king and asked Samuel to appoint a human king. This made Samuel sad. God told Samuel that he must warn the Israelites what it would mean to have a human king.

Samuel gathered the Israelites and said, "If you have a human king like the other nations, this king will take your sons and your daughters and make them his servants; he will take your best land, servants, and animals and keep them for himself. You will eventually cry out to God because having a king will become so bad!" But Israel said they wanted a new king anyway. They said, "We want to be like the other nations. We want a king to fight our battles!" God had commanded the Israelites many times before not to be like the other nations. They were to be separate from the rest of the world. But Israel was prideful. They wanted to be strong and powerful over the other nations. They wanted the other nations to respect them, and they thought they needed a king for that. They chose not to trust in God. They believed that they knew what they needed more than God did. So they asked to have a human rule them instead of having God rule them.

Samuel went before the Lord, and the Lord told Samuel that he was to give the Israelites what they asked for. What the Israelites did not realize was that nothing they could do could take away God's sovereignty in their lives. God would give them a king, but He would still be in control of the situation. He selected a man named Saul to be their first king. Saul was just the kind of man the Israelites were looking for to be king. He would be like the kings of the other nations. Saul was taller and more handsome than all the other Israelites. God had told Samuel that he was to anoint Saul as the king of Israel. He brought about a meeting between Saul and Samuel. Saul had been traveling about looking for a lost herd of donkeys.

He knew that the prophet Samuel was in the region and hoped that Samuel could tell him where the donkeys were. Samuel told him not only that the donkeys had already been found, but also that God had chosen him to become the king of Israel. This was quite a shock to Saul. He thought that Samuel must have been mistaken. Saul stayed with Samuel that night, and the next morning, Samuel anointed him as king. Samuel gave proof to Saul that God had indeed chosen him. First, he told him that he would meet two men at a particular spot and that the men would tell him about the donkeys, and it happened just as Samuel said it would. Samuel also told Saul that he would be given two loaves of bread by three men on their way to offer a sacrifice, and this, too, happened just as Samuel said. Finally, Samuel told Saul that he would meet a group of prophets and would start prophesying with them, and it happened just as Samuel said! Saul then believed that he would be king.

Samuel gathered the Israelites together and rebuked them again for choosing to have a human rule over them instead of having God as their king. He said, "You have today rejected your God, who Himself saved you from all your adversities...and you have said to Him, 'No, set a king over us!'" The Israelites still selected Saul as their king. Saul then reigned over Israel, and despite the Israelites' rejection of God, He still blessed them. The Spirit of God came upon Saul and empowered him to defeat the other nations in battles, and Saul was faithful to give God the glory for his victories.

Though Samuel was old, he was still a prophet of God. While God had allowed the Israelites to have their king, Israel had not repented of their rejection of God, and Samuel knew they needed to. Samuel once again called the Israelites together. He reminded them that he was a faithful servant of the Lord so that they would listen to him. Then he began his message. He reminded the people of God's ability to deliver them. He reminded them of when they were in Egypt and had cried out to God to deliver them from their slavery under Pharaoh. God had answered their cries by giving them Moses to lead them away. Samuel also reminded Israel about when they had been surrounded by evil nations during the time of the judges. God had sent Samson to deliver them from harm. Samuel told the Israelites that they had changed. Now, when they had enemies, instead of letting God be their king and deliver them as He had always been faithful to do, they rejected God and asked for a human king to deliver them. Samuel said, "Now, fear, obey, and serve the Lord. If you and your king obey God's commandments, you will be blessed with the privilege of continuing to follow God. But if you rebel, God's hand will be against you!" Samuel prayed that God would send thunder and rain on their fields where the wheat was growing, and it came! This was punishment for their sin, because their wheat crops were destroyed. The punishment was effective; the Israelites greatly feared the Lord and Samuel and admitted their wickedness.

After their repentance, Samuel gave the Israelites good news. While they were forever changed because they now had a human king, God had not changed. He still expected them to obey His laws, and He would not forsake them. They were still His chosen people. Samuel called the people to do three things: fear the Lord, serve Him with all their hearts, and remember what great things He had done for them. But he warned them again that if they were wicked, God would punish them and their king severely.

Israel had hoped that having a king would allow them to escape from submitting to and depending upon God; they wanted to be like other nations instead of being God's holy people. Israel's independence did not change God's sovereignty.



Lesson Questions

How was Israel different from all the other nations around them? Israel did not have a human king, but God was their king. Because God is perfect, He was the perfect King.

Why didn't Israel want God to be their king?

Israel said that they wanted a king who would judge them and lead them into battle. Israel was rebellious, and they wanted to do what they wanted rather than what God wanted. They thought that a king would allow them to live the way they wanted.

What did Samuel tell the people would happen if they had a king? Samuel said that it would cost the people a lot. The king would take things from the people, such as their land, food, servants, and animals.

What did God do because the people asked for a king? God gave the people a king named Saul. He was tall and handsome and looked like the perfect man for the job of king.

Who is the King of kings and the Lord of lords? How should we act toward Him? God is King, and there is no one above Him. He rules the world perfectly, better than any king or president ever could. We must respect and obey Him because He is God and knows what is best.

Presentation Ideas



A Beka Book Flash-A-Cards

Use appropriate A Beka Book Flash-A-Cards with the lesson.



Betty Lukens Flannelgraph

Use appropriate flannelgraph pieces with the lesson.



Follow Which Leader?

Begin by playing "Follow the Leader" with the leader standing in front of the class. Then play again, this time with the leader sitting down and giving instructions to another student who is leading the class. Explain to the students that God used men called judges to instruct His people in the way they should live. In today's lesson, we will see God give the people a king who was to guide Israel in the way they should go.



Saul Stands out in a Crowd

Have one teacher sit in the middle of the students during the lesson. When it comes time to describe God choosing Saul in 1 Samuel 9:2, have the students stand up and the teacher stand up in the middle. Wow! He really stands out in a crowd. The point to remember is that God is the one who chose Saul.



God versus a Human King

Make two different kinds of crowns, one elaborately decorated and one made from plain paper with marks and tears on it. Begin the story by wearing the gold crown, and explain to the students that Israel had no human king because God was their king. Review some of the ways God had protected and provided for Israel. As you go through the lesson, explain that Israel rejected God as their king and chose rather to have a human king. Put on the poorly made crown, and explain that even the best human king could not rule as well as God had.



Objects of a King

Make use of objects to teach about some of the functions of a king. As the lesson progresses, a student can be called up to hold one or more of the objects. A crown, robe, scepter, Bible, sword, shield, money, treasure, picture of horses, food, etc., can all be used as you explain God's warning to Israel.

Praise and Worship

Change My Heart, Oh God I Love You, Lord Rejoice in the Lord Always Trust and Obey



Israel Rejects God as King

The people of Israel wanted a king, (Holds hands around head to indicate a king's crown.)

Though Samuel had warned them of what that would bring. (Shake finger back and forth.)

Rejecting the Lord to be ruled by a man (Point upward; shake head.)

Would cost them their children and houses and land. (Make a taking movement back and fourth.)

But Israel stubbornly would not obey; (Cover ears with hands; shake head.)

Despite Samuel's warning, they chose their own way. (Shake finger; cross arms over chest.)

PRACTICE THE TRUTH

"That they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments" (Psalm 78:7).

Choose ideas from this section to review and apply the truths of the Bible lesson.



"God Is King" Crown

Give each student a crown made of construction paper or bulletin-board borders. Write the words, "God is King!" on the crowns. Have students color and decorate them with sequins or tinfoil. If space allows, also print, "Fear Him, Serve Him, Thank Him," and 1 Samuel 12:24.



Materials: copies of the "Who Is Your King?" craft pages, glue sticks, brads, crayons Directions: Give each student a copy of the "Who Is Your King?" base sheet (page 2.15), a boy or girl figure (page 2.19), and an arrow (page 2.17). Instruct the students to color and cut out the boy or girl figure and then glue it to the center of the base sheet. Then they should cut out the arrow and use a brad to attach it to the boy or girl, so that it can point to either "You" or "God." (Younger students may need help positioning the brad correctly.) Instruct the students to move the arrow so that it points to "God."



