

# A Human King

1 Samuel 8:1-22

**Big Idea** : Israel demanded a human king so they could be like the other nations because they had rejected God as their king.

**Aim** : To teach that any desire to be like the world is a rejection of God and his rule.

## Series Context

The Series Context on page 3 provides important information to help you understand this series in its historical context.



## Leader's Study Notes

**Read Deuteronomy 17:14-20 to understand the background to this passage. Then read 1 Samuel 8:1-22 noting the two reasons the people gave for wanting a king.**

**Use the following notes to help you think about the passage in more detail.**

After Joshua's death God established judges to rule over his people in the Promised Land. These judges were called by God to rescue and govern Israel and were different to the kings who ruled the other nations. There was no division between civil and religious life; the judges led God's people under God's ultimate rule. Samuel was the last of these judges to lead Israel before Israel demanded a human king.

### Deuteronomy 17:14-20

17:14-20 Even before the Israelites had entered the land of Canaan God anticipated their desire and request for a human king. This passage does not indicate God's approval so much as his awareness of the human heart. God set out clearly these guidelines as to how a king should live and what they should be like: an Israelite, one of God's own people, ruling with God's word in mind.

He would need to avoid excessive wealth, wives and possessions as these could easily lead him astray and he should never take the people back to Egypt where they were slaves. God promised that the king who lived and ruled according to God's law would have sons to continue ruling after him.

### 1 Samuel 8:1-22

8:1-3 Like Eli's sons before him, Samuel's sons were wicked and did not take after their father. Unlike kings, the role of judge was not hereditary yet Samuel seems to have appointed them to help him rule.

8:4-5 The elders were rightly concerned about the corruption of Samuel's sons, but they used this as an excuse for their own demands. They asked Samuel for a king because they had seen the way in which other nations were ruled and wanted to be like them. The Israelites wanted the political and military security of a king, fearing what would happen after Samuel died.

8:6-18 Israel's request was not simply a rejection of Samuel as judge, but rather of God as their king. They should have trusted God's plan for ruling his people, but they desired instead to be like everyone else. This was not a new sin – Israel had been turning away from God and following the nations around them ever since they had been rescued from Egypt.

God warned the people through Samuel about what a human king would be like. He would rule harshly and ruthlessly, taking from the people and serving his own interests. God's willingness to grant them a king does not show that he approved of their demand. He was giving them what they wanted, giving them over to their sin.

8:19-22 Despite Samuel's warning, the people were determined to have a king. Their motivation is clear – they wanted their king to lead them in battle just like the surrounding nations. They would no longer be a nation distinct from the other nations, with God as their king leading them in battle.

Monarchy was a concession to human weakness, but by God's grace and mercy it was also part of his plan for salvation in the person of Jesus. As both God and man Jesus is the only true and perfectly obedient king of God's people.

### **Reflect**

- What reasons did the elders give for wanting a king? Do you think their concerns were reasonable? Why/why not? How does this reveal their lack of trust in and desire for God's rule?
- Are there ways in which your life is distinct from the world? In what ways are your desires the same as the world? How should your trust in God and his rule make your life different from those around you?
- Give thanks that God has appointed the perfect king to rule over his people. Ask him to help you live for him, submitting to his rule and trusting in his provision.

## **Copy King**

Choose one child to go out of the room while you choose another to be the king.

The king and the rest of the children stand in a circle and copy the actions of the king without making it obvious who the king is. (if you can get the whole family to play it'll be great fun)

Bring the child who is outside back into the room and have them stand in the middle of the circle.

They can watch the actions the other children are making and have three chances to guess who the king is.

They could indicate who they have chosen by placing a crown on that child's head.

Play a few rounds of this game, giving each child a turn to be the king and the one to guess.

Remind the children that in today's true story from the Bible the Israelites wanted to copy the other nations. They wanted to have a king just like the people around them.



## Activity

**For 3-7s** – choose either Activity A (pages 15 and 16) or Activity B (page 17).

**Activity A** – Print page 15 onto paper/card (one copy for each child) and print page 16 onto paper (one copy for every five children).

**Before the lesson** cut page 15 as marked. The top part is the slip and the bottom part will be made into a sleeve. Cut away all the hatched areas on the slip then fold and glue the sleeve as marked. You should be able to see the crown through the window in the sleeve. The left side of the sleeve should be either glued shut or stapled about 1cm from the edge.

Cut along the bold lines on page 16 to produce one Samuel and one crowd for each child.

