

# 'The Rise of the Kings Series'

## Sermons in the Book of 1 Samuel

### Message 13 - 'A Royal Request' 1 Samuel 8



As we look at the narrative, we see the people cry 'we want', God will allow them their desire, but it came at a cost. We see the demand for instant change that will have hard consequences. Now, it was not necessarily the request that was wrong but the motivation, but ultimately the Israelites were rejecting God. They thought their demand would guarantee their immediate future, but they failed to realise that God is the One who always has the best for His people. As they insisted on their own way, they would live to regret such a hasty decision. The chapter we consider here not only reveals God, but it also holds a mirror to us and reveals the reality of who we are. We could just talk about the problem of kingship, but really the Scriptures point us to see beyond that as the episode gives a reality check on what and who we really are. We can see:

- **The Request (v1-6)** - Samuel was now old, there was no successor, not only that, but his two sons were not godly men. The Elders were not keen that Samuel's sons should be the natural successors to Samuel's position. They felt they had to drive through change. As the Elders unravelled their request, their desire was to have a king 'like all the nations'. Israel had no king, and no standing army, they were looking at their own resources, the lessons of the Ebenezer seen in the last chapter had been quickly forgotten. They had forgot that the Lord is the one who was sovereign over them, and He it was who granted the ability and victory against the enemy. As the Lord Himself would reveal to Samuel, they weren't rejecting Samuel, they were rejecting the Lord Himself. This too grieved Samuel's heart, and after so many years of ministry, seeing the people turn in such a way was hard for him to bear. However, the Lord remains sovereign. He is never caught out at what people do, He is not prompted to react, or responding in surprise. He is never does not know what to do, His will, plan and purposes are steadfast, secure, and unchanging. God had already planned that Israel would have a King, and this is made clear from the beginning of the covenant. The people wanted a king, and the Lord had made it clear that this would be a reality, so what was the issue? Motive.

- **The Response (v7 - 22)** - This is the important point, it was not the request that was the greatest sin, it was their insistence that God give them a king in their timing and on their terms. It was not the request itself, but the motive behind it that was the problem. The Lord was preparing a king for them, David, the son of Jesse. However, it would be brought to pass in His timing. The reason why the motive was so bad was because the people were placing their hope and trust in a new form of government, a new king, rather than the Lord. They lost their focus of trusting in the Lord and believed that they could manipulate the situation to achieve success. The Lord would make it clear that in receiving their immediate desire that there would be consequences. Despite these clear warnings, the people insisted they have a king. They had lost the focus of pleasing the Lord as their uppermost concern. Samuel is then faced with the stubbornness of Israel. They are so intent on having their own way that in thinking that Samuel is in folly for ignoring their arguments, they fail to see that the foolishness is all their own, and fail to heed the wisdom that is given. Israel hears the wisdom of Samuel, but does not submit to it. The Lord gives instruction but they are not teachable. How the Lord's people should cry out for a soft heart and a teachable spirit, that we might be preserved from the arrogance of our own apparent knowledge. Proverbs 12:15, *'The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, But he who heeds counsel is wise.'*



## Penzance Baptist Church

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Pastor Jonathan Stobbs