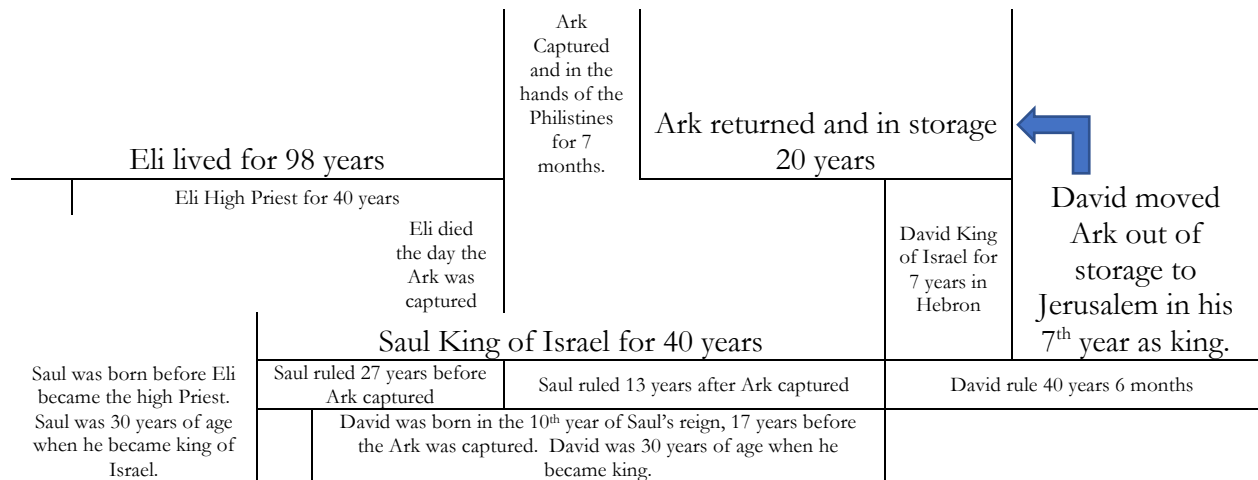


1st Samuel

Lesson 11

Before moving on in the Scripture, let us pause for a moment and discuss the time line again that was mentioned in the last lesson concerning the period that the Ark was in storage for twenty years. In doing so, we will be able to see how Samuel, the writer, broke his history into stories and focused on that story without adding all the surrounding details. Then, later, Samuel would come back and tell a new story that overlapped a previous story he had told. We have already mentioned that same case with the story of Ruth sitting in the time of Joshua and Judges. We will speak of the story of Ruth again when Samuel tells us about the anointing of David to be king later in this book. But for the time of the Ark being in storage, the following chart shows the timing of the events.



Now we will review the facts.

- Eli lived for 98 years and he died the day the Ark was captured by the Philistines.
- When Eli died, he had served as High Priest for 40 years.
- The Ark was in the hands of the Philistines 7 months.
- The Ark was returned to Israel and placed in storage for 20 years.

In the telling of the capture and storage of the Ark, Samuel did not mention the selection of Saul as king of Israel. Neither did he mention David moving the Ark to Jerusalem in his seventh years as a king. Those points were not part of the story in Samuel's mind. So far in the story, Samuel was presenting the story that told about the capture of the Ark and why it was in storage.

Now, in chapter 8, Samuel is tracing back over the timeline of Eli's ministry and the capture of the Ark to focus on a new story about the selection of Saul as King. Once Samuel introduces and anoints Saul as King, he will tell his story. In his story, David will be introduced. At the end of this book, David will become King of Israel upon the death of King Saul.

- David was thirty years of age when he became king.
- David was born in the 10th year of King Saul's reign.
- David was born 17 years before the capture of the Ark.
- David was born while Eli was still the High Priest.
- About the time of the return of the Ark, when the Philistines have been ousted from Israel, when Samuel placed the Ebenezer rock at the location of the capture of the Ark and the following defeat of the Philistines, David will enter King Saul's life while the Philistines are trying to secure a hold on Israel again with their champion named Goliath.

Now we can return to the Samuel's story here in chapter 8. As a recap, the people had asked Samuel for a king and the LORD had told Samuel that the people had not rejected Samuel, but they had rejected Him, the LORD, as their King. The verses read as follows.

"Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah;⁵ and they said to him, 'Behold, you have grown old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint a king for us to judge us like all the nations.'" "But the thing was displeasing in the sight of Samuel when they said, 'Give us a king to judge us.'" And Samuel prayed to the LORD." "The LORD said to Samuel, 'Listen to the voice of the people in regard to all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them.'" (8:4-7)

In short, they did not trust that the LORD could keep the future judges in check after Samuel's death. The people wanted a worldly king to take the place of Samuel when he died.

(b) Forsaken by the People (8:8)

The LORD knew that He had been forsaken by the people. Verse 8. *"Like all the deeds which they have done since the day that I brought them up from Egypt even to this day—in that they have forsaken Me and served other gods—so they are doing to you also."* (8:8)

The feeling of the people for the LORD had not changed in all those years. They were unfaithful while Moses was in charge. They were unfaithful while Joshua was in charge. And for the past four hundred years, they had been unfaithful while the LORD was in charge. Then the LORD says something interesting. He says, *"so they are doing to you also."* The LORD is warning Samuel that the people will be unfaithful to him in the future.