What the King Takes

Use the "What the King Takes" page to illustrate what God promised that the king would take from Israel. Give each student a copy of the page, and instruct them to draw what the events may have looked like.

Coloring Sheets

Give each student copies of the coloring sheets at the back of the lesson. Students can color the pages in class or at home.

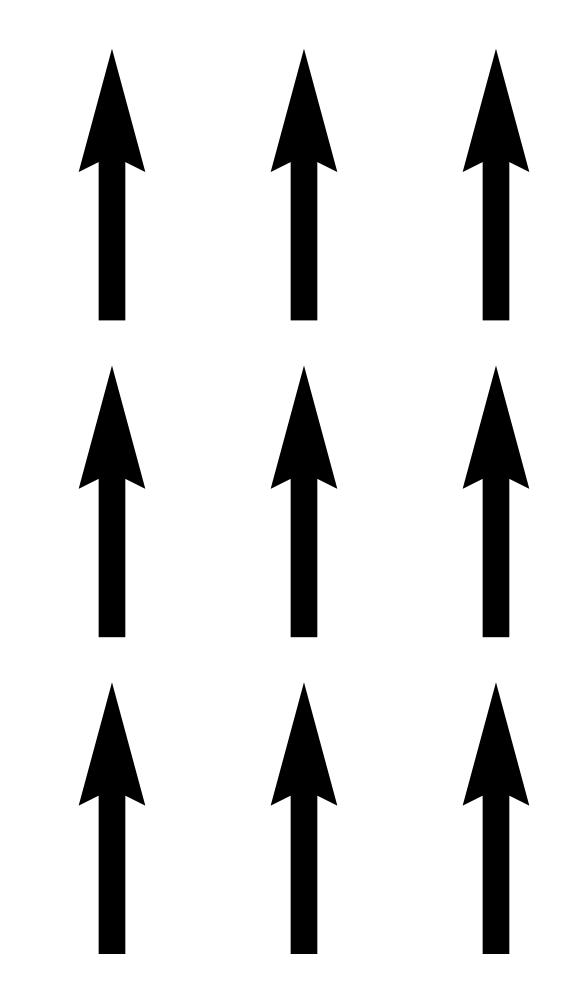


MEMORY VERSE

"Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, He is the King of glory" (Psalm 24:10).

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"For God is the King of all the earth" (Psalm 47:7).







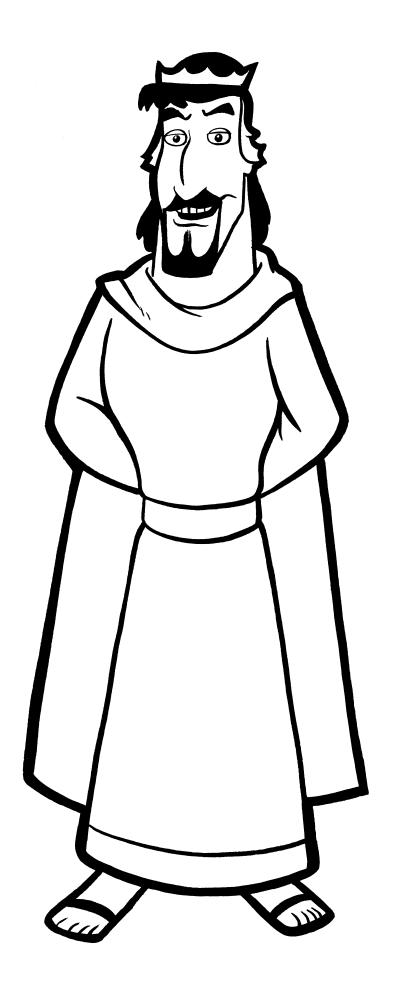
What the King Takes

1 Samuel 8:11–17

The king takes the best people
The king takes part of the crops for food.
The king takes sons for his army.

to work tor him.







"Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on his head, and kissed him and said: 'Is it not because the LORD has anointed you commander over His inheritance?'"
(1 Samuel 10:1).



"And Samuel said to all the people, 'Do you see him whom the LORD has chosen, that there is no one like him among all the people?' So all the people shouted and said, 'Long live the king!'" (1 Samuel 10:24).