

1

# Samuel And Israel's Demand For Kingship



God led the Israelites out of Egypt and settled them in Canaan, but there was little unity among the twelve tribes who quarrelled for supremacy amongst themselves.

Israel lacked a political leader, a king, who would bind them into one strong nation. Hence they looked up to the priests for guidance, especially Samuel whom they revered as a prophet and seer because of his obedience to the Law.



Samuel had grown up in the temple with the chief priest, Eli, after his mother Hannah dedicated him to the Lord in his boyhood. He had earlier served as a judge, settling disputes among the people, and wielded considerable spiritual and political authority.

The Israelites, under constant attack from their enemies, turned to Samuel when in trouble. In one of the fiercest battles with the Philistines, they decided to bring the Ark of the Covenant into the battlefield to save themselves but were defeated by their arch enemy.

The Philistine captured the Ark and set it in the temple of their god Dagon at Ashdod. But God's hand was very heavy upon the people of Ashdod who were inflicted with tumours. Wherever they took the Ark, something bad and evil fell on the people of that area. The worried Philistines decided to return the Ark with a gift to make up for their sin.

The Israelites took the Ark to safety at Kiriath-Jearim, a Judean hilltop west of Jerusalem. They began pestering Samuel for a king. The great prophet prayed to God before he gave in to their desire, warning them to serve the Lord alone and never to worship false gods.



## Word of God

1 Samuel 8: 10 – 18

Samuel told the people who were asking him for a king everything that the Lord had said to him. "This is how your king will treat you," Samuel explained. "He will make soldiers of your sons; some of them will serve in his war chariots, others in his cavalry, and others will run before his chariots. He will make some of them officers in charge of a thousand men, and others in charge of fifty men. Your sons will have to plow his fields, harvest his crops, and make his weapons and the equipment for his chariots. Your daughters will have to make perfumes for him and work as his cooks and his bakers. He will take your best fields, vineyards, and olive groves, and give them to his officials. He will take a tenth of your grain and of your grapes for his court officers and other officials. He will take your servants and your best cattle and donkeys, and make them work for him. He will take a tenth of your flocks. And you yourselves will become his slaves. When that time comes, you will complain bitterly because of your king, whom you yourselves chose, but the Lord will not listen to your complaints."

## Insight



### Fr. Jerome D'Souza, Member, Constituent Assembly

Fr. Jerome D'Souza was the only Christian priest in the Constituent Assembly which adopted India's Constitution. A Jesuit priest, he served as a professor at St. Joseph's College, Trichy, and later as Principal of Loyola College in Chennai. Madras Legislative Assembly elected Fr. D'Souza to the Constituent Assembly of India. The Indian Government issued a postal stamp on his birth centenary in 1997.

## Notes

**Know  
Now**

**BOOK:** The Prophets and Kings of the Old Testament, by Frederick Denison Maurice, has been selected by scholars as being culturally important and is a part of the knowledge base of civilisation as we know it. This work is in the public domain in the United States of America, and possibly other nations. Scholars believe that this work is important enough to be preserved, reproduced, and made generally available to the public. The book will show you the historical facts related to the prophets and kings in the history of Israel.

my TASK this week

To Watch

To Read

To Do



Scan For Help



**Home**

Read the passage 1 Samuel 8: 10 – 18, and discuss with your family the burdens modern political rulers impose on people.