

“Give Us A KING”

I Samuel 8:1-9

I watched a History Channel presentation on the Bible. The section they were covering was one I happened to have been studying. It was about that time in Israel when Samuel had been made the Judge/Prophet of Israel. By this time in the history of Israel Samuel is getting very old but has served God faithfully as a prophet and judge; 3:19; 7:15.

Like those of us who are beyond middle age, Samuel just is not able to do all that he had been doing or had once done. So, Samuel appoints his sons to be the judges over Israel. I have always found it curious that Samuel who was “raised” by Eli had sons very much like the two sons of Eli. If he learned his parenting skills from Eli that would explain that.

What we know about Samuel’s sons: Vs.3 *His sons, however, did not walk in his ways, but turned aside after dishonest gain and took bribes and perverted justice.*

What is curious about this is that Samuel seemed to be ignorant of his son’s behavior. That of course is reminiscent of Eli regarding Hophni and Phineas. We might wonder, “how can a man not know that his sons are thieves who were also lawless?”

The People’s Response: vs. 4-5 *Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah; and they said to him, "Behold, you have grown old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint a king for us to judge us like all the nations."*

Samuel’s Response: vs. 6 *“But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, “Give us a king to judge us.” And Samuel prayed to the Lord.”*

Samuel is upset with the people because they want a king. He feels this is personal – they are rejecting him. So, their request is displeasing or evil to Samuel. The result of this disappointment is - Samuel prays to God.

God’s Response: Vs. 7-8 *“And the LORD said to Samuel, "Listen to the voice of the people in regard to all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them. Like all the deeds which they have done since the day that I brought them up from Egypt even to this day-- in that they have forsaken Me and served other gods-- so they are doing to you also.*

We get from this that what the people were doing was nothing new; after all, they had been rejecting God since they left Egypt. They were not rejecting Samuel, they were rejecting God.

God’s instructions to Samuel: Vs. 9: *Now then, listen to their voice; however, you shall solemnly warn them and tell them of the procedure of the king who will reign over them."*

God tells Samuel that he is to warn the people about this appointing of a king – the act has consequences.

Samuel speaks to the people: Vs. 11-18: *And he said, "This will be the procedure of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and place them for himself in his chariots and among his horsemen and they will run before his chariots. And he will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and of fifties, and some to do his plowing and to reap his harvest and to make his weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. He will also take your daughters for perfumers and cooks and bakers. And he will take the best of your fields and your vineyards and your olive groves and give them to his servants. And he will take a tenth of your seed and of your vineyards and give to his officers and to his servants. He will also take your male servants and your female servants and your best young men and your donkeys and use them for his work. He will take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will become his servants. Then you will cry out in that day because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, but the LORD will not answer you in that day."*

The people respond: Vs. 19: *Nevertheless, the people refused to listen to 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, that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles. "*

Even though Samuel went into specific detail about what a king would do TO them, it seems to make no difference. They had made up their minds that this was the answer to their problems, so they insisted that Samuel give them a king.

God gives them what they want: As you continue to read in 1 Samuel 9-10, God gives them what they ask for – a King named Saul. Samuel anoints Saul as King over Israel. If only these people had listened to Samuel and backed away from this tragic decision they would have been much better off over the next few centuries.

What Lessons Can We Learn from This?

The first thing we learn is that God's people must walk the walk. Samuel's sons did not "walk after his ways." This is often the case in 2nd and 3rd generations in many things in life. In verse 3, Samuel's sons *"turn aside after dishonest gain and took bribes, and perverted justice."* Because of the behavior of these two sons, the people saw no hope of any leadership, so the people say, *"Give us a king";* vs. 5.

From this we should learn that we should practice what we preach. I remember a woman telling me once, **"I'd rather see a sermon as hear one"**. People watch us because we claim to be God's children. We tell people we are Christians then we dare to live like the Devil?

That kind of hypocrisy can overwhelm someone who is *“asking, seeking, knocking”*. This alone should impress on us, how important it is for us to be what we claim to be. Even if someone in authority becomes unfaithful that is no justification to become unfaithful ourselves!

It is quite interesting that these Israelites use Samuel’s son’s unfaithfulness to justify their rejection of God. There is no justification for that. No matter what others do – **I Must stay faithful to God.**

I have lived enough life to know that there are many people that are always looking for an excuse. Just look at the excuses: verse 5 *“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.”*

They want a king because Samuel is too old, and his boys are corrupt. Why not ask for a new Judge/Prophet that can get the job done? God’s man, not a King to usurp the place of God.

Verse 20 *“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.”*

God is not enough since we can’t physically see Him. We need a figurehead out in front of us in battle.

Have you ever noticed how easy it is to find excuses to not do something that you don’t want to do? Compare that with finding a reason to do something you don’t want to do!!

These Israelites had already made up their mind that they wanted a King even if that meant they were going to have to reject God as their sovereign.

Any King Other Than God Is Asking for Total Ruin. In verses 11-16 we get a glimpse of what is going to happen under the rule of a king. These Israelites DESERVE exactly what they get in Saul! A Tyrant that eventually loses his mind and inflicts horrible situations on the people.

The whole picture of what happened is found in I Kings and the Prophets. Throughout their history, there were very few kings who even tried to serve the Lord. The wickedness of these kings caused the people to suffer. Even king Solomon is to be blamed for the division of the kingdom. David was an adulterer and a murderer; his house was plagued with conflict and strife which also caused the nation to suffer.

Their asking for a king other than God started these people on a downward spiral that resulted in their rejecting the Messiah and their ruin. This holds true today. If **anyone** else or **anything** else is your king...If your desires, your lusts, your practices, or the things you have rule your life instead of God, you are headed for complete and total ruin.

The wise thing to do is to honestly look at your life, and if you have another king on the throne other than God, change.

The truth is, even if it will bring us to ruin, God allows us to have what we want in this life. If we have the wherewithal to go after and possess evil things, God will allow that to happen.

These people wanted a king and God knew that a king would be disastrous for them. But God allowed them to have what they wanted. We too can have whatever we want; God is not going to stand in our way.

However, sometimes what we want may not be good for us. Think about some in the Bible that got what they wanted: Adam and Eve; King David.

Here is a question to ask yourself before you pursue something questionable in your mind. Is what I want going to take me, or my wife, or my children closer to heaven? IF it is not going to move you toward heaven, then you do not need what you want. God is going to allow you to have whatever you want even though He knows it will bring you to disaster.

Conclusion: Lessons from 1 Samuel 8:

- *We must walk the walk.*
- *Another's unfaithfulness does not justify you being unfaithful.*
- *Some people are always looking for an excuse*
- **Any king other than God will only lead to ruin.**
- **God will allow you to have whatever you want.**