**The children** colour in the pictures on the sleeve, Samuel and the crowd. They can then glue Samuel onto the right side of the sleeve window and the crowd to the left. Help them to insert the slip into the sleeve from the right. The human king will be hidden from view behind Samuel. Pulling the arrow moves the human king into view and pulls the cross over the crown to show the people's rejection of God as their king.

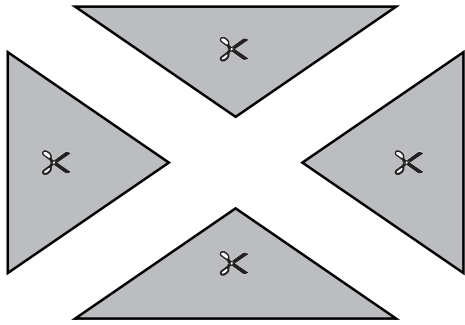


Remind the children that the Israelites wanted a human king so that they could be like all the other people around them. God said that this was because they had rejected him as their king.

**Activity B** – Print page 17 onto paper (one copy for each child).

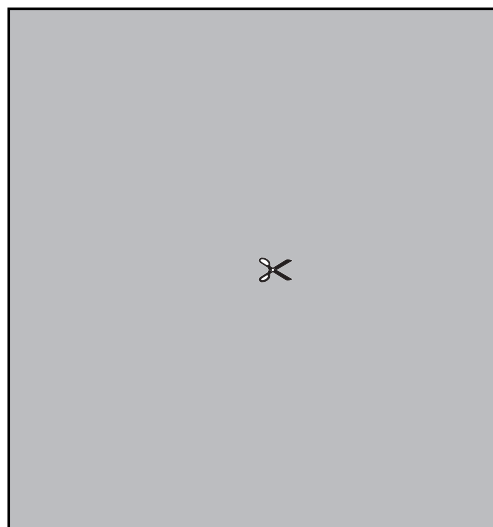
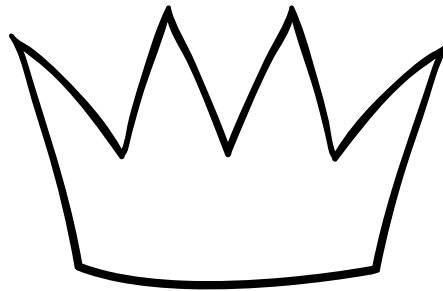
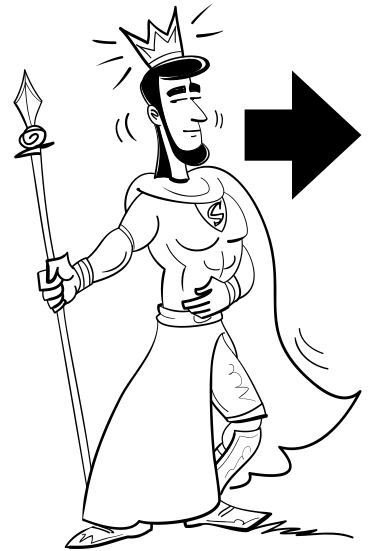
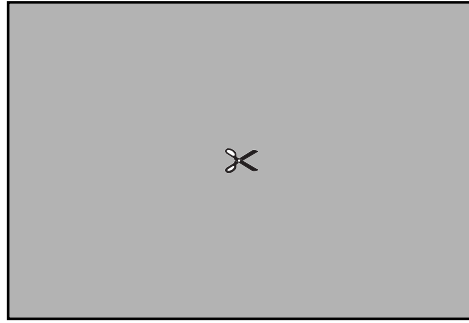
**The children** draw lines to connect the son and daughter to the various things that represent what the king would do with them – he would make the daughters serve as perfumers, cooks and bakers; the sons would serve as soldiers, work his fields and make weapons for war. They can also draw lines to connect the human king to what he would take from the people – one tenth of all their grain and grapes and he would use their cattle and donkeys for himself.

