

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

SEPTEMBER 16TH-17TH, 2023 // 1 SAMUEL

## GIVE US A KING (1 SAMUEL 8:1-9)

Most likely 20–25 years have passed since the events of chapter seven and now Samuel is an old man.

- There is never a pattern of the office of judge in Israel being passed down generationally (God appointed judges, Judges 8:22–23).
- Nevertheless, Samuel appointed his sons as judges (vs. 1–2) and they were dishonest, took bribes, and perverted justice (vs. 3).

## WHERE DID SAMUEL GO WRONG?

Samuel was a godly leader who listened to the Lord and obeyed, but his sons were not.

- We can speculate what kinds of parenting failures he might have had (maybe he was working too much and absent), but at the end of the day, adult children are responsible for choosing to follow and obey the Lord—as parents, we can model obedience, speak truth, and pray.

Samuel's sons were rejected by the elders of Israel as leaders (vs. 4–5).

- Samuel was growing old, Joel and Abijah were ungodly and unfit to lead Israel, and the people desired and longed for a strong leader (a king) they could look to and follow.
- Their desire for a king wasn't necessarily bad, but their reason for desiring a king was completely wrong and sinful.

## "...THE SAME AS ALL THE OTHER NATIONS" (VS. 5B)

Israel's calling was to be distinct and set apart from all the other nations (Leviticus 20:26, Numbers 23:9).

- God and God alone was Israel's king (Exodus 15:18, Psalms 10:16, 93:1).
- God was supposed to be the one the people of Israel trusted to lead, protect, and provide for them—but the people wanted something more tangible and visible than that.

Something about their request seemed wrong to Samuel, and when he took it before the Lord in prayer, God confirmed that the people's request was a rejection of Him (vs. 6–7).

- It was not a total rejection (as if they wanted nothing to do with God), but it was a rejection through demanding that God give them some other source of security, provision, and happiness besides Himself.

This is what the people of Israel had been doing since the day God led them out of Egypt (vs. 8).

- They had wanted God to be a part of their lives, but they had not really trusted in and depended fully on Him.
- Israel had instead created tangible, visible idols that they could look to as practical saviors to give them what they should have been trusting in God for (Exodus 32:1–4).

And now they thought that politics or government could meet their needs in a more visible and practical way than God.

- Irreligious people reject God by not wanting Him to be a part of their lives at all; religious people reject God by letting Him be a part of their lives but not really trusting Him or depending on Him.
- Many want God as a safety net, but functionally they trust in their own strength and their idols.

It would be so much easier to trust God if we could just control Him—but we cannot, which is why many of us choose to trust in ourselves or the visible idols that we create.

- In the end, our idols end up controlling and tyrannizing us, taking from us more than we ever intended to give.
- Whatever you depend on for happiness and security—you become a slave to that thing.

Success, money, relationships, and/or physical pleasure/escape all can become tyrannical slave masters in our lives.

- When you have other kings in your life besides God, those kings don't save you; they eventually tyrannize and rule over you.
- God tells Samuel that if the people really want a king, listen to them, but you must first tell them fully what it's going to cost (vs. 9).

## A WARNING (1 SAMUEL 8:10–18)

It's not that Israel's desire for a king was necessarily bad—it's their reason for wanting a king (to be like other nations and to trust in an earthly king instead of God).

- It also was a matter of them demanding a king from God instead of trusting God to provide them with God's anointed king in His timing.
- Israel was told in Deuteronomy 17 that one day God would give them a king.

A king was in God's plan for Israel, but it was to be God's choice and God's timing.

- We can want the right things for the wrong reasons and we can want the right things at the wrong time.
- When we get the right thing for the wrong reasons at the wrong time, that thing that we expected to be a great blessing can actually end up causing us a lot of problems and heartache.

Israel believed that all their problems could be solved if they just had a king like the other nations—God wanted them to know what they would be getting if they got a king (vs. 10–18).

- Their immediate problem might be solved, but in the long run the problems would outweigh the benefits.
- The dominant word in the description of what a king would do is "take".

Israel expected a king to give them security, provision, and prosperity.

- But in reality, a king would take from them their sons and daughters, crops and land, money and flocks, and they would end up becoming servants of that king (vs. 17).
- Most kings of this world are *TAKERS*, not givers. Once political leaders taste power, they rarely see themselves as servants of the people.

There would come a day when Israel would cry out for relief from the tyranny of the king they were now demanding (vs. 18).

- Every life has a "king"—a king is whatever you must have to feel happy and secure.
- All "kings" eventually make their subjects into servants.
- The "kings" you have appointed in your life come with a cost—tyranny and control.

## WE MUST HAVE A KING (1 SAMUEL 8:19–22)

After Samuel read the "terms and conditions" of what having a king actually meant for Israel, one would think the people would reconsider.

- Instead, the people refused to listen to Samuel and demanded a king (vs. 19–20).
- The irony is that Israel did not lack someone to lead them, go out before them, and fight their battles—God had done all of those things for them since the Exodus!

What the people wanted was the image of a king now on their timing so they could look like the other nations around them and have something visible to look to for leadership other than God.

- Israel wanted their king, their way, on their watch.
- Amazingly, God tells Samuel to listen to the people and appoint them a king (vs. 22).
- Why in the world does God do this?

Sometimes, God will answer our prayers to let us learn the hard way that what we were asking for was asked for with the wrong heart, motives, and timing in mind.

- God might give you the "job you always wanted" if you demand it and look to it as a "king" that will save you and fix your life—but it might come with enormous stress that will bring about relational dysfunction & health problems.

God might give you a marriage if you demand it from Him and look to it as a "king" that'll save you and fix your life—but Mr./Mrs. Perfect can't satisfy the role that only God is intended to fill so that marriage will be a mess.

- Romans 1:26 tells us that sometimes God judges humanity by giving us over to the desires of our hearts. Sometimes, the worst thing God can do for us is to answer our prayers with "yes"!

Sometimes, the most loving thing God can ever do for His children is to say "no" or "not yet" to certain prayers.

- The greatest blessing God could ever give us is the ability to be satisfied and content in Him.
- Sometimes, the "no" or "not yet" answers from God are because we are being invited into a deeper level of trust and fulfillment in Him.

God is going to teach Israel a lesson by giving them exactly what they are asking for—"their king," Saul.

- Saul will start off good, but ultimately he will end up being a self-idolizing, neurotic, paranoid tyrant who ends up falling on his own sword.
- After "their king" fails, God will give Israel "His king"—David, a man after God's own heart.

## THE TRUE COST OF SERVING LESSER KINGS.

- Every "king" says, "Please me, obey me, and I will guarantee your happiness, security, and peace."
  - But every "king" also says, "Disappoint me and fail me, and I will make you absolutely miserable."
  - The cost of serving money, career, and success is that you can't ever get enough of it, and you will always live with the fear that you will be poor, insignificant, and miserable.
  - The cost of serving political ideology and looking to politicians as saviors is that you will live your life constantly disappointed, angry, and frustrated.
  - In a two-party system, for every charismatic political leader that spends their life bringing about change for their particular platform or party, there's another one on the other side that will undo what they spent their life doing.
  - The true cost of serving pleasure, comfort, entertainment, or physical escape is that eventually, those desires cannot be satisfied, and you are pulled into an addiction and an unhealthy relationship with things you once had mastery over.
  - The true cost of serving marriage/relationships is that when you have trouble in the relationship, you assume that you are in the wrong relationship and must get out.
- "Jesus is the only Lord who, if you receive Him, will fulfill you completely, and, if you fail him, will forgive you eternally" (Tim Keller, The Reason for God).
- Jesus is the King you are looking for.
  - He has promised to protect, provide, fulfill, lead, and meet your deepest needs if you trust and obey Him fully and completely with every part of your life.

## DO I TRUST THE LORD?

- Do I trust the Lord to lead me?
- Do I trust the Lord to protect me?
- Do I trust the Lord to provide for me?
- Do I trust the Lord when He tells me "no" or "not yet"?
- Do I trust the Lord to satisfy the deepest longings and desires of my heart?

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; in all your ways know him, and he will make your paths straight."

Proverbs 3:5–6