

“Give us a King”  
1 Samuel 8:1-8  
(Preached at Trinity, September 18, 2016)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. As we come to the opening verses of **Chapter 8** years have passed; enough years for Samuel to grow old and enough years for Israel to see the poor quality of Samuel's sons. We find here a sad flaw in the otherwise excellent leadership of Samuel. If our children are a reflection of our leadership Samuel's children rise up to condemn him. We see two flaws here.
  - A. First, we see the wickedness of his sons.  
(To Samuel's defense, at times adult children will abandon the training of their youth. The requirement of pastors and deacons in 1 Timothy 3 is to have their household in order—i.e. children under their roof.)  
**1 Samuel 8:3 NAU** - "His sons, however, did not walk in his ways, but turned aside after dishonest gain and took bribes and perverted justice."
  - B. Second, we see Samuel's blind spot regarding his sons. He failed to discern their wickedness and appointed them as leaders over Israel. This was an unusual move since judgeship was not hereditary.  
Most likely it was simply an arrangement of using his sons to help him in the daily work of judging Israel. But his sons were not worthy leaders.  
Samuel was allowing his affection for his sons to cloud his judgment.  
We are all in danger of doting over our children and failing to recognize the wickedness of their heart.
2. One great difference between Eli and his wicked sons and Samuel is Eli's sons were working in Shiloh under the direct supervision of Eli, and Eli failed to correct them. Samuel's sons were working in Beersheba, some fifty miles from Samuel's home in Ramah. For this reason, Eli's sin was far more egregious than Samuel's.
2. Samuel may not have recognized the wickedness of his sons but those under their leadership surely saw it—**Verses 4-5**  
On the surface, it would appear that the elders gathered because of Samuel's old age and the poor leadership of Samuel's sons and concluded that it would be best to seek a new form of government—to change from the leadership of judges to the reign of a king. After all, the last time in their recent experience, when Eli grew old and his sons displayed their wickedness the outcome was disastrous.  
But the text tells us there's a far more reprehensible motive behind their decision.  
**1 Samuel 8:7 NAU** - "they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them."
3. Tonight I want us to examine Israel's request for a king.

- I. They were rejecting the reign of God
- A. Israel was established as a Theocracy
1. This was at the heart of their covenant relationship  
**Genesis 17:7 NAU** - "I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you."  
    - a. They were God's covenant people, His own possession  
**Exodus. 19:5-6 NAU** - "if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; <sup>6</sup> and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."
    - b. They were unique. They were holy.
  2. Everything about Israel was designed to separate them as the people of God.  
    - a. Circumcision was a mark of separation, a sign of the covenant.
    - b. The ceremonial laws further distinguished them.
  3. There was detailed structure as every aspect their lives was under God's government – morally, judicially, and ceremonially.
  4. God led them, provided for them, and defended them from their enemies. And He demanded their total allegiance to Him.  
**Leviticus 26:3-4 NAU** - "If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments so as to carry them out, <sup>4</sup> then I shall give you rains in their season, so that the land will yield its produce and the trees of the field will bear their fruit."
- B. They were now rejecting God as their king. They were abandoning God.  
 "they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them."
1. The problem wasn't their request for a king. God made provision for a monarchy in the Mosaic Law.  
**Deuteronomy 17:14-15 NAU** - "When you enter the land which the LORD your God gives you, and you possess it and live in it, and you say, 'I will set a king over me like all the nations who are around me,' <sup>15</sup> you shall surely set a king over you whom the LORD your God chooses, *one* from among your countrymen you shall set as king over yourselves; you may not put a foreigner over yourselves who is not your countryman."
  2. Their sin was in their heart and God knew it. Their sin was in abandoning absolute subjection to God. In making a provision for a king in the Law years before God made it clear that they would still be in subjection to God. Israel was now seeking a king instead of God. They wanted out from under the Law. They were opting out of God's covenant. They wanted to be like the other nations.
  3. In reality this had already happened years before  
**Judges 21:25 NAU** - "In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes."
  4. They had forgotten God's mighty power. They had taken His gracious care for granted

5. In the midst of their rejection of God's reign they still went through the motions of faithfulness. They still offered sacrifices. They still treasured the Ark of the Covenant. They pretended that God was their King.
  6. We saw this in the opening chapter of the **Book of Ruth**.
    - a. Naomi's husband's name was Elimelech  
Elimelech is from two Hebrew words – Eli and Melech  
Eli means God and melech means king = "God is King"
    - b. But how easy it was for them to depart from the presence of God and live with the Moabites. God was not their King.
- C. The truth is God reigns over all
1. Jesus Christ is the King of kings. That means He rules over all authority and power.
  2. God as King and Creator has placed His Law before all men. All must bow and obey.  
**Psalms 99:1 NAU** - "The LORD reigns, let the peoples tremble; He is enthroned *above* the cherubim, let the earth shake!"
  3. How foolish it is to deny His right to reign  
**Psalms 2:2-6 NAU** - "The kings of the earth take their stand And the rulers take counsel together Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, <sup>3</sup> "Let us tear their fetters apart And cast away their cords from us!" <sup>4</sup> He who sits in the heavens laughs, The Lord scoffs at them. <sup>5</sup> Then He will speak to them in His anger And terrify them in His fury, saying, <sup>6</sup> "But as for Me, I have installed My King Upon Zion, My holy mountain."
  4. Pharaoh's heart describes the heart of every lost person  
**Exodus. 5:2 NAU** - "But Pharaoh said, "Who is the LORD that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, and besides, I will not let Israel go."
  5. This denial of God is the root cause of all sin  
Why do men and women cheat on their mates?  
Why do women abort their babies and doctors perform the murderous act?  
Why do politicians lie and practice all manner of dishonesty and deceit?  
Why do we see so much crime that our jails are overflowing?  
Why do people hate authority, hate the government and break its laws?  
Why do people practice so much jealousy, envy, bitterness, and hatred?
  6. Paul describes the problem  
**Romans 1:28-30 NAU** - "And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, <sup>29</sup> being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; *they are* gossips, <sup>30</sup> slanderers, haters of God . . ."

