Message Outlines:
Israel Asks for a King

Topic/Theme:
In today’s lesson we will see how Israel wanted to be like the other nations who had kings. Ultimately Israel was telling God that they did not trust or want Him to be their protection and support. Many times we do not see the danger of doing what others do simply because we want to fit in. The nation of Israel was even told how destructive their decision for a king would be, and they still chose that path. In the end, not having their identity solidly in God led to their destruction.

Your teens may have a difficult time seeing the consequences of their actions. In trying to fit in with their peers, they usually don’t think of the long-term effects. What harm is there in giving in to little temptations? What harm is there in rebelling? The question for teens to answer today is not “do I have a god?” but rather “what is my god?” as we all have something that we let control our lives.

Scripture:
1 Samuel 8:1-22

Get to the Point:
Choosing something other than God will ultimately lead to destruction, especially when we just want to be like everyone else.

Context Commentary:
Through the time of Moses, the priests, and the judges, God was considered the king of Israel. He had been faithful to the Israelites, bringing them out of slavery in Egypt into the Promised Land.

In today’s scripture, Samuel is the prophet/judge for Israel. Unlike the other nations around them, Israel has no earthly king. Eventually Israel decides they want a king as well. It no longer mattered to the Israelites that God was their king. They thought they had a better idea; they wanted to be like the other nations who had a physical king sitting on a throne—no matter what the consequences. Some would argue it was the beginning of the end for the nation of Israel.
Outline and Options:

Icebreaker:
Have your students act out 45-second dramas where they think they have a better idea than their parents, teachers, or some other authority, but in truth, the results end up being bad, perhaps even disastrous. Some possible scenarios are speeding in a car, coming home after curfew, drinking, cheating on a test, etc.

Media Clip: *Titanic*
Show two clips from the movie *Titanic*: Chapter 12 (when the steward tells of the iceberg warnings) and Chapter 15 (when the captain and first steward are talking). You will probably want to narrow these clips down, depending on how much time you have.

Set the scenes up by saying: *The Titanic was the fastest, biggest, and most luxurious ship ever built. People said it could not be sunk. And yet a veteran captain ignored warnings about icebergs and steamed ahead at a quick speed.*

After the clips, transition into the outline by saying: *One of sin’s lies is that the consequences will only affect the person who is disobedient. And, yet, every sin affects the entire community, no matter how private the actions are; you are either building up or tearing down the community at all times.*

Outline:

1. Samuel was growing older and was ready to pass on the role of judge to his sons.
   a. However, his sons did not walk in the ways of the Lord.

Interactive Questions: Rebellion Why?
* Why do children rebel against their parents?
* What is the allure of rebellion?
* Who is responsible for the outcome of a child—parents or children? Why?

2. The leaders of Israel recognized the succession of Samuel will not work because his sons are not fit to be prophets.
   a. They used this as an excuse to get a king.
   b. They wanted to be like the nations around them.
      i. In what ways do we tell God we want someone else to be our king?
ii. What do we choose?

iii. Who are our “kings” today? What do we use to replace God’s role in our lives? Why?

iv. What are some issues or areas in which teens most want to do their own thing?

**Illustration Option 1:**
There are two kinds of people. The first person is one who will listen to the stories of others and learn from them. The other is the type of person who will listen to the stories of others but chooses to do things their own way. They are not convinced that things will turn out for them as it did for others. Which kind of person are you? Do you listen to others and believe what they say or do you have to experience it for yourself?

3. Samuel knew that the request for a king was a bad idea.
   a. However, his focus was on the shame of his own family.
   b. In this time of upheaval he prayed to God.
      i. God’s response: they are rejecting Me not you.

4. God tells Samuel to listen.
   a. Warn the Israelites; they do not know what they are asking.
      i. The consequences will be unfathomable.
   b. A characteristic of sin is that it looks good initially, but the consequences far outweigh any benefits.

**Illustration Option 2:**
Special Guest Illustration. You may know of someone in your church who would be willing to share their story, or their testimony. With sensitivity, ask someone who understands what it means to face the consequences of their actions. You might also look to sensitively ask a parent who watched their child make poor choices and face the consequences of their choices. Select your guest carefully, talk about what they would say to the group before hand. Explain to them what you are trying to do and the main point of the lesson. Also be sure to affirm them.
5. Samuel tells the Israelites the king will:
   a. Enslave your children
      i. He will draft your sons for war, put them to work in the fields, and in the construction of chariots and articles of war
      ii. He will take your daughters to cook and make perfume
   b. Take your best fields and vineyards
      i. He will get money for his government from your harvest
   c. Take your servants, cattle, donkeys, and flocks

6. Despite hearing all the negative things having a king will bring, the Israelites still want to proceed down this path.
   a. What does this remind you of? In what way is this choice for a king a return to Egypt?
      i. Essentially the request for a king replaced God as their leader and sent them back into a kind of slavery.

7. God tells the Israelites what He will do when they have a king
   a. You will cry out to God for relief and He will not answer you (v. 18).
   b. In any other circumstance, the Israelites would consider such a person a threat to their existence.
      i. This possible behavior of the king seems worse than anything the Israelites have seen yet, and in each of those cases they have cried out to God for rescue.
      ii. Now God is telling them that He will not rescue them from the consequences of their choice.
**Interactive Game:**

Divide your group into two teams. Give each team a few minutes to compile a list of characters in literature and movies who have ignored warnings. Then bring the teams back together. Bouncing back and forth between the teams, have each team name one character one right after the other. If both teams have a character on their list, the first one to use their name gets to count it, the other team must cross that name off their list. The first team that cannot answer the other team with another character loses. For example, team A says “Captain of the Titanic.” Team B says “General Custer.” Team A says “The Captain of the Ship in the Perfect Storm.” Team B can’t answer, so they lose.

8. Samuel goes back and reports their desire to God.

   a. What were the Israelites saying to God?
      
      i. We do not trust you to protect and care for us.

   b. What was God’s response to their request?
      
      i. He gave them a king.

**Application Questions:**

*Why does God allow us to choose our own way when He knows it will let to destruction and misery?*

*Do you think God has ever given you what you wanted even though it wasn’t the best thing for you? Why?*

*Do you know anyone for whom life would be better if they did not have the opportunity to have a free will?*

*Have you ever gone through a time of rebellion?*

*In what way are you most concerned about being like everyone else?*

9. Why were the Israelites willing to ignore God’s warning?

   a. Do we ever ignore warnings? Why?

   b. What are some of the warnings that you and your peers ignore?

   c. Generally we rebel because we lack self-identity. We sometimes feel threatened by the demands of teachers, parents, bosses, and God.

      i. If you try to find your identity in anything other than God, you will end up with behavior that can be very destructive.
10. Application/Challenge

a. Have slips of paper with this phrase: “Sometimes I act as though the king who rules my life is: __________.

   i. Have each teen fill it out and talk about what he/she desires.

b. In many times and different ways we want to take our own path.

   i. For some it is because they want to be like everyone else and fit in.

   ii. Some of you will listen to the wisdom of others and choose a path of life in God.

   iii. Others will think that things will be different for you. Even if you know bad consequences are a possibility that does not deter you.

   iv. This decision to have a king was a decision that led to the downfall of a nation.

   v. Be careful that you aren’t letting anything (like your desire above) push God out of your life.

Further Study Resources:
