

We Want a King - "Like the Other Nations"

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 15 February 2024

Preacher: Malcolm Macdonald

[0 : 00] We'll sing to God's praise some verses from Psalm 146.

Psalm 146, we'll sing from verse 5 to the end. Psalm 146, verse 5.

O happy is that man unblessed from Jacob's God of aid, whose hope upon the Lord doth rest, and on his God is stayed, who made the earth and heavens high, who made the swelling deep, and all that is within the same, who truth doth ever keep, who righteous judgment executes for those oppressed that be, who to the hungry giveth food, God sets the prisoners free.

The Lord doth give the blind their sight, the bow down doth raise, the Lord doth dearly love all those that walk in upright ways. The stranger's shield, the widow's stay, the orphan's help is he, but yet by him the wicked's way, turned upside down, shall be.

The Lord shall reign forevermore. Thy God, O Zion, reigns to all generations. Praise to the Lord, give ye.

[1 : 29] These verses, Psalm 146, from verse 5. O happy is that man unblessed from Jacob's God of aid. O happy is that man unblessed from Jacob's God of aid, whose hope upon the Lord doth rest, and on his God is stayed.

Who made the earth and heavens high, who made the swelling deep, and all that is within the sin, who truth doth ever keep, who righteous judgment executes, for those so blessed that be, who to the hungry give the food,

God sets the prisoners free. The Lord doth give the blind their sight, the bounden doth raise.

The Lord doth dearly love all those that walk in the bright ways.

The stranger shield the widow's stay, the Lord doth help his sea, but yet by him the wicked sway, turned up, side down shall be.

[4 : 32] The Lord doth bear the Lord doth. The Lord doth bear the Lord, the Lord doth bear the Lord, my God, O Zion, praise to all generations, praise to the Lord doth.

Can we turn to 1 Samuel chapter 8?

And we're going to look at the whole of this chapter, but just to focus our attention to begin with at verse 7.

And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee, for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.

They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. As we know from our reading of the scripture, the experiences of the Lord's people go from highs to lows, sometimes great height and sometimes the depth.

[6 : 22] And I suppose when we concluded our consideration of chapter 7, you could argue that at that point the Lord's people had achieved these heights.

They had been dealt with by the Lord. They had experienced the Holy Spirit convicting them of their sin.

And the experience of repentance was much in evidence. The bittersweet experience of repentance.

If you're one of the Lord's people, you will know what that is. There's a grief that is deep and that is penetrating and that brings you to the very just.

But by reason of God's dealings with you, you experience the joy and the blessedness of forgiveness at God's hand.

[7 : 46] The two must go together for it to be a genuine repentance. And that's what we believe took place. And Samuel witnessed that and was instrumental in bringing it out, bringing it about in the hands of the Holy Spirit.

So they marked the occasion as it were with raising up a stone of remembrance that allowed them to look back on all the dealings of God that took them to that time.

So you would think that now they're re-established once again in a new path of obedience.

But we begin chapter 8 with these words that acknowledge that Samuel has achieved old age.

Some other commentators believe that he's only around about 60 at this time. And I'm not sure where they work that out from. I'm sure it can be done.

[9 : 01] But even if he was just 60 years of age, if we believe that he was a prophet and a priest, as well as a judge, then the work of the priesthood would require him to be physically able and fit.

And the law required that of the priesthood, that they were able-bodied men. So maybe that had something to do with it. We're not told.

Samuel was old. And then we're told he made his sons judges over Israel. How he came to do this, it's not explained to us. Why he came to do this, we're not told.

What we are told is that the sons that he made judges did not walk in his ways, but turned aside after Lucca and took bribes and perverted judgment.

And you're confronted there with something that almost is a contradiction. Because Samuel is one of Israel's judges, one of Israel's foremost judges.

[10 : 26] He's endowed with the Spirit of the Lord. He's endowed with wisdom that enables him to carry out the work entrusted to him.

And yet, here he is, and he lacks discernment. Surely if he knew anyone, he would know his own sons.

And yet he chooses them to be judges in his place. And they took bribes and perverted judgment.

And you marry that with the thought of his upbringing and the influence on his life as he served with Eli.

And you remember the way Hophni and Phinehas desecrated the temple of the Lord and abused their privilege.

[11 : 31] And they brought the name of God into disrepute by their activities. You would think that that would have forewarned him. And there's a mystery there.

There's a deep, dark mystery there that God chooses not to explain to us. But he doesn't hide it from sight. And Samuel is left to deal with the aftermath of that.

And there is an aftermath. If you search out the names of Joel and Appiah, you won't really find much evidence of them within the scripture.

The only commentators I came across that reference then suggests that they had descendants who served in the temple as David's musicians.

So the grandchildren of Samuel, one of them at least, had that function. But we're not told there's no expansion of that thought.

[12 : 53] There's no elaboration of it. That may be true and may not. But the thing is, this is how it was.

And it is the door opening to the people of Israel to come to Samuel and to present this as part of their argument.

It said, It's as if they are equipped then to come with this request to Samuel and leaving Samuel almost with a leg to stand on.

Now, we're not able to say how much it affected the thinking of those who came to Samuel with this request.

I wouldn't be insistent on saying that this was genuine grounds for seeking a king. It was simply ammunition.

[14 : 17] It was simply something they used, a pretext for which to seek something that they wanted. And you have to remember that often when you are confronted with those who are at odds with your mind on certain things that arise from the truth of God.

And they are not able to say that. Their arguments may well have an element of truth in it. Whereas, it's not necessarily that truth that they are basing for their...

That's not what stimulates their desire to put you right. They'll bring arguments that may suggest to you this is the grounds upon which this desire is sought.

But very often that's just something that is declared. And it is something that is declared here. The reason for Israel seeking a king is that Samuel's sons were robbers.

The reason for seeking a king was that Samuel himself was aged and decrepit. Well, if that was the reason, then they could easily have come to the Lord and solicited somebody of the mind of Samuel to follow in his footsteps.

[16 : 00] They could easily have thought that they continuously were under a judge who was God-fearing rather than seek a king.

And the reasons that they give for seeking a king come to the fore as you read on. Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.

At one level it seems logical and reasonable and the right thing to do. An alternative to the sons and somebody like Samuel would be the better option.

The option that they should surely have sought from God. But they wanted, and this is the thing, they wanted a king regardless of cost or consequence.

And they wanted their king to be like the kings of the other nations. And it's not an individual's desire.

[17 : 12] It's the desire of the leader of Israel. And yet it is as if you see a populist desire expressed.

And is that not the case in our own generation? The reason that whatever is sought, very often you see it closed.

First of all, in the vestiges, in the clothing that gives it all the trappings as it were of righteousness.

It's requested and required on the basis of justice and equity. And it's the right thing to do. And it's what everybody wants.

And because everybody wants it, it truly must be sought. And many of these voices are heard in our own day.

[18 : 20] Voices that suggest to us that the things that are desirable and that they hold out to be worthy desires, that they are desired by the majority and they have the evidence of other sources to suggest or even demand that these things, be ours for our good.

For example, in our day, we are familiar enough with our news broadcasts in recent days anyway, talking about the law having to be changed to protect those who wish to go to an abortion clinic and to seek their freedom to do that.

And to suppress the freedoms of others who might object to that liberty being theirs. It's a current news issue.

It's something that was on this week. And the law is going to be changed very much. I think that will happen so that there will be a parameter, a boundary around these clinics that will forbid anyone to object anywhere near to them.

The freedom for this is freedom that is claimed on the basis, not of scripture, not of experience even, but very often it is pointed to the countries that have had this in their country for numerous years.

[20 : 27] And they highlight the good that it has caused. They highlight the benefit that there is for society if these things are allowed.

Similarly, with euthanasia, the countries that are cited, the countries that have these laws, the countries that are pointed to and their laws promoted as laws that we should espouse.

If you examine the kind of liberating law-making that they are under, very often these countries are permissive.

They are atheistic in their philosophies and very often they are very humanistic.

The main lawmakers of society within these societies, you could call them all of these things, humanistic, atheistic and permissive.

[21 : 45] So that the laws of the scripture, the laws of the Bible, the laws of Christianity or even any religion are discarded because what counts is the desire of the many.

And the desire of the many determines that these laws are enacted upon. The desire of the people who have been in their country. But this is really what was at the heart of the desire expressed to Samuel for a king.

We want them. We want them like others have them. And if they have them, then we should have what they have. And that is the thing.

That is what matters. That is what's important. And we see here Samuel is displeased because he sees it as a personal rejection.

He sees it as an affront to himself. And it's not surprising because he allies his own heart and mind and will with the heart and mind of the Lord.

[23 : 02] And when what he suggests or what he teaches is overlooked or rejected, then he takes it personally as you would expect. But the Lord says to them, no, it's not you that they have rejected.

It is me. And he reminds them. And it's amazing again how the Lord patiently teaches Samuel something that he needs to be reminded of.

The Lord said unto Samuel, hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they have said unto thee. For they have rejected, not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.

According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt, even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me and served other gods, so do they also unto thee.

God is saying to Samuel, why are you surprised by this? Why are you so downhearted by what they are doing?

[24 : 14] Surely you should not know that that's the kind of people that Israel are. That's the kind of mindset that they have. That's the kind of behavior that they have shown over decades, hundreds of years.

From the time that I made them my own, they have gone away from me. They have followed idols. They have departed from the truth. They have embraced ideals and ideologies that contradict what they have been taught.

And yet, knowing that, understanding that, and enabling Samuel to understand that, he gives the direction to Samuel what he is next to do.

He says to them, go and explain to them the consequences of their actions. He tells them that they are to get their desire.

They are going to have a king. This is what they want. This is what they want. They are going to have their king. But teach them, remind them, explain to them what this will mean, what this will involve.

[25 : 35] How be it, protest solemnly unto them, and show them the manner of the king that shall reign over them. And Samuel told all the words of the Lord unto the people, and asked of him a king.

And we have this description of what it will involve for them. And it's quite detailed. And it's quite explicit.

This is what it's going to cost you. It's going to cost you monetarily. It's going to cost you, as far as your family is concerned, this king will take your children away from you.

This king will take your wife and your daughters away from you. He will use them to serve his own ends. They will serve him in the military.

And they will do all these things. And they have to be told, and tell them that, explain it to them. And it's very detailed.

[26 : 41] They are left with no excuses. And yet what do we find? We find that having heard all that, that the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel.

And they said, nay, but we will have a king over us. Now many believe that the words that Samuel brings to them have a basis in the book of Deuteronomy.

Whether it is a prophecy being fulfilled or the inevitable consequence of the knowledge of God, of the heart of the kind of people that he has.

If you go to Deuteronomy, in chapter 17, in verse 14, there is legislation given there to Israel as to what they should do when they have a king.

When they were to come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me.

[28 : 05] Now it's not God telling them to have a king, to anoint a king, to choose a king. But he is more or less telling them prophetically that this will happen, but when it does happen, there are certain rules that they must follow.

Thou shalt in any wise set a king over thee, whom the Lord thy God shall choose. One from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee.

Thou mayst not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother. But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses.

For as much as the Lord hath said unto you, you shall henceforth return no more that way. Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away.

Neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold, and so on. Now, what is the basis for that information?

[29 : 15] Well, it's purely information that can be gleaned from the kind of activity that other kings have. That kings who belong to nations around about them, this is how they live their lives.

This is how they exercise authority over their people. These are the things that they can see for themselves. And God is saying here, telling them through the prophet, through Samuel, that they should know that and should understand that.

So that they do what God expects of them. But the fact is that they have already decided.

They have already decided what's good for them. Is there not an incredible blindness there?

The very king that Samuel is telling them will do all these things that are to be considered as negative.

[30 : 39] They want to overlook that and ignore that and say, well, our king will go at the head of us in battle. He may well do, but he's not going to fight the battles for them.

Just a simple fact. Just a simple fact. He will not be the one who is cannon fodder. He's not going to be the one that rides their horses into the valley of the shadow of death.

He's not going to be the one who will be counted amongst the dead in their thousands. They want a judge.

