

## Give us a King to lead us (1 Samuel 8:1-22 & 1 Timothy 6:15)

05-August-2018

G'day church family

This is the final part of our short series on the OT book of 1 Samuel

There's the usual sermon outline in the bulletin if you'd like to take down notes

Let's pray before we take a look at this passage together

### INTRO

*Child – Being an only child – naturally my mum would try to spoil me all the time – and of course I could do no wrong – it was easy to make excuses for her golden haired boy when he did the wrong thing. When I did get into trouble – plenty of times at school – mum would always blame the kids I was hanging out with – she would assume, Paul couldn't possibly of made that wrong choice on his own – the other kids must have led him astray and she would try to stop me playing with those kids. It came as a bit of shock to her a many times – when I or one of the other kids or their parents - pointed out - it was actually Paul's idea that had got everyone into trouble.*

As parents we have to be careful not to overlook or condone our children's behaviour just because we love them so much - and they can apparently do no wrong!

That's the problem for Samuel here in this chapter - chapter 8.

### THE PROBLEM (1 Samuel 8:1-3)

[PowerPoint 1a-Problem]

Samuel's old - he's been a great godly leader

But his succession plan is not so good

His sons Joel and Abijah whom he has appointed as his successors - are not following God (they've turned aside it says in v3) - they made dishonest gain and accepted bribes and perverted justice.

In other words they've abused their position and misused their power

It's Deja-vu! From earlier in the Book of Samuel

Samuel's sons, despite how godly Samuel is, have behaved in exactly the same way as Eli's sons.

They showed the same contempt for God, the law and the people.

They were clearly totally unsuitable for public service of any kind, let alone leaders of God's people!

And yet their doting father, Samuel, in spite of his undoubted integrity was apparently unable to see what was right in front of him - and to see his 2 sons true colours.

When it came to his 2 sons - Samuel had a blind spot

Parents often don't see the wrong in their children

Or turn a blind eye, not wanting to chastise or discipline their children or advise them - in case they cause offence!

As parents we have God given duty and responsibility to train a child in the ways of the Lord

However at some point adult children have to be responsible for their own choices

Samuel was relying on hereditary succession.

In the same way that the Royal family works - the next person in line - becomes the king or queen

Samuel assumes naturally - his sons will take over his job

But of course they have to be fit to lead and they're not

[PowerPoint 1b-App]

App - It's no difference for us - when it comes to our faith in our Lord Jesus.

We can't rely on our heritage

Just because our grandfather or grandmother - or our mother or father - were Christians - doesn't mean we just become Christians by default

We must have a personal faith in Jesus - and faithful obedience to God

### THE REQUEST (1 Samuel 8:4-5)

So given the hereditary plan is not looking good

[PowerPoint 2a-Request]

In verses 4 & 5

The elders of Israel (they are the tribe leaders of the 12 tribes of Israel) - they came to Samuel at Ramah

They told Samuel that he was old and that his sons don't follow Samuel's ways (which is God's way) - and they demand that Samuel - now appoint a king to lead them - just like the other surrounding nations?

There's good and bad in this

Good - in that the elders at least realize there is an ungodly corrupt problem and so they've gone to their spiritual leader to demand action.

The elders did the right thing which may well be thanks to Samuel's leadership over many years

They saw that the ongoing leadership from Samuel's family will not answer Israel's leadership problem anymore than the replacement of Eli with his sons would have done

They asked for a king - that's not entirely bad

They need good order in their country -

And in fact God knew they would ask for a King

Back in Deuteronomy 17:14-20 - God told Moses to tell the people:

*<sup>14</sup> When you enter the land the LORD your God is giving you and have taken possession of it and settled in it, and you say, "Let us set a king over us like all the nations around us," <sup>15</sup> be sure to appoint over you a king the LORD your God chooses. He must be from among your fellow Israelites. Do not place a foreigner over you, one who is not an Israelite...*

*<sup>18</sup> When he takes the throne of his kingdom, he is to write for himself on a scroll a copy of this law, taken from that of the Levitical priests. <sup>19</sup> It is to be with him, and he is to read it all the days of his life so that he may learn to revere the LORD his God and follow carefully all the words of this law and these decrees <sup>20</sup> and not consider himself better than his fellow Israelites and turn from the law to the right or to the left.*

So God knew they would ask for a king

In fact Kingship is part of God's plan in sending Jesus - the Messiah King - from the line of David

But kingship was to be in God's timing and in God's way - and the King must be a godly king!

So the elders asking Samuel for a king in itself - is not a bad thing

BUT

Asking for a King "such as all the other nations have"

There's the problem right there!

