

BAD TRADE

In October of 1989, the Minnesota Vikings made one of the best trades in NFL history—if you’re a Dallas Cowboys fan. It’s largely considered one of the worst trades *ever* by everyone else.

The Vikings wanted the legendary Herschel Walker and traded the Cowboys five players and eight future draft picks. They believed Walker would give them a Super Bowl right away. He didn’t. Instead, this trade allowed Dallas to draft the likes of Emmitt Smith, Russell Maryland, Kevin Smith, and Darren Woodson, and handed the Cowboys a dynasty in the 1990’s.

In our *Run Through the Bible*, we’ve seen God give Israel the Law through Moses. We’ve seen him establish Israel in the Promised Land with Joshua, but we’ve seen them fail in obedience through *Judges*. God had intended his people to live as a *kingdom of priests* (Exodus 19:6) with God as their sole ruler (we call this kind of governance a theocracy). They failed to understand and live in the grace and freedom offered in the Law with God as King. Instead, they made a bad trade.

RHYME REVIEW

1	CREATIONS GLORY NOW UNDONE
2	FLOOD OUT THE WORLD, START FRESH WITH YOU
3	NEW LANGUAGE BRINGS DISUNITY
4	THE SOD, THE SEED, AND BLESS SOME MORE
5	WALK THROUGH RED SEA AND STAY ALIVE
6	POSSESS THE LAND, BUT DO NOT MIX
7	IN SIN, ENSLAVED, THEN LOOK TO HEAVEN
8	WE WANT A KING AND WILL NOT WAIT

1 SAMUEL 8:4–9

⁴ Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah ⁵ and said to him, “Behold, you are old and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint for 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 to the LORD. ⁷ And the LORD said to Samuel, “Obey the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them. ⁸ According to all the deeds that they have done, from the day I brought them up out of Egypt even to this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are also doing to you. ⁹ Now then, obey their voice; only you shall solemnly warn them and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them.”

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Jesus is King, Jesus He reigns, There’s only one Savior, There’s only one Name, That breaks every chain, That bows every knee, And when He returns, The whole earth will see, Jesus is King.
Unlike the people who desired a king to be like the nations, we have a King, the ruler of all Creation. Christ, the Everlasting King, invites us into his kingdom by grace through faith. Scan the QR code to worship the King.



DISCUSSION

What’s the worst trade you’ve ever made (or seen someone else make) where one side clearly got the better end of the deal?

1. What did Israel’s elders demand of Samuel and why? (4-5)

2. How did God assess their demand? (7-8)

3. What did God instruct Samuel to do about it? (9)

4. Why might wanting to be “like all the nations” be a rejection of God himself, not just a request for a new system of government?

5. Where are you tempted to blend in (“like the other nations”) instead of living set apart?

6. How does knowing your identity in Christ free you to live set apart?

It’s likely that many reading this have made a “bad trade” and have regrets—or maybe your living with those consequences. Hope isn’t lost. Talk to your coach!

ICEBREAKER

OBSERVATION

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION



ATHLETE STUDY

STUDY NOTES

IMPATIENCE DEMANDS

The book of *Judges* ends on the repeated refrain, “*In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.*” Everyone pursuing their version of “right” had dire consequences, though that wasn’t God’s plan. God had made it clear, repeating often: “*You are a people holy to the LORD YOUR GOD. THE LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth*” (Deuteronomy 7:6 & many other places).

“Holy” means “set apart.” Like fine china that only comes out for special occasions, holiness carries the idea of something set aside for a special use. God intended Israel to be special among all other nations, to be distinct, to point the world to the One True God.

Unfortunately, that’s not how the story played out. Instead of looking to God’s Law, they “*did what was right in their own eyes.*” That led to chaos, death, and destruction—which is where sin always leads.

Although not recorded in *Judges*, God raised up Samuel as a Judge—the final Judge, as it turned out. Samuel led faithfully, but Scripture records that his sons did not follow in his ways. Despite his faithfulness, his ministry culminated in the moment recorded in 1 Samuel 8 where ***all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah and said to him, “Behold, you are old and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint for us a king to judge us like all the nations.”***

IMPATIENCE MAY BLIND US

Notice *why* they wanted a king—to be like the other nations. Of all the reasons, that’s the worst. That’s the last thing God intended for his people. Although God had made provision for kingship in the Law (see Deuteronomy 17), that wasn’t the goal. In fact, we don’t really see many of Israel’s coming kings obey what we see in Deuteronomy 17.

Unlike the elders, Samuel knew what they were trading away—the ***thing displeased Samuel when they said, “Give us a king to judge us.”*** Faithfully, he took his frustration to the Lord. ***Samuel prayed to the LORD. And the LORD said to Samuel, “Obey the voice of the people in all that they say to you.”*** Anyone in leadership understands the frustration that comes with wayward followers. It’s hard to care so deeply and see people running into foolishness and harm. That’s how Samuel felt, but the Lord made it clear, ***“they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them.”***

Keep in mind, they weren’t suddenly rejecting God as King—they’d been rejecting him all along, ***“according to all the deeds that they have done, from the day I brought them up out of Egypt even to this day, forsaking me and serving other gods.”***

The Lord reassured Samuel that he’d done nothing wrong. What Israel has done to the Lord, ***“so they are also doing to you.”*** The Lord told Samuel, ***“Now then, obey their voice; only you shall solemnly warn them and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them.”***

#8, WE WANT A KING AND WILL NOT WAIT

Samuel warned the crowd, prophetically declaring what life would be like under a king. If you have your Bibles, continue reading in 1 Samuel 8 and underline the words “*he will take.*” Six times, Samuel describes what the king “*will take*” for his own—none of it good for the people. In fact, the Lord warned them, ***“in that day, you will cry out because of your king”*** (1 Samuel 8:18). But the people would not heed the warning. They responded, ***“No! But there shall be a king over us, 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.”*** (1 Samuel 8:19b–20)

Space does not allow us to unpack how foolish that statement was. Read any of Israel’s great victories, from Egypt through *Judges*, and look for how much human cunning and strategy benefited Israel—you won’t find much. Instead, every decisive victory came because the Lord gave the victory. Regardless, Israel wouldn’t be warned. Will you?

Adolescence is marked by a quest for identity—asking, “Who am I?” Two things you need to know: in Christ, you are holy and you are adopted. Holiness means “set apart.” If you look like your lost friends, do what they do, talk like they talk, and conform to “normal” in their eyes, that’s probably not holy.

Likewise, in Christ, we are adopted sons and daughters of the King of the Universe. Ladies, how should a princess of all Creation respond to a young man who wants to date her? Men, how should a prince respond when someone insults or disrespects him?

Holiness and adoption are just two of many attributes we receive in Christ that should shape how we see ourselves and how we live. Warnings in Scripture abound regarding the dangers of conforming to the world. Do not turn a blind eye to those warnings. Heed them. Be holy. Live differently. Don’t trade the righteousness of Christ for the fleeting pleasures of this world.