



 **LifeGroups**
REACH • LEARN • LOVE

Four Offices: Judge

Representatives of God as King

- Human leaders are only representatives of God as king
- 1 Samuel 3:19–21; 7:15–17; 8:1–9
- We see four leadership roles in the book of Samuel – judge, king, prophet and priest.
- Moving from a theocracy to a monarchy was a major transition for the nation of Israel.
- The main human leadership role changed from judge to king.

Representatives of God as King

- Theocracy: During the Exodus, Wanderings and Conquest
- When Israel left Egypt, Moses was their leader and Scripture calls him a “prophet.” Because it was a theocracy, there was no human king; God Himself was their king.
- Their human leader was simply a spokesperson for God to His people, which is what the Hebrew word prophet means, “spokesperson.”
- The role of Moses was to hear from God and then communicate to the people what God said.

Representatives of God as King

- He was not to make decisions; he was just a human representative of God.
- God said that Moses' role as prophet was unique, like no one before him.
- He spoke directly to Moses, not through dreams or visions, but “mouth to mouth, clearly, and not in riddles” (Numbers 12:6–8).
- During this time, God also established the role of priest and ordained Moses' brother, Aaron, as the first high priest.

Representatives of God as King

- During this time, the leadership team consisted of God as king, Moses as prophet, and Aaron as priest.
- Moses also fulfilled the role of “judge” between the people, along with a group of elders.
- He wasn’t called “judge” as a title or role; he called the elders “judges” (Exodus 18; Numbers 25:5).

Representatives of God as King

- Theocracy in Judges: Leaders Who Were Not also Prophets
- But when the people finally settled in the land, things changed.
- They were supposed to continue as a theocracy, with God as king, but the people kept turning away from the Lord and doing “what was right in his own eyes” (Judges 21:25).
- When they rebelled against God, He would get angry and let the nations around them overtake them.
- Then they would cry out to God to save them.

Representatives of God as King

- The Lord would raise up a “judge” to save them from their enemies.
- They would follow the Lord as long as that judge lived, but when the judge died, they would worship other gods again, and the cycle started all over (Judges 2:10-19). This went on for more than 400 years.
- Unlike Moses, these judges were not prophets. Until Samuel, only one of the judges, Deborah, was also called a prophet (Judges 4:4).
- The Hebrew word means “to judge between or rule over people.”

Representatives of God as King

- Moses used the term “judge” for the 70 elders he chose to help him judge disputes (Exodus 18:21–23).
- During the book of Judges, the judges God raised up acted as military leaders who delivered the people from their enemies, as Moses had done.
- So they fulfilled some of Moses’ leadership roles (deliverer, judge / ruler).
- And they did hear from God in some ways, yet they were not considered prophets (except Deborah and Samuel), so God used the term “judge” for them as leaders.

Representatives of God as King

- Samuel was the last judge of Israel before the monarchy (1 Samuel 7:15–17; 8:1–9).
- But he was also a priest (1 Samuel 2:11–3:1; 7:10; 10:8) and a prophet (1 Samuel 3:19–21)
- During Samuel's time as leader, God was king, and Samuel filled all three of the other roles.
- It seemed he could be the one to change Israel for good.

Representatives of God as King

- Monarchy: From Judge to King
- When he became too old, Samuel appointed his sons as judges, but they did not follow God.
- They perverted justice for their own gain (8:1–3), so the elders of Israel came to Samuel and asked for a king. They needed “more” than a human representative of God.
- Samuel was upset, but God told him the people weren’t rejecting him; they were rejecting God as their king (8:7).

Representatives of God as King

- From this point on, kings were the central leaders in Israel, not judges.
- The king, with a group of elders, fulfilled the role of judging disputes (8:5) as Moses had, at the city gate (Deuteronomy 21:18–21; Ruth 4:1–11; 2 Samuel 19:8).
- In his time as a leader, Samuel functioned as judge, priest and prophet, with God as king. But when the monarchy began, these roles split.
- The king judged disputes with the help of elders and led the military with the help of generals.

Representatives of God as King

- But the king was not a prophet; he needed a prophet separate from himself to remind him of God's Word and hold him accountable when he was going astray.
- He was not a priest; he had a separate priest to facilitate worship and sacrifices in the temple.
- Like Moses and Joshua, the king was to meditate on God's law and follow it, ruling as God's representative, as vice-regent of the true king (Deuteronomy 17:18–20).

Justice - The Heart of God

- Godly people execute justice because they have the heart of God
- Deuteronomy 10:12–21; 16:18–20; and Micah 6:8
- When Samuel appointed his sons as judges, they didn't follow God's law and do what was just; they took bribes for their own gain, which was explicitly forbidden in God's law (Exodus 23:8; Deuteronomy 16:19).
- God's judges were supposed to judge between people the way He would, executing justice with no partiality and no bribes (Deuteronomy 10:17–18).

Justice - The Heart of God

- When the elders saw that Samuel's sons were perverting justice, they asked him for a king to judge between them instead.
- During the time of the kings, God continued to send prophets to tell the kings how they were committing injustice against the people (Isaiah 58:3–7; Ezekiel 22:29; Hosea 10:13; et. al).
- The prophets preached a lot of messages, but they boiled down to two issues – idolatry and injustice, which are just two sides of the same coin.

Justice - The Heart of God

- They were breaking the two greatest commandments, to love God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength, and love others as yourself.
- Idolatry is “not loving God,” and injustice is “not loving others.”
- In the Bible, “justice” means to give others what they are due, in both the negative and the positive sense. Punishment for a crime gives the criminal what is due and brings justice to the victim.
- But justice isn’t only about what happens in court. It’s about giving people what they are due in all things.

