

“The King You Have Chosen” (1 Samuel 8:1–20)(2.13.22)

1 Samuel 8:1–20 (NIV84) *Israel Asks for a King*

8 When Samuel grew old, he appointed his sons as judges for Israel.² The name of his firstborn was Joel and the name of his second was Abijah, and they served at Beersheba.³ But his sons did not walk in his ways. They turned aside after dishonest gain and accepted bribes and perverted justice.

⁴ So all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah.⁵ They said to him, “You are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways; now appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have.”

⁶ But when they said, “Give us a king to lead us,” this displeased Samuel; so he prayed to the Lord.⁷ And the Lord told him: “Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king.⁸ As they have done from the day I brought them up out of Egypt until this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are doing to you.⁹ Now listen to them; but warn them solemnly and let them know what the king who will reign over them will do.”

¹⁰ Samuel told all the words of the Lord to the people who were asking him for a king. ¹¹ He said, "This is what the king who will reign over you will do: He will take your sons and make them serve with his chariots and horses, and they will run in front of his chariots. ¹² Some he will assign to be commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and others to plow his ground and reap his harvest, and still others to make weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. ¹³ He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. ¹⁴ He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive groves and give them to his attendants. ¹⁵ He will take a tenth of your grain and of your vintage and give it to his officials and attendants. ¹⁶ Your menservants and maidservants and the best of your cattle and donkeys he will take for his own use. ¹⁷ He will take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will become his slaves. ¹⁸ When that day comes, you will cry out for relief from the king you have chosen, and the Lord will not answer you in that day."

¹⁹ But the people refused to listen to Samuel. "No!" they said. "We want a king over us. ²⁰ Then we will be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles."

The word of God for the people of God.

LET US PRAY.

Title: **“The King You Have Chosen”**

INTRODUCTION:

It seems the Israelites were willing to give up a great deal in their pursuit of safety; in their desire to be like all the other nations. But that is exactly what they were not! They were supposed to be a Chosen People. Deuteronomy 10:15 (NIV84) Yet the Lord set his affection on your forefathers and loved them, and he chose you, their descendants, above all the nations, as it is today.

Exodus 19:5–6 (NIV84) God speaking to Moses:

⁵ Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine,⁶ you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites.”

Isaiah 61:6 (NIV84)

⁶ And you will be called priests of the Lord, you will be named ministers of our God.

You will feed on the wealth of nations, and in their riches you will boast.

Deuteronomy 7:6 (NIV84) For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession.

1 Samuel 8:19-20:¹⁹ But the people refused to listen to Samuel. "No!" they said. "We want a king over us."²⁰ Then we will be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles."

What went wrong? In what ways does this scripture apply to us today? How are we individually and as a nation like Israel?

BODY:

Our scripture begins with a sad state of affairs. Although Samuel was a faithful man and diligent in his service to God and to Israel, it seems his judgment failed as he got older. For Samuel's sons to turn away from righteous living and abuse the positions of authority he appointed them to for their own selfish gain, had to be a great heartache.

Though unfortunate, we see this throughout the human experience. The Old Testament is filled with bad kings following good kings, usually sons were the successors. We see it today when ministers and leaders in the Church suffer Samuel's same disappointment. We see it in our own families,

when faithful parents bring up their children rightly, but they turn to the things of this world and the pursuit of a fulfillment they will never find apart from Jesus. Being in the public eye or a place of prominence just amplifies all the issues.

The elders of Israel confront Samuel. Because the LORD characterizes the elders' actions as a rejection of God and not Samuel, it reveals that their motives were not pure. Maybe the circumstances provided an opportunity to pursue an unspoken agenda.

We are not told that they came together, prayed over the situation, consulted scripture and received guidance from the Almighty. That would have been the correct way to proceed. After all, I could walk you through several places where a king for Israel is part of the long-term plan of God. The elders should have spent time in prayerful discernment. They might have prayed, "Lord, is this the time for us to have a king?"

So, there was nothing inherently wrong with the elders' request for a king. The motivations of their hearts is the key issue, as it is in all our actions. Remember that the days of the Judges were dark days for Israel: The closing verse of Judges 21:25 (NIV84) "In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit." Maybe the elders

hoped to have their positions enhanced. Maybe it was power or wealth that motivated them.

At the same time, it is quite interesting to see that they acknowledged Samuel's position of authority. We want a king, so you appoint a king to lead us. They knew what they wanted, and yet at the same time, they wanted their desires to be blessed by God's representative.

Then the elders give us an insight. When they say, "We want a king over us."²⁰ Then we will be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us," they reveal exactly where they stand. As we have already demonstrated, they WERE NOT supposed to be like all the other nations.

