



7 | 1 SAMUEL 8

THE IMPEACHMENT OF GOD

Living in the fear of God is the safest and happiest way to live.

Outline

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Call to Worship

Ascribe power to God, whose majesty is over Israel, and whose power is in the skies. ³⁵ Awesome is God from his sanctuary; the God of Israel—he is the one who gives power and strength to his people. Blessed be God!

—Psalm 68:34-35

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Behold Our God

Revelation Song

Whiter Than Snow

King of Kings

All Hail the Power of Jesus Name

Announcements

WELCOME: We are glad you are here! Be sure to grab a Welcome Packet if you are visiting with us.

GIVING: You can give over Zelle through your bank with no fees (use secretary@livinghopechurch.net). We also have a collection box on the Welcome Center. Malachi 3, "Test me in this" Proverbs: "**Give of your first fruits.**" We believe blessing comes by putting God first.

Introduction

We are in a series in the book of 1 Samuel called "Exalting God's King." We are learning how to exalt Jesus Christ as King in our lives. Our title this morning is: "The Impeachment of God."

Every couple of political cycles in the modern times, it seems we have a presidential impeachment. No president has ever been convicted, but if he was, he would have to vacate his place of authority over the lives of our citizens. **It's one thing to impeach a president, but it's another thing all together to impeach God himself.** What a horrible thing to do, yet this is exactly what Israel did. They threw the yoke of God's love off from them. They wanted their own king. God also wanted them to have a king, but in his time and in his way. But they rejected God and elected their own king who would rule for them in the prototype of the pagan nations around them.

The books of 1 and 2 Samuel are really all one book, and that book concerns one message about God's ultimate king, the Lord Jesus Christ. It tells the story of one king, that of the coming Messiah and the failure of all other kings. Some have said that the books of 1 and 2 Samuel in particular could almost be considered the first Gospel story. It's interesting to go back and read 1 and 2 Samuel in those terms because you'll see many of the same themes that are repeated in the Gospels in the books of Samuel and the books of 1 and 2 Kings.

We see in 1 and 2 Samuel, the beginnings of a king, and the acceptance of the king by the nation. Then we see the rejection of God's king (a man after God's heart) by Israel. God wanted to give Israel a king in his time, but Israel just couldn't wait. Let's begin by reading the first nine verses.

1 Samuel 8:1-9 | When Samuel became old, he made his sons judges over Israel. ²The name of his firstborn son was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; they were judges in Beersheba. ³Yet his sons did not walk in his ways but turned aside after gain. They took bribes and perverted justice. ⁴Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah ⁵and 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." ⁶But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." And Samuel prayed to the Lord. ⁷And 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.

⁸According 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. ⁹Now then, obey their voice; only you shall solemnly warn them and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them."

The passage before us in 1 Samuel 8 is an extremely important chapter. It is in this chapter what we see is **the institution of a new office**. We see a monumental change happen in the life of God's people and that is the institution of the office of the king of Israel. This is the very office that Christ himself would eventually occupy. First Samuel chapter 8 can be divided into more less four divisions.¹

The first three verses really tell us something about the circumstances that surrounded the institution of this office—what gave birth to it. The next section is verses 4-6 which gives us insight into what the people are actually asking for when they ask for a king. Then verses 6 to 9 give the theological evaluation. What is God's actual analysis or response to what Israel chose? What is the diagnosis of what's going on with the people ask for a king? Finally in verses 10 to 22, we really get a full sense of the wickedness of this request. We'll see when we finish here that out of the great evil of this request comes great good.

¹ Some structure based on a message by Phil Soen. "The Impeachment of Yahweh." Sermon preached at Living Hope Bible Church of Roselle, Illinois on December 12, 2012. <https://www.sermonaudio.com/sermoninfo.asp?SID=1231278425>

Key Thought: Anytime we choose sin, we choose enslavement to sin. Anytime we choose Christ, we choose freedom and joy.

1. THE PATH TO COMPROMISE (8:1-3)

In verses 1-3 we get a picture of the circumstances they give birth to this evil request for a king. Now let me just say from the outset that Deuteronomy 17 lets us know that the request for a king as such was not evil. Instead, it's the worldly motivation of their hearts that is evil. God had made provision for there to one day be a king over Israel. There will be a king for Israel, but it should be the one whom God chooses. Let's consider what exactly this evil is here in verse 1.

FAVORITISM

1 Samuel 8:1 | When Samuel became old, he made his sons judges over Israel.

We learn that Samuel is now old, and he appoints his sons as judges over Israel. Samuel does not have the authority to do that. Only God can appoint judges. It seems favoritism is a poisonous path toward compromise. At least in this instance, he puts his love for his sons above the Lord. It seems harmless, but it is deadly.

DISTANCE

1 Samuel 8:2 | The name of his firstborn son was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; they were judges in Beersheba.

Samuel's sons were far enough away (50 miles) so that perhaps the prophet could deny culpability. The distance between Samuel and his sons was not only in terms of miles, sadly, "they did not walk in his ways" (8:3).² If possible, it is best to keep our families close. The influence of mother and father over a lifetime is incalculable. We want to see multigenerational godliness. A family that is geographically close is going to have the opportunity for more influence. That could have greatly benefited Samuel's sons.

² Lyle M. Eslinger, *Kingship of God in Crisis: A Close Reading of 1 Samuel 1-12* (Sheffield, UK: Almond Press, 1985), 253.

ABUSE OF POWER

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

It says in verse 3 that his sons did not walk in his ways. They went a bit mafia. **For enough money, they were willing to look the other way.** Samuel should have kept his family close so that he could hold them accountable.

A Challenge to Older Saints

What is going on with Samuel? How can this happen? Yes, he is older now. There is a necessary application here to those putting on the years. It's easy to let your foot off the gas and relax a little as you get older. The sins of older people are they tend toward apathy. They are tired. They want a little break. Dear older saints, never take a break. Our rest comes when we see Jesus!

A Glimpse of God's Sovereignty

One other note of importance. **Regardless of the compromise, God's plans are never thwarted.** God is absolutely sovereign.

Daniel 2:21 | He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings.

You cannot thwart his plans. These compromises give birth to the **office and institution of king**. What we will see throughout this book and the entirety of the Old Testament, is that human kings fall pitifully short. Even God's king, David will stumble and fall so much. There is only one king we can look to in the Bible that is a perfect monarch, and that is King Jesus!

2. THE DECEPTION OF COMPROMISE (8:4-6)

1 Samuel 8:4-5 | Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah ⁵ 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."

COMPROMISE PROMISES RELIEF

Often, we make compromises when the pressure is on. We know we need a change. As all the elders gather at Ramah, Samuel's home, they make a plausible request. It sounds like a good and moral request. They tell Samuel, "Your sons are taking bribes to look the other way on wickedness in Israel."

We can't keep going down that road. Give us a king like the nations." It sounds so promising. It seems like it will relieve the immediate pressure of growing corruption in Israel. We must never make decisions just to relieve the pressure.

It was the elders of Israel who, on a much earlier occasion, had come up with a proposal to solve a national security crisis—a military defeat by the Philistines. That proposal was to bring down the ark of the covenant of the Lord from Shiloh (4:3). The idea was a historic failure. Now, faced with another crisis, which also involved a military threat (8:20 and 12:12), they met together, apparently agreed on their proposal, and brought it to Samuel at Ramah.³

They have forgotten God's great deliverance of them at Mizpah when his voice thundered from heaven, and they defeated the Philistines and set up the Ebenezer stone. They are panicking and we must remember panic is not a fruit of the Spirit. Panic is fear, and it is unbelief. That's what we have here.

COMPROMISE IS OFTEN REASONABLE

It's also not wrong to ask for a king. It's in God's law. The problem is they look at the compromise Samuel made and find it reasonable to make their own compromise. You appointed your sons, now we will resign so you can appoint a king. That's reasonable, right? How could Samuel disagree? He had gone out of the wisdom and will of God and subverted God's right to make the choice of leadership for Israel.

If Samuel appointed his own sons who he knew were wicked, what makes the elders of Israel think that Samuel's appointment of a king is going to make them any better off? **Their argument is merely a disguise to get what they want.** They want a king who will rule them like all the pagan nations. What they are doing is **following Samuel's bad example.**

COMPROMISE IS MISLEADING

Compromise is deceptive. It looks so good in your mind when you imagine it, but the cost is far greater than the return.

Notice that in doing impeaching Yahweh, who had given the elders authority, they are themselves resigning as elders of Israel in favor of a king. They are forfeiting much of their God-given authority and guidance over Israel. This is not all Israel requesting this. This is the elders. **They are basically resigning their offices as elders to make way for a king.** They are giving up their right to hold leadership accountable because they had already stopped holding Samuel's sons accountable.

³ John Woodhouse, *1 Samuel: Looking for a Leader*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008), 143.

By impeaching Yahweh as their king, they are going to get a king that becomes a tyrant. The new king will have no accountability. He's going to lead them down a path of worldliness and fleshliness where the king of Israel is consulting the witch of Endor instead of the Lord God almighty. So sad. We don't trust human leadership. The head of the church is Jesus Christ. He is trustworthy. That is why we must have pastors and teachers and elders that bow to the lordship of Jesus.

On a side note, I'm so thankful the church of Jesus Christ was built for accountability. That's what membership is all about. We hold each other accountable to live godly in Christ Jesus.

COMPROMISE MUST BE MET WITH NEW SURRENDER

The text gives us hope. Samuel sees that this is wrong, but he goes to the Lord. We read that this matter was evil in the eyes of Samuel. So Samuel prays to the Lord.

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

This is good. Even though Samuel has not been wise with his sons, and as a result, he has failed in setting the right example for the nation, he yields himself to God's control. This is a vital truth we all need to understand.

Sometimes when we sin, we feel like we irrevocably messed up God's plan for our lives. Yes, sin interrupts our fellowship with the Lord, but it in no way interrupts God's good plans for the world. He will save his elect. He will carry out his plans. His plans do not rest on me or you, but on Christ, his coming king. It's important to keep that in mind and appreciate the humility of Samuel in going directly to the Lord. In this he is a good example. I believe Samuel begins to pray for God's king, and though it will be a while before David is installed, it will happen. There is hope here.

3. GOD'S RESPONSE TO COMPROMISE (8:7-9)

Samuel prayed, and God answered. What is God's response to the people's request for a king?

THEIR REJECTION DOES NOT HINDER GOD'S PLAN

He basically says, "I am in control. Trust me and do whatever they say." "Yes, they are rejecting you, but more important they are rejecting me. And I'm in complete control of that."

1 Samuel 8:7 | 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."

The people are wanting to impeach Yahweh and have a king like the pagan nations instead of a king after God's heart. And yet, God tells them to obey because he's in total control. I find this text comforting. Even when things go completely wrong in life, it does not hinder God's plan of redemption. Jesus holds the scroll of redemption in his hands. No one else is able to open the scroll (Rev 5:1-5). Notice, God does not comment anything about Samuel's appointment of his sons as judges.

THEIR IDOLATRY DOES NOT HINDER GOD'S PLAN

Finally, he points to the real reason Israel is impeaching Yahweh. They love serving other gods. This is their pattern.

1 Samuel 8:8 | "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."

There's something about what they're doing that harkens back to the very history of these people from the beginning. What they're doing is a form of idolatry. They want a king not only in the office of administering justice. They don't want God's justice. They want to make their own rules. They are lawless and want to live their own way. They are impeaching God. "We'll take it from here" is what they're saying to God. They want what they want, and they are willing to impeach God to get it. That's what they did in the days when God brought them out of Egypt. Because of their idolatry, they were never able to enter into the promised land, but they all died in the wilderness.

What they really want is a king will rule them according to their standards. They're not just setting aside the presence of God as one who governs them, but they're setting aside the law of God, the very perfect righteousness of God that he's given to his people. In impeaching Yahweh, they are not just throwing off the Lord, but they are throwing off his perfect standard of righteousness in exchange for their own lawless standards. They want a king who will rule them according to their standards. They are choosing the values of the pagan nations.

THEIR MONARCHY DOES NOT HINDER GOD'S PLAN

They want to throw off their identity as God's people but notice God's evaluation of it. They are not forsaking you, but they are forsaking me. They are serving other gods.

1 Samuel 8:9 | “Now then, obey their voice; only you shall solemnly warn them and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them.”

Do what the people say, but solemnly warn them. Tell them all about what will happen if they get what they want, a king like the pagan nations. The “ways” of the king could also be translated, the **blueprint** for the king. Tell them what’s going to happen if they appoint a king over themselves. What follows here is the blueprint that God gives of all that the king will be allowed to do as he rules over Israel as a pagan. By impeaching God, **Israel will surrender the divine presence, squander their royal identity, and return to being slaves.** But other than that, it’s going to be fantastic. Or not!

So here is the warning. The Lord will sometimes give us our selfish request to our own misery (8:7a, 9). **God’s granting our request may not be a sign of his favor** but of our stubborn heart. Sometimes **God’s greatest kindness is in not answering our prayers exactly as we desire.**⁴ Psalm 106 speaks of Israel in the wilderness. They asked for things outside of God’s will, and God gave it to them to their own misery.

Psalm 106:15 | He gave them what they asked, but sent a wasting disease among them.

God have mercy on us! Don’t grant our fleshly requests!

4. THE COST OF THE COMPROMISE (8:10-22)

This is what the king will be allowed to do. This shall be the blueprint of the king who will rule over you.

THEY GIVE UP THEIR DIVINE COMMANDER

1 Samuel 8:10-12 | So Samuel told all the words of the LORD to the people who were asking for a king from him. ¹¹He 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. ¹²And he will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and some to plow his ground and to reap his harvest, and

⁴ Dale Ralph Davis, *1 Samuel: Looking on the Heart*, Focus on the Bible Commentary (Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2000), 86.

to make his implements of war and the equipment of his chariots.

Remember when Joshua was to conquer the promised land, who led them? It was the captain of the angel armies, King Jesus. Now they get a new commander in chief for war, and it's not God. It's a human king. So the king will take their sons and he will use them as **vessels for war**. They will have to lay down their lives in defense of Israel. But he will also use their sons and daughters for **peace keeping and infrastructure**.

THEY SQUANDER THEIR ROYAL IDENTITY

1 Samuel 8:13-16 | He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. ¹⁴He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards and give them to his servants. ¹⁵He will take the tenth of your grain and of your vineyards and give it to his officers and to his servants. ¹⁶He will take your male servants and female servants and the best of your young men and your donkeys, and put them to his work.

Notice the pattern. They give their sons for warriors and their daughters for cooks and bakers and perfumers. We have land. We have servants. **What they are losing in exchange for a king are the very emblems of their royal identity.** Remember God had said to them in Exodus you will be a kingdom of priests. And yet they are willing to take everything that God has given to them that symbolizes their royal identity as a kingdom of priests and to give it over for a king who would rule over them like the pagan nations.

THEY RETURN TO BEING SLAVES

1 Samuel 8:17 | He will take the tenth of your flocks, and you shall be his slaves.

Notice the punch line right here. Finally, what does this mean for them? And you shall be his slaves. Notice the irony. They're acting like how they've acted during the golden calf incident in forsaking God as their one true object of worship. And the tradeoff is **now they're also going to be returned to their previous status as slaves.**

What they're asking for is not just autonomy and freedom. That's what they think they want. But what they're really asking for is a return to slavery. **They will have a new Pharaoh over them.**

1 Samuel 8:18 | 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.

They determined to choose a king for themselves without God's guidance. That's contrary to the law. Yahweh alone was to choose the king. But instead, they chose a king for themselves. The Lord will no longer answer them. They are returned to the status of slaves. They will give up the salvation of Yahweh, the help and provision of God's very presence. Notice, that they have "chosen" this for themselves. But it get's worse.

God says through Samuel, that they will be returned to the status of slaves, there will be no salvation for them when they cry out on that day. "This is what we want," they say.

THEY ABANDON THE DIVINE PRESENCE

1 Samuel 8:19 | But the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel. And they said, "No! But there shall be a king over us."

What's fascinating about that is remember after the golden calf incident Moses intercedes for them, and God does preserve them. Remember Moses he appeals to the divine name of Yahweh and says, "What will the Egyptians think of you if they see that you brought us out here to the mountains to slay us?" He appeals to the name of Yahweh to preserve God's people.

God says, "Okay. You will be preserved but my messenger will go out before you." They don't like this. God says he will remove his presence from them. And Moses responds and says, "If your presence does not go with us, do not carry us forward." Moses says, "Without the presence of God we will not go into the land." Why? Because the device the divine presence among the people of God defined their very identity.

It pained them to realize that God would leave them in the days of Moses, but here they willingly and knowingly forsake the divine presence. God will not be there to deliver them, and they say, "Sure. Why not? Let's sign on the bottom line." But more than that, their arrogance does not stop at a desire for autonomy. Notice what it says. They insist that a king **can do better for them than the Lord God almighty**. Samuel pleaded with them to remain under God's lordship. But they refused. Listen to their arrogant response to Samuel.

THEY ABANDON DIVINE PROTECTION

1 Samuel 8:19b-20 | “No! But there shall be a king over us,²⁰ 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.”

Notice the change. They now no longer look at their battles as the Lord's battles. “No, we don't need God. They are our battles.” **That pronoun “our” is extremely arrogant.** Remember they were to be led by God in the promised land. They were to occupy the promised land because Yahweh himself would fight their battles for them. Remember God said to Joshua, “Be strong and courageous,” but that courage was fortified by the very presence of God. Remember the battle of Jericho. In our little kids' songs, we say Joshua won the battle of Jericho, but that's wrong. Yahweh won the battle of Jericho. It's Yahweh the fights our battles. Yahweh is the one who fights battles. So **when they say “our” battles, they are severely mistaken.** The wickedness is not just their desire for **autonomy**, but also claiming every battle that has delivered them up at that point as **their own battle**. The saints' battle is always Yahweh's battle.