Justice - The Heart of God

- Doing justice in business is charging a fair price and paying a fair wage, not exploiting people.
- Doing justice socially is giving people their unalienable human rights – everyone, not just certain groups of people.
- The cry for justice in Scripture is focused on helping the vulnerable and the oppressed, those who are denied those unalienable rights.
- Our God desires justice for all, but He fights for justice for those who have been treated unjustly.

Justice - The Heart of God

- Justice isn't just a good thing; it is the very heart of God's law, because love is the very essence of who God is (1 John 4:8).
- If we really loved God and loved others as ourselves, we would not let other people be treated unjustly.
- If we really had the heart of God, we would seek justice the way He does.
- Justice is a foundational part of what it means to be God's people, to love God and love others.

Failure of Israel's Judges

- The failure of Israel's judges points us to Christ
- 1 Kings 3:5–14; 10:6–9; Psalm 99; Isaiah 11:1–5; Ezekiel 34:1–6, and 17–24
- When Solomon became king, he realized it would take a special wisdom from God to judge the people well (1 Kings 3:5–14).
- Moses, Samuel and David had all judged well because they had the Spirit of the Lord with them (Psalm 99; 119:121).
- As prophets, Moses and Samuel heard directly from God about what to do.

Failure of Israel's Judges

- When Samuel's sons didn't judge well, the elders asked for a king.
- David and Solomon were good judges (1 Kings 10:6–9), but through the remainder of the monarchy, most of the kings judged the same way Samuel's sons had, perverting justice, and abusing the people for their own gain (Ezekiel 34:1–6).
- Putting a king over them instead of a judge didn't solve the problem of those in power perverting justice for their own gain.
- The issue was the heart of the leader.

Failure of Israel's Judges

- Those who loved and followed God judged fairly; those who didn't, used the people for their own gain.
- But even Samuel, David and Solomon made many mistakes and missteps in judgment.
- The failure of Samuel's sons and so many kings after them to be righteous judges over God's people only points to our need for the Messiah who would come to judge the people in righteousness and justice.

Failure of Israel's Judges

- This Messiah would have the Spirit of the Lord upon Him as Moses and David had, and the Spirit of wisdom and understanding as Solomon had.
- He would judge with righteousness and equity, executing justice for the poor and the meek as the Lord Himself does.
- This judge to come would be filled with God's Spirit in a way no one ever had been before (Isaiah 11:1–5).
- God will remove the human leaders from over His people and come Himself to judge His people (Ezekiel 34:17–23).

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Failure of Israel's Judges

- Messiah would be a perfect judge because He would be God Himself.
- Jesus is the One appointed by the Father to judge the living and the dead (John 5:22; Acts 10:42; 17:31).
- We will all appear before the judgment seat of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10).
- When Jesus returns on the Day of the Lord, He will judge all the world, with both the positive / negative sides: punishment for the wicked and vindication for the righteous (Zephaniah 1:14–18; 3:8–13; 1 Thessalonians 5:1–11).

Failure of Israel's Judges

- Those of us who know Jesus have no need to fear His judgment.
- We will be saved (Romans 8:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:5–12).
- We can trust Christ's judgment; it is always just (John 5:30; 8:15–16).
- Judges, Samuel, and Kings show us that only Jesus is the true judge.
- Only He has the right and wisdom to judge someone's eternity.

Failure of Israel's Judges

- The goal of His judgment isn't to condemn the world but to save it (John 3:16–21) and to use discernment, wisdom and judgment.
- We are not to judge those outside the Church, but we should judge believers, including ourselves – not to condemn but for accountability, to help turn people back to the Lord (1 Corinthians 5:1–13) and even rebuke and correct to help one another grow in sanctification (2 Timothy 3:16–17).
- Our role as God's people is to do justice (Micah 6:8 - “to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God”).

Biblical View of Government



Human Nature

- The Bible describes two elements of human nature.
- This viewpoint is helpful in judging government systems.
- Humans are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26–27), they can exercise judgment and rationality.
- However, humans are also fallen creatures (Genesis 3). This human sinfulness (Romans 3:23) has therefore created a need to control evil and sinful human behavior through civil government.

God's Institutions

- Since civil government is necessary and divinely ordained by God (Romans 13:1–7), it is ultimately under God's control.
- It has been given three political responsibilities: the sword of justice (to punish criminals), the sword of order (to thwart rebellion), and the sword of war (to defend the state).
- Christians are to submit to civil authority (Romans 13:1-4, 1 Peter 2:13–17) as they would to other institutions of God.

Civil Disobedience

- Christians, however, are not to give total and final allegiance to the secular state.
- Other God-ordained institutions exist in society alongside the state.
- Christians' final allegiance must be to God.
- They are to obey civil authorities (Romans 13:5) to avoid anarchy and chaos, but there may be times when they may be forced to disobey (Acts 5:29).

Checks and Balances

- A Christian view of government recognizes the need to limit the influence of sin in society. This is best achieved by placing certain checks on governmental authority.
- This protects citizens from the abuse or misuse of governmental power which results when sinful individuals are given too much governmental control.
- The greatest threat to liberty comes from the exercise of power. History has shown that power is a corrupting force when placed in human hands.

Salt and Light

- As Christians, we should strive to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matthew 5:13-16) and work within the government that God has ordained (Romans 13:1-7).
- Those of us who live in America are privileged to be able to work within a representative form of government that provides us with the freedom to choose our representatives.
- We therefore have the privilege and the opportunity to influence our government in significant ways. We should be grateful to God for the privilege we enjoy and be good stewards of that responsibility.

A BIBLICAL VIEW ON
Government

Kerby Anderson



Time for Another Visit Next Week?