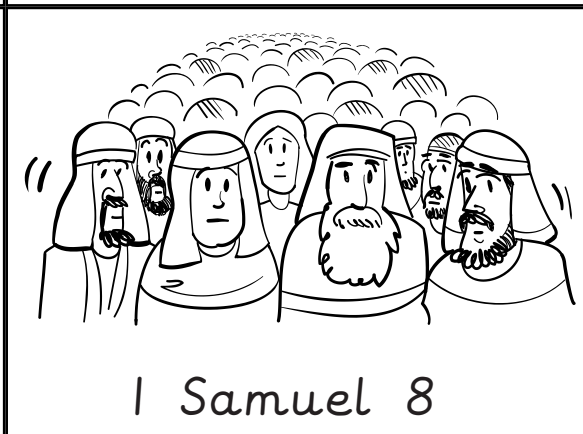
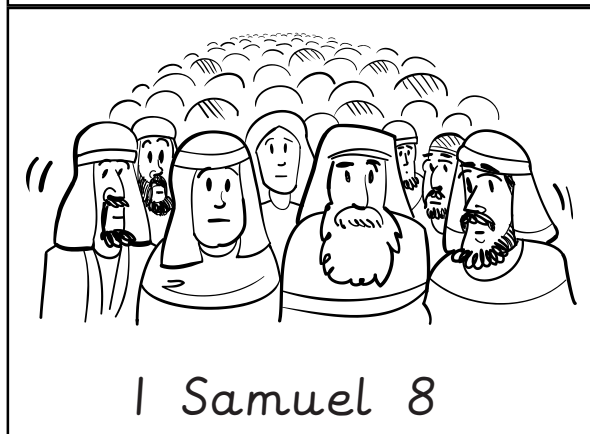
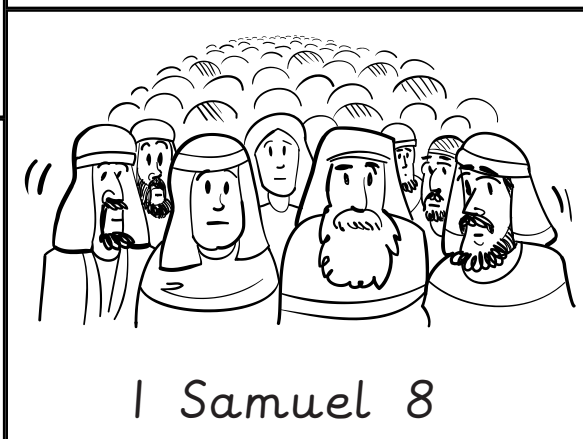
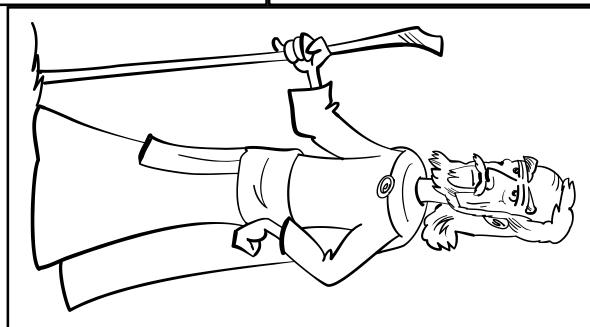
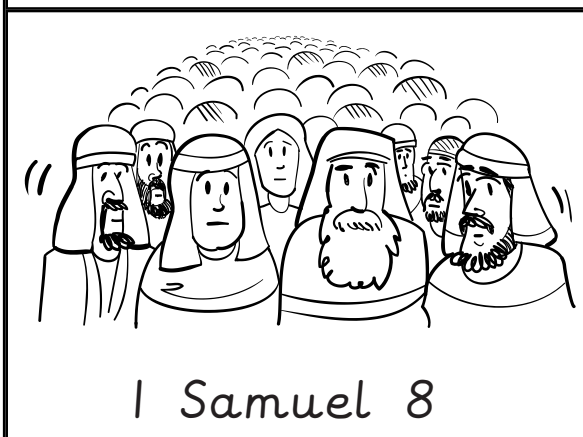
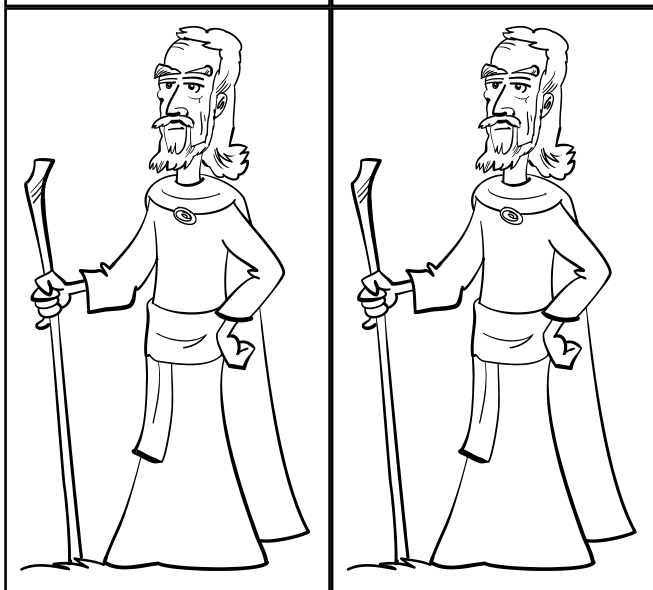
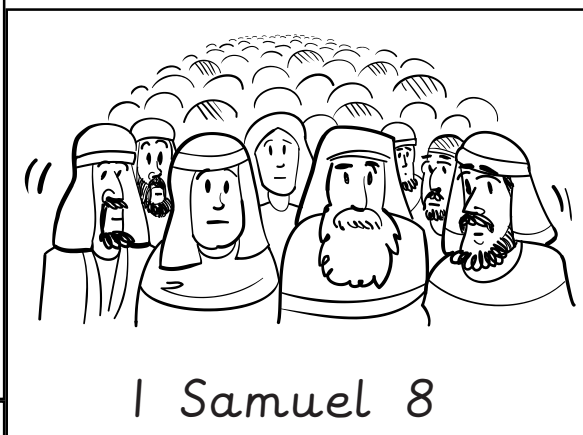
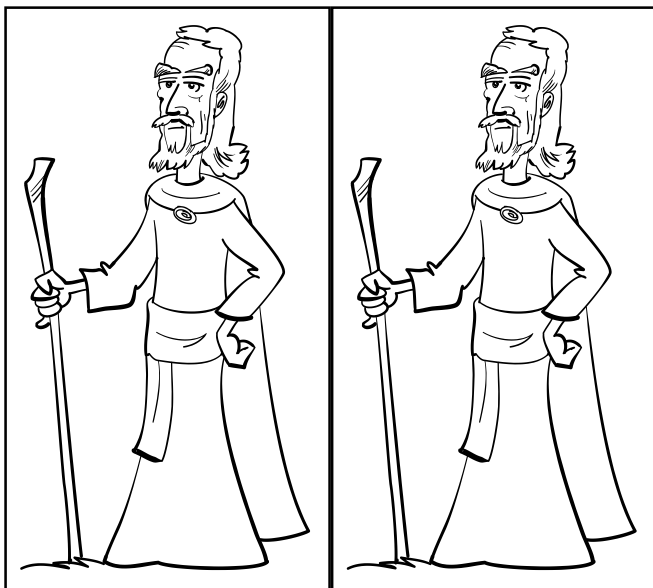
Remind the children that even though Samuel warned them about all these things they still wanted a human king. They did this because they had rejected God as their king.