The other nations don't worship - God, YHWH - and so those kings won't be acting in a godly way at all - is that really what they want?

We can't avoid the conclusion that asking for a king like the other nations implies that they don't quite trust God enough

If we were to read through the book of 1 Kings and 2 Kings

We would see that the idea of a king - and a monarchy in Israel - is an unresolved tension

On the one hand - a king was God's representative on Earth, able to lead the people in service to God and reflect God's requirements to the people, helping the people to understand God's character and purposes.

On the other hand - as Samuel and other prophets suggest, having a king - a monarchy - can be seen as a rejection of God and his kingly rule. The king could stand between the people and God - and could draw allegiance to himself and away from God. In this view, the monarchy was neither useful nor necessary for the life of God's people. Nowhere is this tension really brought out into the open. We are simply presented with 2 views - the monarchy can be seen as a good thing or seen as a bad thing.

### **THE REJECTION (1 Samuel 8:6-8)**

When they asked for a king

[PowerPoint 3a-Rejection]

Samuel felt personally rejected

He had a vested interest in his succession plan

He saw this request for a king as a rejection of everything that had gone before. If the elders wanted a change that must mean they hadn't appreciated what Samuel had done

But in fact, there's no suggestion of this in the elders' request.

Their problem was not what had gone before but with what might come next

*Illustration- When working in my IT job and installing computer systems - it was often fraught with trouble - especially if a person's job got replaced by the new computer system - it's hard for that person to not feel like all they have done in the past was a waste of time - and to feel like it's a rejection of them! Similarly - those who have dedicated their life say to a particular ministry at church or dedicated themselves to say playing a certain musical instrument - have seen God's blessing their work. They can feel a sense of rejection when the church decides it is time to close down that ministry or cease using that musical instrument.*

In these situations we need to heed God's word to Samuel in v7 - where God says:

*"listen to all that the people are saying to you"*

**[PowerPoint 3b-personal]**

APP - We must not jump to conclusions that a desire for change implies personal rejection

At no point is there any suggestion that the facts that the elders presented to Samuel were wrong.

Samuel was old and his sons did not walk in his ways. There's no doubt that some sort of change was necessary.

The problem is that the people had come to Samuel not to seek God's help in finding a new way forward - which Deuteronomy 17 indicated may well be a king - but they came not to ask God's help but to implement their own predetermined solution - of a king *like all the other nations*

The people had forgotten the victory (from last week) in chapter 7 - when God thundered and defeated Israel's arch enemy - the Philistines. For some reason this victory had not convinced them that God's power was sufficient.

The elders' motivation may not have been entirely wrong - but verse 7 and 8 make it clear that they have rejected God and they were still following their ancestors in forsaking the Lord and serving other gods

This is nothing new - God says -

They have rejected Him over and over - since He led them out of Egypt

They were as God pointed out to Samuel, still seeking security in something other than following God's path. In this case their dependence was on kingship as a system of government which they saw as being at the heart of the other nations' success. They may not have intended to turn away from God but they failed to fully understand who God is - and the extent of His sovereignty and power.

[PowerPoint 3c-Cross]

APP -It's so important we don't presume to have a better plan than God and we must remember what God has done for us

Israel should remember God led them out of slavery in Egypt

And we must remember that God led us out of slavery to our sin - through Jesus' death on the cross

Failing to remember what God has done for us

Is rejection of Him and His rule

APP - So where does our security lie?

[PowerPoint 3d-Security]

In our modern world - often things such as education, a sizeable bank balance, a shares portfolio, an insurance policy, a super/pension fund, the armed forces, public or private health care - are seen as essential supplements to our trust in God alone.

Like the monarchy for Israel, these things are not in themselves wrong and can often be God's means to care for us. Nevertheless if dependency on them is so strong - in reality they can become a rejection of the lordship of God in our lives and can indicate a failure to understand God and his sovereignty (power and authority)

(pause)

**THE WARNING (1 Samuel 8:9-18)**

[PowerPoint 4a-Warning]

So God tells Samuel to warn the people what the king they are asking for will be like:

He points out they will be opening themselves up to tyranny [*cruel and oppressive governance*]

There's irony here - we've seen the corruption of Eli's sons and now Samuel sons  
 But the attributes of a proposed king would in fact - be just the same as them  
 Creating a king would give more power to one individual

God warns them in v10-18 what it will be like to have a king:

People will be slaves to the king!

He will use up the people and their resources

They will be taxed - 10<sup>th</sup> of their crops and animals

[PowerPoint 4b-Consequence]

APP - There are always consequences for the choices we make

If we choose to participate in dangerous sports - is it reasonable to expect God to protect us from injury?

If we choose to join the rat race - is it reasonable to expect God to preserve us from stress?

We need to be careful what we ask for and what we choose?

That's God's point in v18

He's warned them of what the consequences of their choice will be

And He basically says in v18 - *'don't come whining to me when the king you've asked for turns out to be a tyrant and uses you up! I won't listen'*

Is this fair?

Yes - we must heed all of God's words and warnings!

## IGNORING THE WARNING (v19-22)

### [PowerPoint 5a-Ignore]

But in v19 to 22 - the people ignored God's warning

They refused to listen

And so God said - "give them a King"

It's made clear that the introduction of kingship was in no way an actual threat to God's sovereignty. God is still in control and Samuel is given the job of implementing this monarchy in the coming chapters - making sure the man God chooses - is appointed

### [PowerPoint 5b-Challenge/Encouragement]

APP - God's response here is consistent with the picture presented throughout the OT -

Human beings are created with the ability and responsibility to make choices and in general terms - God will not overrule those choices - even if they are contrary to His will for them or not in their long-term interests.

Likewise in general terms - God will allow the consequences of those choices to stand - human responsibility is real and will be taken seriously.

The pattern here is that God starts where people are at, accepting their choices and then moving on to provide them with new choices which could lead them forward in a way that is consistent with his ultimate purposes.

In this case, in 1 Samuel 8, the appointment of a king at precisely this point in Israel's history - God knew would have consequences for them - and as history

shows, God would not step in to prevent it from happening. Nevertheless he did not simply leave Israel to their own devices. If they were to have a king, He wanted them to have the best king possible and he continued to be involved in the process

There is both a **challenge** for us to seek God's will for us - and an **encouragement** to know that God is sovereign even in our wrong choices

## RESPONSE TO OUR KING (1 Tim 6:11-16)

[PowerPoint 6a-Response to our King]

So what are we to learn from the ancient Israelites today?

Do we need a king or queen to rule over us - here in Australia?

It certainly causes a lot of debate doesn't it? As to whether we should be a republic - or whether we should continue to have the Queen of England as head of state in Australia - or whether we should have an Australian as head of state  
It's probably ruined many a BBQ get together that subject!

Yet - we know from Romans 13:1-2 that God is a God of order and has established governing authorities over us - which we are to submit to

But this should not mean that our allegiance is switched to this governing authority - whether they are a king or queen or president or prime minister

[PowerPoint 6b-Jesus]

Because we have a King - one true King  
King Jesus!

Our NT passage from 1 Timothy 6 - says He's the King of Kings and Lord of Lord's

When the people asked Samuel for a king they wanted a king who would "go into battle for them" (1 Sam 8:20)

Jesus IS a King who did go into battle and fight for us

Not in a military sense - but in a spiritual sense

He fought and won the battle against sin - so we could have forgiveness

He fought and won the battle against death - so we could have eternal life

So what should our response be today to Jesus - the King of Kings:

Like any loyal subject of a king or queen

We must show allegiance to King Jesus

The Apostle Paul gives us 3 things we must do:

[PowerPoint 6c=Flee]

1. **First - Flee** from all of this - all of what - the stuff that Paul mentions earlier in chapter 6 of 1 Timothy - fleeing from false teaching, fleeing from arguments with people who twist God's words around to suit themselves; fleeing from those who think we should follow God just for what we can get out of it. Flee from pride and selfishness. Basically Paul is saying flee from evil - flee from anything that is not Godly and that is not true!

[PowerPoint 6d-Pursue]

2. **Second - pursue** righteousness [purity of living], godliness [respect and reverence to God], faith [belief in Jesus always], love [loving God and

loving others], patience [during trials and hardship] and gentleness [including being humble]. If we were to model ourselves on King Jesus' life - we would be modelling all these things - and show our allegiance to the King! Paul is saying - this is how we become a man [or woman] of God - rather than a man [or woman] of the world!

### [PowerPoint 6d-Fight]

3. **Third - fight the good fight of faith.** We need to have a soldier's mindset. We are fighting against worldly temptations and against dark evil forces - we are in a spiritual warfare. According to Paul fighting this fight contains 2 parts - a) taking holding of the fact and promise that we have eternal life available to us because of Jesus and b) remembering that we have been called or drafted into Jesus' army, just like Timothy, to be a great witness of our Christian faith - in words and actions.

So friends, let us keep on doing these three things - until Jesus returns - or until we're called home!

Let's pray...