

Sunday Night Message

May 26, 2019

We Want a King

Topics – The People Desire a King; Samuel’s Sons

Series – *1 Samuel*

Text – 1 Samuel 8

Introduction

Chapter eight begins the second major section of 1 Samuel. This chapter will explain the transition from the rule of judges to the reign of a king.

In this chapter, we fast forward many years (20 or 25 according to Wiersbe¹) toward the end of Samuel’s ministry. In chapter seven, he was just getting started, but here in chapter eight, he is attempting to pass the torch to his sons.

Remember, the focus of 1 Samuel is David. However, in order to get to David, we need to get to Saul, and in order to get to Saul, we have to go through Samuel. Samuel will anoint Saul first, and later David as kings of Israel.

In this chapter, the people of Israel are going to tire of the “judge system” that they had in place for the past three hundred or so years. They want to be like the other nations who have a king. Samuel is upset about this, and so is God, but God will give the people what they want, even though it was not His perfect plan for them.

Note – Be careful that you don’t keep pestering God for something that is not His will. He may just give it to you. It’s better to want what you don’t have than to have what you don’t want.

Illustrate – boyfriend, girlfriend; new car; new big house.

God actually knew that this day was going to come so he gave them principles regarding what a king should do (See Deuteronomy 17:14 – 20).

I. The Sons of Samuel (vs. 1 – 3)

Samuel had made his sons judges in Beersheba, the southernmost city of Israel (48 miles south of Jerusalem; 57 miles south of Ramah).

Notice the cause for the people’s beef: Samuel’s sons are wicked. The people likes Samuel, but they were unwilling to submit to Samuel’s sons. This is reminiscent of Eli’s sons. Samuel’s sons “turned aside after lucre, took bribes, and perverted judgment.” They were corrupt; they were crooked.

Samuel’s failure was magnified because he gave his corrupt sons positions of leadership within the kingdom. Either he was blind to his son’s flaws, or he purposely looked the other way.

¹ Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Successful*, “Be” Commentary Series (Colorado Springs, CO: Victor/Cook Communications, 2001), 45.

God gave strict instructions in the Law regarding treating God's people fairly:

"Thou shalt not wrest the judgment of thy poor in his cause. Keep thee far from a false matter; and the innocent and righteous slay thou not: for I will not justify the wicked. And thou shalt take no gift: for the gift blindeth the wise, and perverteth the words of the righteous. Also thou shalt not oppress a stranger: for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt." (Exodus 23:6-9)

"Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, throughout thy tribes: and they shall judge the people with just judgment. Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift: for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous. That which is altogether just shalt thou follow, that thou mayest live, and inherit the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee." (Deuteronomy 16:18-20)

God gives strict instructions to His New Testament preachers regarding being honest:

"The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." (1 Peter 5:1-4)

Why did Samuel fail as a parent? Eli was too easy on his kids (1 Samuel 2:29), but was that Samuel's problem? We really do not know for sure, but it could be because Samuel was away from home too often. Remember, he travelled in a circuit to several different towns in Israel, judging the people. The time we spend with our children must be both quantitative and qualitative.

II. The Stipulation of the People (vs. 4 – 5)

The people actually have three reasons for asking for a king. We will discuss two now, and the other later:

1. Samuel was old and wouldn't be able to lead the nation much longer.
2. His sons were wicked.

These two are both valid concerns. Israel's system of judges was only as good as the spiritual condition of the people and the judge.

Because the sons of Samuel cannot be trusted, they demand a king. The problem with their thinking is that they did not know for sure that they would get an honest king, and since a king would yield more power than a judge, a dishonest king would be a much greater problem.

They should have prayed to God for a leader, whether it be a political leader, like a judge; or, a spiritual leader, like a prophet or a priest, who could help them.

Note – Churches need strong, spiritual leaders. Churches that either lose their leader, or whose leadership goes bad, will often go into spiritual decay and then adopt the world's methods to straighten out the problem.

III. The Supplication of Samuel (vs. 6 – 9)

Samuel prays. He is hurt by the rejection of the people. He is disappointed with his sons. He knows that this move is not the will of God.

God encourages Samuel by telling him that the people had been rejecting Him all along. Ultimately, when the people reject the message of the man of God, they are rejecting the God of the message. God will allow them have what they want, but only after they are warned about the consequences of their actions. In this case, the consequences are not judgements brought about by God, but they will be the natural results of their own choices.

IV. The Service Required by a King (vs. 10 – 18)

The king will require:

Soldiers

Servants

Sustenance – requires taxation (a tenth in addition to the tenth paid in tithes)

The bigger the kingdom gets, the more the government will take from the people.

When the people eventually pay the full price of asking for a king, they will then regret their decision.

A prime example of a king taking too much from the people was King Solomon. He was the richest man in the world, but much of his wealth came from the labor of the people. See 1 Kings 12:1 – 17; also Jeremiah 22:11 - 17. When a king gets too greedy, it causes the people to revolt. No matter what form of government a nation may have, ultimately, the power is in the hands of the people. If enough people want a change, change will come.

V. The Stubbornness of the People (vs. 19 - 22)

Ultimately, the people will get what they want. They want to be like everybody else:

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." (1 John 2:15-17)

"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." (Romans 12:2)

God's people were not supposed to be like any other nation, however, They were supposed to be different.

Notice also that they wanted a king to fight their battles. God used to fight the battles for the people, but they were no longer trusting in God.

This is not the first time the people demand something against the will of God.

1. They demanded that Aaron “make [them] gods” (Exodus 3:21) when Moses was away for too long.
2. They demanded a “captain” to lead them back into Egypt after their failure at Kadesh Barnea (Numbers 14:4).
3. Later they were reject God’s “Kingship” when they state, “we have no king but Caesar” (John 19:15).

They should have yielded to the Kingship of God by asking Him what they should do.

Note – when you don’t know what to do, ask God, but do not make rash decisions.

I believe God would have given them a king anyway, but it would have been David. Because they are insistent upon a king “now,” God will give them Saul.

I have seen this same principle repeated countless times by God’s people. They want what they want. They are convinced that they are right, even though what they want goes against the clear teaching of the revealed Word of God. They do it, and usually they regret their decision because of the pain that is caused by it.

Remember when the Israelites complained about the manna in the wilderness. They cried out for meat and God finally gave them quails:

"They soon forgot his works; they waited not for his counsel: But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert. And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul." (Psalm 106:13-15)

Conclusion

In 1 Samuel 12:1 – 19, the people realize that they may have been wrong to ask for a king, but Samuel prays for them, and assures them that they will be fine as long as they do not turn from the Lord.

Note – Sometimes, we make mistakes, and we make unwise choices, and when we realize later on that we made a bad choice, we fear that life is over; that we cannot recover. God always has a “Plan B” for His repentant child.