(3) The Caution of the LORD (8:9)

And so, the LORD gave Samuel a warning. Samuel was to give the caution of the LORD concerning the taking on of a king. *"Now then, listen to their voice; however, you shall solemnly warn them and tell them of the procedure of the king who will reign over them."* (8:9)

When the LORD says, *"Now then, listen to their voice."* He truly gives Samuel the authority to find a king because of their request. However, the LORD wanted Samuel to caution all the people concerning how a king would change things in the Promised Land.

(a) The Prescription of Fighters (8:10-11)

First, a king will have the authority for the prescription of fighters. Verses 10. *"So Samuel spoke all the words of the LORD to the people who had asked of him a king."¹¹ He said, "This will be the procedure of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and place them for himself in his chariots and among his horsemen and they will run before his chariots."* (8:10-11)

For over four hundred years, when an army was needed, the word went to the tribes, and volunteers would show up to fight. With a king, the people would not have the opportunity to volunteer for the army; service in the army would be mandatory.

(b) The Prescription of Farmers (8:12)

Second, a king will have the authority for the prescription of farmers. Verse 12. *"He will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and of fifties, and some to do his plowing and to reap his harvest and to make his weapons of war and equipment for his chariots."* (8:12)

Not only will the king order the sons into service of his army, but he will appoint them to different offices. Then he will also take the sons to work the king's fields and make the war equipment. More about that in a few verses.

(c) The Prescription of Females (8:13)

Third, a king will have the authority for the prescription of females. Verse 13. *"He will also take your daughters for perfumers and cooks and bakers."* (8:13)

Like in the other nations, the women and girls will be taken from the work of the home and put into the work of the king. The hardship would cause the work of the home to go undone, but the work of the king would be done.

(d) The Prescription of Fields

(i) The Fruit of the Fields (8:14)

Returning to the subject of the work of the fields by the sons, the king would have the authority for the prescription of the fields. He speaks first of the fruit of the fields. Verse 14. *"He will take the best of your fields and your vineyards and your olive groves and give them to his servants."* (8:14)

Notice that the king would take. It does not say that the king would buy. And what would the king take from the tribes? He would take the best.

(ii) The Seeds of the Fields (8:15)

Continuing on, the king would take the seeds of the fields. Verse 15. *"He will take a tenth of your seed and of your vineyards and give to his officers and to his servants."* (8:15)

The king will not buy the tenth; he will take the tenth. We must understand that without a king, the people had ninety percent of their crops for themselves to trade, sell, or consume. But with a king, they would be reducing their take to eighty percent.

(e) The Prescription of Forces (8:16)

Fifth, the king would have the authority for the prescription of the forces. Verse 16. *"He will also take your male servants and your female servants and your best young men and your donkeys and use them for his work."* (8:16)

The cautions were bad enough so far, but now they are worse. The king will have the authority to take the employees and work animals of the farms away for his own use leaving the work of the farm undone.

(f) The Prescription of Flocks (8:17)

Sixth, the king will have the authority for the prescription of the flocks. *"He will take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will become his servants."* (8:17)

Before the king, every tenth animal went to the LORD, and the remaining nine stayed with the owner. With a king, every tenth animal will go to the LORD, every ninth animal will go to the king, and the owner will only have eight for himself.

(g) The Prescription of Failure (8:18)

Seventh, the king will have the authority for the prescription of the failure. Verse 18. *"Then you will cry out in that day because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, but the Lord will not answer you in that day."* (8:18)

In other words, when you can bear the king that you so desired, crying to the LORD will do you know good; the LORD will not answer you then because you rejected Him in your desires for a human king.

(h) The Prescription of Fantasy (8:19-20)

Eighth, a king will have the authority for the prescription of fantasy. Verse 19. *“Nevertheless, the people refused to listen to the voice of Samuel, and they said, ‘No, but there shall be a king over us,²⁰ that we also may be like all the nations, that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles.’”* (8:19-20)

It will actually be the fantasy of the people that the kings will preside over. They will have a fantasy in their expectations about what the new guy in charge will be able to do in domestic issues and in war. We will see that it will not take long after they get their king that he will surely disappoint them. But then, it will be too late to call upon the LORD for help.

(4) The Command of the LORD (8:21-22)

Finally, we come to the point in this chapter where Samuel tells of the command of the LORD. Verse 21. *“Now after Samuel had heard all the words of the people, he repeated them in the LORD’s hearing.²² The LORD said to Samuel, ‘Listen to their voice and appoint them a king.’ So Samuel said to the men of Israel, ‘Go every man to his city.’”* (8:21-22)

So Samuel repeated everything so the elders could not be mistaken about what would happen if a king was selected. Then the LORD commanded Samuel to appoint a king. Samuel sent the elders to their homes, and the search for a king would begin.