

1st Samuel Chapter 8

V: 1-3 “When Samuel was old...” 20–25 years pass between chapters 7 & 8.

- As Samuel gets older he appoints his sons as judges over Israel and relocates them to the South in Beersheba – possibly for better coverage.
- Sadly his sons do not follow in his ways, they are dishonest and use the priesthood for their own advantage – ultimately they don’t fear God.

Ezekiel 34:2 “Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, thus saith the Lord God unto the shepherds; woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks?”

- The only clue we have about Samuel’s sons and their family life is back at the end of chapter 7, Samuel served the Lord and was on a circuit between Bethel, Gilgal, Mizpeh, and Ramah – perhaps he spent too much time away from home, perhaps he should have been more directly involved in his kids up-bringing, living that Godly example out in front of them.
 1. Joel: (H3100). Yow'el, yo-ale'; “Yah or Jehovah is his God”
 2. Abiah: (29). 'Abiyah, ab-ee-yaw'; Also seen as “Abijah” later on. “Worshipper of Jehovah” “Yahweh / Jehovah is My Father”.
- It is too bad that they didn’t live up to their names, they are not heard from again except that they are used as one of the reasons the people want a king to rule over them.

Peter exhorts the shepherds, pastors, and teachers: the ministers of God:

1 Peter 5:2-3 “²Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; ³neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.”

V: 4-5 All the elders approach Samuel, meaning they all agree – that Samuel’s sons don’t walk in his ways – a sad statement that is not contested by Samuel.

3 John 4 “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.”

- True words, but the opposite is true as well, sometimes there is no greater sadness than to know that your children don’t walk in the truth.
- Samuel was used of God to bring revival to Israel, the word of God had come to Samuel, and he’d been faithful to give it to the people – but like us he had his blind spots or his weak points.
- There is a two fold statement in their request:

1. They don't want God to rule over them, they want a king.
2. They want to be like the rest of the world, they want to be conformed to the world.

God's word consistently tells us the opposite:

Romans 12:2 "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

2 Corinthians 6:17 "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you."

Ephesians 4:17 **Psalm 1:1-2**

V: 6-7 As Samuel is no doubt grieved about their request for a king; the first thing he does is pray to the Lord, seeking God's face. He doesn't try to carry this burden himself.

- God responds and speaks to Samuel – whatever has gone on with his sons, Samuel is still in communion with God.

"They have not rejected you, they have rejected Me."

- God is dealing tenderly with Samuel, comforting Samuel.
- When we share the Gospel, or give Biblical counsel – and people reject either, often times we feel like we've been rejected, we are hurt personally, but in reality they are rejecting God and His word, not us.
- There is a prophetic element to their desire for an earthly king, fast forward 1,600 years and we see the same thing again.

John 19:15 "But they cried out, away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him. Pilate saith unto them, shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, we have no king but Caesar."

- God still desires a Theocracy for His people, a people ruled and governed by God.
- God wants to reign and rule in our hearts, that we would be submitted to Him, allowing Him to be the Lord of our lives.
- An important point to note is that God will not force the issue, He doesn't force the people to allow Him to rule – He makes it very very attractive, but He won't force it.
- If people don't want to honor God He won't make them, but there are consequences, just as there are today – God respects our choice.

V: 8-9 God explains that this is pretty consistent with their behavior since He brought them out of Egypt.

- Hear them out and explain to them what it will be like to have a king.
- Man is incapable of handling authority and power without corruption, we don't have the capacity to rule over other men without being corrupted by that power – absolute power corrupts absolutely. Government always ultimately becomes abusive and corrupt.
- Only when a man is submitted to a higher authority does he have the ability to rule or govern, if that higher authority is God.

V: 10-18 Samuel obediently describes to the people what they're getting into.

- *“He will take...”* 6X's – He will take the things that are most precious to them.
- He will take your sons, your daughters, your fields, vineyards, olive orchards, your men servants, maidservants, and a 10th of your cattle.
- Today the governments of the world do pretty much the same thing through a vast system of taxation and control. When you purchase property / land, the government will tell you what you can build, how you can build it, tax you upon it – property rights are a myth.
- And on top of all that you'll be his servants, his slaves.
- They are trading away a Heavenly King that who is the giver of every good and perfect gift for one that will do nothing but take away that which is most precious.

Matthew 20:28 *“Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”*

- You will eventually cry out because of your earthly king – but neither your earthly king nor your Heavenly King will listen at that time.

V: 19-22 The people refused to listen, they had already determined what they were going to do.

- They wanted to be like the other nations.
- Samuel acting in the capacity of a priest hears the people then rehearses the entire thing back to God.
- God says essentially that they will have a king. Samuel dismisses the people back to their cities.