They want a leader in the battle. And that's as far as they're willing to look. And they ignore what the Lord has told them.

Whatever their problems are, they seem very keen to overlook them. What can a king do for them that the Lord can do for them?

[31 : 57] What would they want God to do for them that God is not able to do? Or that God is not willing to do?

That's the kind of question that they should have asked. But it's not the kind of question that they're willing to ask. Because they're determined to have their own way.

They're determined to have their own will in this matter. We should always be aware of that. That if our determination to have their own way means the sacrifice of what God condemns.

Or the sacrifice of what God commends, Father. Then it should certainly be questioned. And it should certainly be held up to scrutiny.

Very often the Lord's people find themselves in difficult situations of their own making.

[33 : 06] Because they ignored simple truth. They ignored what the Lord had commended to them. What the Lord had advised them.

What the Lord had insisted upon. Because they know better. Because they think they can achieve the same ends that the Lord has set before them.

In their own way. But not in God's way. The commentator Dale Ralph Davis makes this observation.

And you can meditate upon it. He says we have a tendency to assess all problems mechanically. To assess all problems mechanically.

Rather than consider them spiritually. Our first impulse is to assume there is something wrong. And that what is wrong.

[34 : 10] Can be remedied by something else. Something different. Something better. Something that we can do better. Now there is no question.

But that there are times when we have to take stock. Of what we are doing. What we are not doing. And what we must do. In order for whatever it is that we must be doing to be done properly.

Now that's not the same as to say. That if the Lord is not at the head of our thought process.

If the Lord doesn't come first. In leading us into whatever it is that we are taking decisions over.

Or the direction that we are heading. Then we will be no different to Israel of old. Who point to the other nations. And to point to the way the other nations are doing things.

[35 : 16] We have a king like them. He will rule us like he rules them. And it will be better than the way God has chosen to rule us.

It will be better. It will be more profitable. It will be more successful. It will be more secure. It will be more comfortable. There is mileage I suppose for us to think about what Deuterion says.

But Samuel tells the Lord. What their thoughts are. And he simply says. Give them what they want.

Does that make what they want right? Does that make what they want right? Well unfortunately not. Is God bad then to allow them to get what they want?

Is God bad in that he allows them to get their king? Well unfortunately. Again. There are things that God would have us learn from him.

[36 : 30] And if it means going down the wrong road. By our own choice. Or choices. Then he may well allow us to do that. And the lessons that we learn.

Are lessons learned. But they may well be painful ones. God sometimes allows us to have our own way. He allows us that.

In order that we discover the truth. That he has set before us. That establishes the way for true life.

And true possession of his own goodness. Well. It's easy to look back. Hindsight is a wonderful thing. We know the story of Saul.

But that hasn't started yet. This is before Saul. These are the decisions that were taken. Before Saul came to the throne. But they were necessary.

[37 : 32] They had to take place. They had these decisions. Wrong decisions that were made. Resulted. In a king set over Israel.

And even there. There's a mystery. God gives them. One who was head and shoulders over. All other men.

But. That soon. Went its own way. Well. Look. At that as we go on. Let us pray. Oh Lord our God.

We give thanks for your word. And we pray that. We would learn from it. That we would understand that. What we want is not. Necessarily.

What is right. And. Whatever. Evidence. We cite. Whatever proofs. We. We gather together. However.

[38 : 29] Heavily weighted. In favor of. Opposing. Opinions. Now.

These. Are. Our. Our. Way. Should be. Registered. In the light of your own counsel. And.

We give thanks that you are the one. Who is able to. Lighten. Our path for us. Watch over us each one. Pardoning. Sin. In Jesus name.

Amen. We are going to. Conclude. By singing to God's praise. From Psalm 106. Psalm 106.

And. Verses 4. And 5. Are.

[39 : 39] Him.LE "- good at the football field. Good at the football field.

Good at the football field.

Good at the football field.

Good at the football field.

Good at the football field.

[42 : 42] Good at the football field. Good at the football field. Good at the football field. Good at the football field.

Good at the football field. Good at the football field. Good at the football field. Good at the football field.

Good at the football field. Good at the football field.