God was the One to fight for Israel (Deut 1:30). Having God as the leader of battle is not incompatible with having a human king who guides Israel in warfare as long as that human king trusts in the Lord for the victory (2 Kgs 18:5; Psa 72), but that is not the kind of ruler the Israelites wanted. They wanted a king who would revel in his own might, in the size of his royal court, and in his own glory.

Flee from Temptation

When you see compromise brewing in your heart, flee from that temptation. The final eruption of Mount St. Helens in May of 1980 was not a sudden event. For two months prior to the massive blast—the most deadly and destructive in American history—earthquakes and volcanic activity signaled a major event was underway. Authorities had plenty of time to sound the alarm and warn those living nearby of the looming danger. Yet despite the seriousness of the threat, some people chose to disregard the warnings.

Probably the best known of those who refused to evacuate was Harry Randall Truman. The eighty-three-year-old man was the owner and caretaker at the Mount St. Helens Lodge at Spirit Lake. He had survived the sinking of his troop ship by a German submarine off the coast of Ireland during World War I, and he was not about to leave just because scientists thought there was danger. Truman told reporters, “I don't have any idea

whether it will blow. But I don't believe it to the point that I'm going to pack up." On May 18, 1980, Truman and his lodge were buried beneath 150 feet of mud and debris from the volcanic eruption. His body was never found.

It is foolish to recognize danger or temptation and think that we will somehow be exempt from the consequences if we linger.

GOD GIVES THEM OVER TO THEIR SIN

1 Samuel 8:21-22 | And when Samuel had heard all the words of the people, he repeated them in the ears of the LORD. ²² 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."

Now when we read this, we must not think that God is approving of their choice when they want a king like the nations. In the next chapter, we are introduced to a man named Saul who becomes the king the people chose. God didn't choose him. The people did.

The name "Saul" in Hebrew is "the one asked for."⁵ God didn't appoint Saul. He was "asked for" by the people. Sometimes we read the book of Samuel and we think, this was plan A but it failed, and therefore God anointed David. But David was always God's plan A. Saul is the king like the nations, but David is the man after God's own heart.

How disappointed we will be in Saul, and even in David, God's king. What future is there, though, in this monarchy? The answer, of course, is there is ultimately no hope. By the time you get to the New Testament, the people realize there must be a King who out-kings all these other kings. Because we never had a king that could actually fulfill all that we were hoping for. The king we long for is King Jesus.

God's ultimate promised king is Jesus who is King of all kings and Lord of lords. There are no term limits on the rule and reign of Jesus. He has always been King and he always will be King. There is no death that threatens the endlessness of his sovereign authority. There is no usurping of power by a lesser rival to his throne. There are no coups, no successful revolutions. **There is no threat of actual impeachment.** They tried to impeach Yahweh, but he still rules and reigns. They can try to rebel against his rule, but no one can derail his plan of redemption. He'll grant mercy to anyone who comes to him.

Dear saints, whenever we choose sin, we are choosing another authority over our lives. It's not just the sin, but it's the one we give control of our lives

⁵ Francis Brown, Samuel Rolles Driver, and Charles Augustus Briggs, *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 982. "שָׂאֵל"

to. We are talking about unseen spiritual entities. We give place to the devil when we sin. Don't do it.

Conclusion

Anytime we choose to sin, we not only grieve the Spirit and hurt our relationship with our dear Father in heaven, but we also give ourselves over to the evil harasser of our soul. So many Christians live in a funnel of toxic emotion. It might be a constant ball of anxiety in the pit of their stomach. It might be a general sense of anger and frustration. It might be slavery to lust or substance. Why church? Why live in that?

It reminds me of the story of the monkey trap. I'm told that monkeys are fast and agile creatures – it's almost impossible to catch them. The resourceful hunters in Africa designed to catch a monkey, based on its greatest weakness, mainly food! A monkey hunter would use glass **jars with an opening slightly bigger than a monkey's hand**. They would put food like banana and peanuts in them.

When a monkey sees one of the jars, its hand reaches inside and grab the food, and the hand is now clinched into a fist. It then struggles to withdraw realizing his hand is now stuck. No matter how hard it tries, the hand cannot be freed from the jar because he refuses to let go of the prize. The opening of the jar is simply not large enough for the fist to get out. The hunters then throw a net over the monkey, and it is game over!

Dear saint, anytime you say yes to sin, you are voting to impeach Yahweh in your life. Don't do it. He is your Good Shepherd. He never sleeps or slumbers. You hear his voice, so follow him. Let go of anything this world offers you, because it is a trap. Let the Lord fill you. Look to him alone and rest that there is nothing and no one who will treat you better. Being under his lordship is the only way to live in peace and freedom.