

Give Us a King

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[0 : 00] Well, let's turn back to our reading in 1 Samuel. So the Philistines.

But the Lord had thundered out and won the battle for the people. You see that in verse 10. But the Lord thundered with a mighty sound that day against the Philistines and threw them into confusion. And they were routed before Israel. So they had won a battle. In the midst of danger, the Lord was with them. And then in verse 12, Samuel took a stone, the Ebenezer stone, the remembrance stone, and set it up.

And these great words in verse 12. Till now, the Lord has helped us. So it was very much a sense of the Lord was with them in all of these things.

And then in verse 15, it says, Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. And he went around all the different places, bringing the word of God to the people.

[1 : 25] So that's the context of what was going on then. But then in chapter 8, as we come into chapter 8, there's a jump. There's a jump in the time frame now. And we see that in verse 1 when it says, when Samuel became old.

So time has moved on. And there's a jump in the time frame here. And Samuel has become old. He's made his sons judges over Israel, his two sons.

One commentator put it like this. There was one problem with Samuel. He was mortal. He couldn't go on forever.

While Samuel was alive and judging the people, things were going well. Even in the midst of times of threat, like the Philistines there in chapter 7, they could still say, till now, the Lord has helped us. The Lord was with them. But now things are about to change. Samuel is an old man. He's got two sons, Joel and Abijah.

[2 : 37] But it says of them in verse 3, his sons did not walk in his ways. They didn't follow the way of Samuel following the Lord.

Instead, they turned aside after gain. They took bribes and perverted justice. So this was now the leadership that was coming up behind.

And it was already impacting the people. As you see, with the people of God, even up to this point, it's that recurring theme of turning away from God.

And here it is again. The people's attitude is changing. Their desire towards God is changing. The repenting of their sins before God is on the way.

And again, there's almost no thought of their sin coming in once more. It doesn't take long for change to come. And it's ongoing, as you see throughout the Bible, the sense of being near to God, blessing God, and then drifting away from God.

[3 : 43] You see it in the Old Testament. You see it in the New Testament. And you see it down through the ages of history to our own day. Today, it's the ongoing theme.

Are we going to be with God? Are we going to be trusting God? Are we going to go our own way and do things in our own way? Well, having had God near and the blessing of God with them, we see a period of change is about to come here as well.

And what do the people want? Do they want God with them? Do they see Joel and Abijah and their wicked ways, their bribery, their corruption, their perverting justice?

Do they see this and say, Samuel, cry out to God for us? No, they come with their own ideas. And they want a king.

They want a king over them as a people. In verse 5. Now, appoint for us a king to judge us like all the nations.

[4 : 49] And in many ways, it sounds right. And as we'll see in a moment, it does seem like a good request. But it's what is the motive behind it. What is behind what they're asking?

They want a king just like all the other nations. But why? And for what purpose? They had been used to having judges over them, judges who were leading them towards God. But now their eyes were starting to wonder and see what else was going on around them and think, maybe we should go that way. And that's so often the problem for ourselves today as well. We can become so accustomed to calling ourselves maybe a Christian people or a Christian nation. And we think that we have everything in our hands that we need. But then we start to see little things around us that catch our attention and lead us away and make us think, well, maybe what we need is we can still have God to a degree, but we can have all these other things as well.

[5 : 52] And eventually, God is pushed out. And instead we're saying, we want to be just like everybody else around us. Just think back in our own lifetime.

We had a queen, Queen Elizabeth II, who ruled for over 70 years, an incredible length of time. And for many of us, it's all we knew from a very young age up until 2022 when she passed away. It's all we knew. Queen Elizabeth II was all we knew. And it's hard to imagine anybody saying during her reign, we don't want her as queen anymore.

There would be maybe one or two who weren't royalists in that sense who would say it. But the majority of people would never come and say, we don't want you as queen over us anymore. You would never get like this, the elders of Israel or the parliament coming to the queen in our day and saying, we don't want you as queen anymore. We want something else.

[6 : 53] We want something different. But change often happens and it brings in a sense of a different perspective. So today, maybe many more would say, we don't want a king over us now.

We had a queen for 70 years. That's long enough. Let's have something different. Let's go a different direction in our day and age. Do something different.

Let's be like other nations. Let's get a president. Or let's just have somebody else over us. Or let's not have anybody at all ruling over us. Let's just do things the way we want to do it ourselves. Well, that's what was happening in Samuel's day. They'd had Samuel for a long period of time. But change is coming in and it's no longer, we don't want Samuel anymore.

It's more we don't want the Lord anymore. So let's just see what our options are. And so we want to see just what this meant in Samuel's day.

[7 : 57] Sometimes we take peace for granted. Sometimes we take the blessing of God for granted, that he has given us days of peace and his goodness to us.

And we start to suddenly think, maybe we don't want that anymore. We don't want the Lord anymore. And as we see the world in which we live, I almost could say it's at a tipping point today, where every nation is asking, well, who is going to be our king?

Who is going to be our ruler? Who is going to help us in the midst of all that's going on? And it's all about egos and personalities. Instead of every nation of the world saying, may the Lord be king over us.

We are always in danger of pushing God out. And with that, there are serious consequences. And there's three things I want us to see in this chapter today as we think of the people's request for a king.

The first thing is just the request itself. We'll begin with that. The request that is made by the people. And like I say, the people's request, it's not a wrong request.

[9 : 09] In fact, if you go back to the book of Deuteronomy, it's something that the Lord has already told them that's going to be happening. And the Lord has said to them that, you will have a king over you.

In Deuteronomy 17, verse 14, it says, when you come to the land, the Lord your God is giving you, and you possess it and dwell in it, and then say, I will set a king over me like all the nations that are around me.

You may indeed set a king over you whom the Lord your God will choose. So the request itself wasn't wrong.

They had heard from the Lord that this was going to happen, that this would take place. And here in this tipping point in their history, they're about to move from having judges over them to having a king over them.

And you think, great, we're going to see the Lord working out his plan. But there's a problem. When you look at Deuteronomy, it says, a king over you whom the Lord your God will choose.

[10:19] But here in verse 5, it's saying, now appoint for us a king to judge us like all the nations. They are wanting to have their say.

It's not about the Lord's choosing, but just their own desires. And so from here we see the request for a king, not itself wrong, but it's a motive behind it that is wrong.

You could say the people were right to call for a change. They see, Samuel, you're old. Your sons are taking bribes and perverting justice. Something's got to change.

So we're going to take it into our own hands. And we are going to sort out this mess. But what they want is to be like all the other nations.

It's a testing time for the people. And they're wondering which direction to go in. And what they want is, as you see down in verse 20, we want a king, that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles.

[11:29] It says there, they're wanting a king who's going to do what they want and the way they wanted. And the people did not trust God in their battles. That's what they're saying here.

We need a king who will go before us in our battles. If we are going to be successful, we must be like all the other nations around us.

Because we look at them, they've got a kings themselves. That's the way we need to go. They didn't want to be different to everybody else.

And therein is the challenge that the people had to face up to. Who did they want to be? Where was their identity to be found? Just like everybody else around them or their identity in the Lord and the Lord as their king.

And that's the challenge for ourselves today as well. Whether it's individually or collectively as a church or even as a nation, a nations of the world.

[12:31] It's what are we going to be like? You see in so many ways that every nation and all the leaders, they want to be the ones taking the lead.

We want to be the ones going ahead of everybody else, setting the tone, setting the ways that others might follow us. You think of the discussion and the debate going on over assisted suicide just now.

It's like, well, we're seeing other people doing it. We're seeing other nations doing it. Let's be like them. Let's be like them. Let's show that we are just like everybody else around us.

That we're open-minded. That we're the ones in control. That we're the ones who have power. Let's just push what God is saying in his word away from us. And let's just be like the rest.

But if we are to be God's people, we are to be different. We are called to be holy and to be set apart. And to stand apart from everything else that goes against the word of God and say, no, we are not just going to be like all the rest around us.

[13:39] We're not going to have the king over us as just the king of this world. When we have the king of the heavens and the earth. When we have the king who made all things, who has everything in his hands.

Why would we want to be like everybody else around us? So what is our motive in life? The motive behind the request here was that they would be like all the other nations.

Well, as a people, what do we want? Do we want to be like everybody else around us who pushes God out? Do we want to be like other nations that just do things their own way?

At the end of the book of Judges, it says the people did what was right in their own eyes. They had no king over them. And that's what happens. We descend into that chaos.

We just do what is right in our own eyes, but we are called to be holy, to be set apart. And what the Lord is saying here is the request of the people.

[14:49] They are not rejecting you, Samuel. They are rejecting me. In verse 7, 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.

Rejecting the Lord as king. The same thing that Jesus speaks about in the parable of the 10 minutes in Luke chapter 19, where it says, we do not want this man to reign over us.

They were rejecting the Lord as king. Are you? Are you rejecting the Lord as king today? Are you rejecting Jesus? I will not have this man reign over me.

Think about what that means. You want to be like just the rest of the world around you. But where is the world going? Descending into darkness and chaos.

When in the king, our king as Jesus, we have one who is light, who is truth, who is life. What are we asking for?

[16:03] Well, the second thing we see is the response that God gives. And herein we see the Lord make clear this is what you are asking for. Just so you may be aware, you need to hear this voice.

It says in verse 9, Now then, obey their voice. Only you shall solemnly warn them and show them the ways of the king who will rule over them.

So, the Lord is saying, Samuel, they're not just rejecting you, they're rejecting me as their king. But warn them. Warn them if this is the way they want to go, that this is the kind of king that they are going to have over them.

So, he gives them a clear warning that things are not going to be what they might expect. And there's a lesson there for ourselves. Today's a lesson we see in Psalm 106, verse 15, where the psalmist says, He gave them their request.

He gave them what they wanted, what the people wanted. And then it says this, He sent leanness into their soul. They got what they wanted, where did it take them?

[17:16] Leanness in their soul. They were missing out on the blessing of God. Be careful what you ask for, for you might just regret it.

And that's the kind of world that we are living in today as well. Where our requests are saying, we don't want the Lord as king, we want the kings like other nations.

Let's be careful what we ask for. What lesson do we learn in God's word in the Old and New Testament when we see the history of the nations in the world?

Well, we see that when God gives the people the desires of their hearts, it so often descends into moral chaos and corruption. Like I mentioned, the days of the judges, they had no king over them, and they did what was right in their own eyes.

The same is true in the book of Romans, chapter 1. When you go through that chapter, you see chaos descending. Why? Because in verse 22, it says, claiming to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

[18:30] Therefore, God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity. He gave them over to the desire of their hearts. Do you want to be just like the people around you?

Do you want to find your fun and your satisfaction and your pleasure and wholeness in everything that the world has to offer? Is that the way you want to go? Well, be careful because there are consequences.

Be careful the direction it takes you because it leads us away from the grace of God and leads us into chaos and that's what we see in the next few verses from verse 10 down to verse 18.

We see the chaos it leads to going completely the wrong direction. A world class runner was once invited to a race in a major city in America and they were very excited to go to this race a very prestigious race with a great reward if you won and so this runner she went to the city and thought she knew where she was going as she'd been given directions but as she came into the city she found herself thinking she was in the right place but not sure exactly where to go so she stopped at a shop and asked there's a race taking place today can you tell me where it is?

Oh yes the shop assistant said there's this race it's just about a mile up the road there if you make your way up you'll find it's just about to start you'll find the runners there and so she left and hurried arrived just in time to register and enter the race there was fewer runners than she anticipated being there and she thought well it gives me a better chance and so she ran in this race and she came first a few minutes ahead of everybody else she was delighted at first but then she started to realise there's no talk of the prize being given she got a medal and that was it but she was expecting money and she said oh I'm sorry there was no prize fund for this is this not the race such and such oh no that's in a town seven miles away so she had just ran a race on the wrong course and missed the chance of winning the prize because she was given the wrong direction and that's the way we are living today we are seeking a prize but the prize of being offered is very different to what the Lord offers we're in the wrong race when we choose to reject God and to turn away from him and notice the way the Lord speaks here in these verses notice the word that is used so often he will take that's all that keeps appearing in verse 10 through to verse 18 he will take your sons he will take your daughters he will take the tenth of your great gain and he will take your male servants and female servants he will take the tenth of your flocks everything here this king is going to be

about taking away they are going to lose so much he will take he will take he will take and that's what the king of this world offers that's what the world offers to us come in this direction but it's all about

[22 : 14] I will take from you I will take from you and we are in danger of losing everything we are in danger of losing the blessing of God we are in danger of losing the gospel we are in danger of losing our life our very soul if we choose to go in this direction because the God of this world is the devil and he will take take everything away from us take our very soul if he has opportunity he will take he will take he will take and we're left with nothing this is the king that the people have asked for and look at the response even when God says this is the kind of king you will have in verse 19 but the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel and said no but there shall be a king over us we are warned in the gospel of the consequences of rejecting the lord as our king everything will be taken from us will you say no but I will still have this world as my king

I will have this world as my domain I will have the pleasures of this world as my playground will you have that but lose your soul he will take he will take he will take well let's see as we think of the response of God let's see the reasoning why we must come to our senses the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel they wanted their own king but what should they have asked for they should have asked for what God gave them in Deuteronomy the king of his choosing and that's the king that we need to do that's the king that you and I both need to do because what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world but yet loses his soul we need the Lord as our king we need Jesus as our king a king not who takes who takes who takes but who gives a king who came not to be served but to serve a king who came not to take life but to give his life and to give his life as a ransom for many a king who says I have come that they might have life and life in abundance the one who has come to give to give and to give and yet we would say we don't want this king it would be madness it would be foolishness to see a selfish king who would take and take and take and said that's my king that's what I want instead to see Jesus who says I give I give my life for you I give you life I give you life eternal so will you not come to me will you not have me as king over you it's such a difference that Jesus makes as king to his people the difference he makes to us individually the difference he makes to us as a church the difference he makes to us as a land and as nations of the world if we would but say lord be king over us rule over us the world will take but Jesus gives and so what is our desire today what is your desire today when you think of who is king over you who do you want as king do you want the world that will take your soul or do you want Jesus who will give you life individually every one of us should desire to find that life in Jesus as our king and collectively as a church here let's have

Jesus as our king as our focus the one who has given his life for his church as a nation may we pray that Jesus would be king that he would rule in all things in our parliaments in Westminster in Holyrood in all our leadership throughout our land in all our homes and all our families that Jesus would be king and in our world in which we see so many troubles may we pray that Jesus would be king and bring peace and stability may we as a people not refuse the king that is before us but receive the king of kings and the lord of lords with gladness with joy and with praise he is there for us the people in Samuel's day they wanted to be like all the other nations rejecting the lord as king may we not be may we instead receive our king with joy and look to him and give thanks to him that he has come not to take but to give blessing upon blessing to his people if they will but return to him let us pray our father in heaven we thank you for the one who is king over all and yet the one who is rejected by many and we pray lord that we would have only the lord as our king Jesus as the one who is on the throne high may we lift his name up and may we praise him for all his goodness to us that he has come that he might give for his people and give to his people we ask oh lord that you would guide our every step in his paths as we ask it with the forgiveness of our sin in his precious name amen we're going to conclude by singing to god's praise in psalm 106 page 378 psalm 106 at verse 1 we sing from verse 1 to verse 5 the tune is

[29 : 54] Huddersfield give praise and thanks unto the lord for bountiful is he his tender mercy doth endure into eternity god's mighty works who can express or show forth all his praise blessed are they that they that judgment keep and justly do always we sing from verse 1 to 5 to God's praise praise to wisdom man unto the lord for bountiful is he his strength the mercy doth endure unto eternity!

O mighty words to come express our show for love his praise blessed are!

of judgment keep our judgment justly do always! Remember me your breath and love which thou to
thine dost fail!
with thy salvation O my God to visit me you near I chosen to!
chosen to see! and in their joy rejoice!
[32 : 08] and may with love love and with cheerful voice after the benediction i'll go to the main
door we'll close with the benediction now may grace mercy and peace from god father son and holy
spirit rest upon and abide with you all now and forevermore amen who Thank you.