- D. Our generation has carefully selected their kings
1. The king of humanism – the royalty of man is exalted above all. We set our own standards. We have become a god unto ourselves. Everything begins and ends with us.
  2. The king of materialism – we love our wealth. During the 1992 presidential election James Carville coined the phrase, “It’s the economy stupid.” The idea suggests that if our standard of living is maintained nothing else really matters.
  3. The king of sexual freedom – We want to decide who, what, when, where, and how. We’ve redefined marriage. We’re even trying to redefine male and female. The abortion debate is really about sexual freedom.

II. Notice the timing of Israel’s demand for a king: It happened during a time of peace and prosperity

- A. During times of adversity Israel would cry out to God
1. We saw this over and over in the **Book of Judges**  
**Judges 2:16-19 NAU** - "Then the LORD raised up judges who delivered them from the hands of those who plundered them. <sup>17</sup> Yet they did not listen to their judges, for they played the harlot after other gods and bowed themselves down to them. They turned aside quickly from the way in which their fathers had walked in obeying the commandments of the LORD; they did not do as *their fathers*. <sup>18</sup> When the LORD raised up judges for them, the LORD was with the judge and delivered them from the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; for the LORD was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who oppressed and afflicted them. <sup>19</sup> But it came about when the judge died, that they would turn back and act more corruptly than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them and bow down to them; they did not abandon their practices or their stubborn ways."
  2. During the life of each judge Israel enjoyed peace and prosperity  
 Othniel - "Then the land had rest forty years."  
 Ehud – “And the land was undisturbed for eighty years”  
 Deborah – “And the land was undisturbed for forty years”  
 Gideon – “And the land was undisturbed for forty years”
  3. This was the pattern over and over. Israel sinned. God would send an enemy to oppress them. They would cry out for mercy. God would raise up a judge. They would enjoy peace and once again turn away from God.
- B. **Chapter 8** opens with Israel enjoying peace and prosperity
1. In **Chapter 7** we saw Israel repenting of their wickedness and idolatry  
**1 Samuel 7:3 NAU** - "Then Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel, saying, "If you return to the LORD with all your heart, remove the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you and direct your hearts to the LORD and serve Him alone; and He will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines."

2. God received their repentance and defended them as their King. There is no greater King; no greater warrior to come to our defense.  
**1 Samuel 7:10 NAU** - "But the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day against the Philistines and confused them, so that they were routed before Israel."
  3. Israel entered into an extended period of peace.  
**1 Samuel 7:13 NAU** - "So the Philistines were subdued and they did not come anymore within the border of Israel. And the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel."
  4. All of Israel's land seized by the Philistines was restored. There was no conflict with the Amorites (the name referring to the former occupants of Canaan).  
**1 Samuel 7:14 NAU** - "The cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron even to Gath; and Israel delivered their territory from the hand of the Philistines. So there was peace between Israel and the Amorites."
  5. In spite of the poor leadership of Samuel's sons, Israel was enjoying freedom from oppression. They were enjoying the prosperity that came from years without war. The result of this is they saw no need to cry out to God; no need to serve Him as King. They no longer saw themselves as God's peculiar people.
  6. They became discontented with their leadership and wanted a king like the other nations had.  
**1 Samuel 8:5 NAU** - "Now appoint a king for us to judge us like all the nations."
- C. This can become our condition as well
1. When things are well we are inclined to become satisfied. Our prayers become weak; our worship becomes a mere form.  
**Matthew 15:8 NAS** - "This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far away from Me."
  2. God often brings us trials and affliction to make us cry out to Him and bring us to greater dependence upon Him. It is only in our weakness that we find Him the strongest.

#### Conclusion:

1. The only King we need is Jesus. He alone is seated upon the throne of majesty. We must bow before His throne.  
**Psalms 118:8-9 NAU** - "It is better to take refuge in the LORD Than to trust in man. <sup>9</sup> It is better to take refuge in the LORD Than to trust in princes."
2. The hymn by Twila Paris says it well:  
*We will glorify the King of kings, we will glorify the Lamb;  
We will glorify the Lord of lords, Who is the great I Am.  
Lord Jehovah reigns in majesty, We will bow before His throne;  
We will worship Him in righteousness, We will worship Him alone.*
3. In Romans 11 Paul announces the centrality of Christ in all things  
<sup>KJV</sup> **Romans 11:36** – "For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen."