

1 Samuel 8 – Give Us A King

March 6, 2022

1. The Crisis

A. **Samuel was old.**

When Samuel became old,... 1 Samuel 8:1 (ESV)

B. **Samuel was sharing the work with his sons.**

...he made his sons judges over Israel. The name of his firstborn son was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; they were judges in Beersheba.

1 Samuel 8:1–2 (ESV)

Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, "Rule over us, you and your son and your grandson also, for you have saved us from the hand of Midian." Gideon said to them, "I will not rule over you, and my son will not rule over you; the LORD will rule over you." Judges 8:22–23 (ESV)

C. **Samuel's sons were crooked.**

Yet his sons did not walk in his ways but turned aside after gain. They took bribes and perverted justice. 1 Samuel 8:3 (ESV)

Moreover, look for able men from all the people, men who fear God, who are trustworthy and hate a bribe, and place such men over the people as chiefs of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens. Exodus 18:21 (ESV)

- The **best** of leaders can have the **worst** of sons.

2. The people wanted a king so they could be like the other nations.

Then 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." 1 Samuel 8:4-5 (ESV)

In 1 Samuel 7, the people were following the foreign gods around them. In 1 Samuel 8, they want to follow the style of foreign governments around them. The people wanted a human leader they could see, not faith in a God they had to trust.

- **Just as Israel was not to be led like other nations, the church is not to be run like a business.**

But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." And Samuel prayed to the LORD. 1 Samuel 8:6 (ESV)

- **Samuel did not respond in anger. He took his frustrations to God in prayer.**

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. 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. Now then, obey their voice; only you shall solemnly warn them and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them." 1 Samuel 8:7-9 (ESV)

...The LORD their God is with them, and the shout of a king is among them. Numbers 23:21b (ESV)

- **When we continually rebel against God, sometimes God will give us our misplaced desires as a form of discipline.**

Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, Romans 1:24 (ESV)

For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; Romans 1:26 (ESV)

And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. Romans 1:28 (ESV)

- Sometimes God's greatest mercies come in the form of unanswered prayers.

3. God warned the people about the sinful heart of a king.

So Samuel told all the words of the LORD to the people who were asking for a king from him. He said, "These will be the ways of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and appoint them to his chariots and to be his horsemen and to run before his chariots. And he will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and some to plow his ground and to reap his harvest, and to make his implements of war and the equipment of his chariots. He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards and give them to his servants. He will take the tenth of your grain and of your vineyards and give it to his officers and to his servants. He will take your male servants and female servants and the best of your young men and your donkeys, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your flocks, and you shall be his slaves. And in that day you will cry out because of your king, whom you have chosen for yourselves, but the LORD will not answer you in that day."

1 Samuel 8:10–18 (ESV)

- Kings/Monarchs and big governments will always take more than they give.

King Solomon drafted forced labor out of all Israel, and the draft numbered 30,000 men... Solomon also had 70,000 burden-bearers and 80,000 stonecutters in the hill country... 1 Kings 5:13–15 (ESV)

4. God's warning fell on deaf ears.

But the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel. And they said, "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 8:19–20 (ESV)

- Elders are supposed to lead the people, not follow the people.

And when Samuel had heard all the words of the people, he repeated them in the ears of the Lord. And the Lord said to Samuel, "Obey their voice and make them a king." Samuel then said to the men of Israel, "Go every man to his city."

1 Samuel 8:21–22 (ESV)

Application

- Israel tried to find security for the future in a king instead of God. Today, in a similar way, people look to politicians to save them and give them hope for their future instead of God.
- Whenever a church or denomination strays from a plurality of qualified elders governing the body and concentrates power on one man, it will lead to disaster. (See 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:5-16)
- The majority rule does not always produce the right results. Elders are to lead the people, not follow the people.
- Jesus is the only king who won't fail us. He is the only king we can always trust.

Life Group Questions

1. What did you learn in this week's lesson that you did not know? What questions do you have?
2. Does The Bible teach that believing parents should expect all their children to be godly? **Read Proverbs 22:6, Luke 12:52.** How do Eli and Samuel's sons help us better understand these verses?
3. What kind of government does the Bible warn against and why? What are the dangers of concentrating too much power on a person that governs a nation, church, or denomination? Does the Bible teach a particular form of government?
4. **Read 1 Peter 2:13-17, Romans 13:1-7.** What is the biblical role of human government? What limitations, if any, should the government have on its power?
5. In Deuteronomy 17:14-20, God revealed that one day Israel would have a king. What was wrong with the Israelites demanding a king at this time?
6. What are the dangers of trying to run a church like a business?
7. Why did God give in to the people's desire for a king? What does this teach us about unanswered prayer?
8. How does this chapter help us better understand Jesus and why he is a king worth following?