Hosea 13:9-11 “⁹O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in Me is thine help. ¹⁰I will be thy king: where is any other that may save thee in all thy cities? And thy judges of whom thou saidst, give me a king and princes? ¹¹I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took him away in my wrath.”

- God always give His best to those who leave the choice with Him, always.
- One of the greatest judgments that God can pour out on a nation or a person is to give them what they want:

Psalms 106:15 “And He gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul.”

- Thus ends the time or the era of the judges, as we get into chapter 9 we start into the time of the kings of Israel.

1st Samuel Chapter 9

V: 1-2 Introduction of Saul; coming from a wealthy & powerful family - “mighty man of power”.

- The tribe of Benjamin had almost been wiped out in Judges, only 600 men left for whom they’d secured wives and began to rebuild the tribe – still small and weak comparatively.
- Saul: “Desired” or “Asked for”. He was “Choice (handsome) & goodly”, big & tall – looking good on the outside.
- Later as God is replacing Saul, He corrects Samuel when he’s looking at the sons of Jesse.

1 Samuel 16:7 “But the Lord said unto Samuel, look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.”

- His parents named him, mostly likely because they were praying for a son – but he would later fit the bill for the children of Israel who asked for and desired an earthly king – earthly in every sense of the word.
- The sovereignty of God and the free will of man is on display here.
- There is no mention of God in relation to Saul in these verses, because there is no relationship, there is nothing to say. Saul reflects the spiritual state of the nation, looks good on the outside, no heart for the Lord on the inside.

V: 3-5 Saul is sent by his father on a wild donkey chase – but God is going to use it.

- Saul came from a loving home, he knew that his dad cared about him. Saul was probably somewhere around 37-40 years old. When he's anointed king he assembles an army and his son Jonathan is old enough to lead a large group of men – so Saul is not a teen ager.

V: 6 Just as Saul is giving up on looking for the donkeys, the servant suggests that they seek out a man of God to help them.

- The servant begins to describe this man of God very much as though Saul had never heard of him which is strange. Rama is in Ephraim, right next to the territory of Benjamin.
- Saul lived in Gibeah, about 5 miles from Rama. Apparently Saul's family did not attend the annual feasts, seemingly no one from his family has enquired of God, and specifically not through Samuel, they were not concerned with spiritual things.

V: 7-10 The first thing Saul thinks of is how are we going to pay the man of God for his services.

- This misconception may harken back to Eli, Hophni, and Phinehas – but thus far payment has not been an issue in terms of hearing from God.

V: 9 This is a parenthetical break, and editorial note placed in the text.

V: 11-14 They are probably entering Rama, a city on a hill and the home of Samuel.

- They encountered the young women who told them that if they hurried they could catch "the seer" as he blesses the sacrifice prior to the meal – possibly a thank offering in which everyone would share.
- This is where we get the excellent custom of blessing the food before we eat it, Samuel did it and we continue in it.

V: 15-17 God had already prepared Samuel to receive Saul.

- Samuel knew and loved the Lord, so God spoke to Samuel in his ear. Saul on the other hand had no relationship with the Lord, so God spoke to Saul through lost donkeys – circumstances.

Revelation 2:7 "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear..."

- God has heard the cry of His people and is going to give them what they've been asking for.
- There is God's perfect will, and there is God's permissive will.

- God refers to them as “*My people*” two times – He’s still claiming them.

2 Timothy 2:13 “If we believe not, yet He abideth faithful: He cannot deny Himself.”

V: 18 Saul did not know who Samuel was, nor did he seem to have any particular discernment.

V: 19-21 Samuel immediately begins to give Saul direction – inviting him to dinner.

- He also tells Saul not to worry about the donkey’s, they’ve been found. Saul hadn’t mentioned the donkeys yet, this was Samuel’s way / God’s way of validating that Samuel was in fact a “seer”.
- Interesting how God uses the simple things of life, the donkey’s are lost – which God uses to bring Saul to Samuel.

Romans 8:28 “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose.”

- Samuel begins to tell Saul what is going to happen – Saul seemingly knows about the desire of the people for a king – and you’re the man.
- Saul then expresses his surprise – who, me? Saul starts out as a humble man.
- Hard to say if it’s genuine humility or false humility: Least of all the families? Seems to contradict V: 1 “A Benjamite, a mighty man of power.”

V: 22-24 Samuel has Saul and his servant come into the parlour / room and sit in the best seat, then he directs that he be given a king size portion – the whole shoulder, and everybody else gets what is left – a little preview of things to come.

V: 25-27 Samuel brings Saul to his home, they spend the evening on the roof, a cool place – communing, getting to know one another.

- Early the next day as Saul is headed home, Samuel requests a private conversation with him – that he may show him the word of God.

Stand still a while:

Psalm 46:10 “Be still, and know that I am God...”

- Can’t necessarily hear the Word of God when we’re distracted and on the run – it is best to be still before Him.