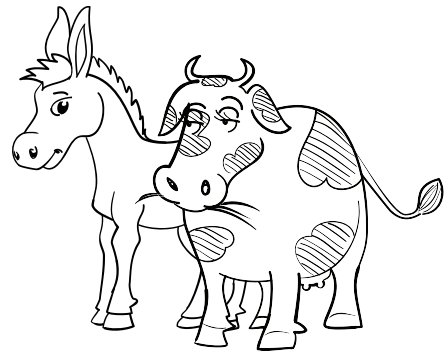
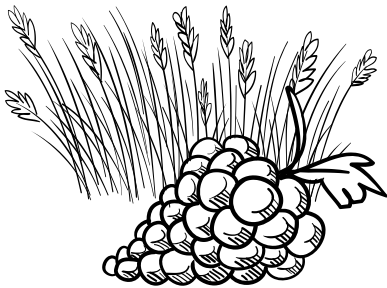
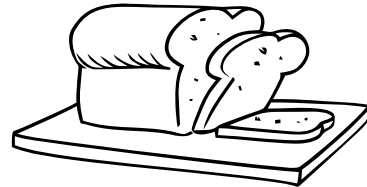
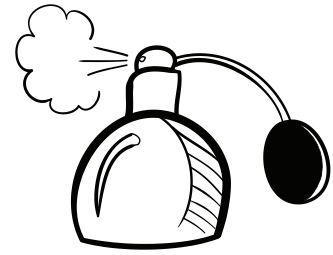
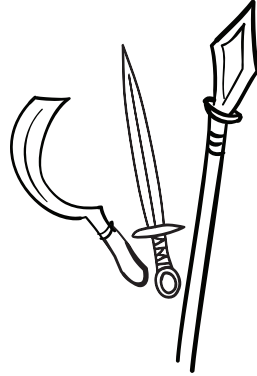


...they didn't want God  
to be their king.

Israel asked Samuel for  
a human king because...







Draw lines from the boy and girl to what the king would make them do.

Draw lines from the king to the things that he would take for himself.

Samuel told the people what a human king would do with their sons and daughters and what he would take for himself, but they would not listen.

1 Samuel 8.

