

1 Samuel 8

JPS [Online]

Israel Demands a King (Deuteronomy 17:14–20)

1And it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel. **2**Now the name of his first-born was Joel; and the name of his second, Abijah; they were judges in Beer-sheba. **3**And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted justice.

4Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah. **5**And they said unto him: 'Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways; now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.' **6**But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said: 'Give us a king to judge us.' And Samuel prayed unto the LORD. **7**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 be king over them. **8**According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, in that they have forsaken Me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee. **9**Now therefore hearken unto their voice; howbeit thou shalt earnestly forewarn them, and shalt declare unto them the manner of the king that shall reign over them.'

Samuel's Warning

10And Samuel told all the words of the LORD unto the people that asked of him a king. **11**And he said: 'This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: he will take your sons, and appoint them unto him, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and they shall run before his chariots. **12**And he will appoint them unto him for captains of thousands, and captains of fifties; and to plow his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and the instruments of his chariots. **13**And he will take your daughters to be perfumers, and to be cooks, and to be bakers. **14**And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants. **15**And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants. **16**And he will take your men-servants, and your maid-servants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work. **17**He will take the tenth of your flocks; and ye shall be his servants. **18**And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king whom ye shall have chosen you; and the LORD will not answer you in that day.'

God Grants the Request

19But the people refused to hearken unto the voice of Samuel; and they said: 'Nay; but there shall be a king over us; **20**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.' **21**And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he spoke them in the ears of the LORD. **22**And the LORD said to Samuel: 'Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king.' And Samuel said unto the men of Israel: 'Go ye every man unto his city.'