God says to Samuel, remind them how I brought them out of bondage in Egypt and made them a nation. Even though time and time again, they have broken my heart. They have continually rejected me and served other gods. {pause} Do we ever think about how we grieve God?

How do the Ten Commandments start? Exodus 20:1-5 (NIV84) **20** And God spoke all these words:

² "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

3 **“You shall have no other gods before me.**

4 “You shall not make for yourself an idol **in the form of anything** in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below.⁵ **You shall not bow down to them or worship them;** for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God.

This is a core truth, commanded by God, that is to be foundational for each one of us and our culture. All of our thought processes and behaviors should flow from this fountain. The Lord God is THE authority in our lives. He has made His desires as plain as day. Not only that, the Father sent the Son, the Lord Jesus, to pay for our failures. Not only that, God the Holy Spirit indwells within every follower of the Lord Jesus.

And still, even though we have the testimony of the Holy Scriptures, even though we have the testimony of human history, we still go astray. We seek out and submit to other authorities, other kings, to rule us.

The Lord relays through Samuel to the elders, if you have a king over you, here is what you will get. There is a price to pay, and it is steep. You believe a king will keep you safe and secure, but what are you willing to give up?

This king you call for will have authority over you and your families. The king will decide on what happens with your sons and daughters. Based on the "common good," as determined by the king, your sons and daughters will serve the king. This safety you seek, the cost is your sons making weapons of war. The cost is your sons dying in battle. The cost is your daughters laboring as the king decides. The king will make the rules and construct the culture. And because the king has the power, you will submit. There will be no choice.

How will all this be paid for, the standing armies and all the supporting structures? Taxes, heavy taxes. This king will take what is yours and give it to his political cronies. One tenth of all that you have, and the best of it, will go into the king's coffers. How does the LORD characterize their condition? You yourselves will become the king's slaves. This is a very strong warning.

Of course, having a king is having a monarchy as your form of government. Do not fool yourselves into thinking that the issue is the form of government. The inherent issue is whose authority do we put ourselves under.

As Americans, we have a certain smugness about our form of government. We get to choose our kings on a regular basis. They may be little kings

or big kings, but we get to decide during our elections. Because of the grace of God, we have become the world power, though it could be argued that there are a couple of close contenders.

The founders of our nation knew something about human nature and governments. Because of flaws in human nature - sin, governments made up of those same human beings, must be constrained. All human institutions, including governments and church denominations seem to take on a life of their own. Somehow, those structures and mechanisms intended to be a blessing for the people, become a bondage for the people. Our country's founders wrote our Bill of Rights to protect the people from the ever-growing over-reaching power of governments.

Let us take one narrow area and look at it. We have a great road system in our country; well, just overlook the potholes. You buy a car or truck, and you pay sales taxes on it. When you buy gas to use it, the federal and state taxes are about 13%. You must register your car or truck and pay the annual fees. Then you pay tolls to ride on those roads, bridges, and tunnels. We know that locally the Atlantic City Expressway, the Garden State Parkway, and the bridges into Philadelphia and New York City all have very high tolls.

The Tobin Bridge in Boston, was originally constructed in 1948 through 1950 when it opened in February. The tolls were supposed to be removed after enough money was collected to pay off the \$27 million in bonds that were issued to finance the construction. The tolls, which were only charged in the southbound direction, never came down. Now, tolls are charged in both directions on the bridge. That has been going on for 72 years.

On Friday, the National Debt was \$30 Trillion. There are 332,571,434 people in the country. Each person's share comes to \$90,206. So, you owe that debt which grows larger every single day. Do you feel responsible for that debt? One aspect that makes our tax situation even more galling, is that the money collected for one purpose is often diverted to another purpose by those in authority over us.

Can you identify with the Lord's warning about becoming slaves of the State? "When that day comes, you will cry out for relief from the king you have chosen, and the Lord will **not** answer you in that day." We have so many layers of government over us. And, even our church is part of a government-like institution, the United Methodist Church. I cry out to Pharaoh, like Moses, "Let my people go!!"

But the people refused to listen [to God's warning given] [through] Samuel. "No!" they said. "We want a king over us. Then we will be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles."

As crazy as it seems, this is common human behavior. The truth is laid out before us, but we do not want to hear it. We think we know better. We listen to the Enemy. We listen to the culture around us. We listen to what Freud called the ID within us. And, in so doing, we reject God as our king.

But pastor, we have been born into this system. What are we to do? Mark 12:17 (NIV84) Then Jesus said to them, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's."

And they were amazed at him.

What if there is a conflict between human authority and God's authority? Acts 5:29 (NIV84) Peter and the other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than men!"

CONCLUSION:

Alexander Maclaren wrote a great sermon on this chapter. I paraphrase his concluding paragraphs:

“The people rejected Him, and in seeking a king followed their own earthly minds; but they prepared the way for King David and David's Son. Their children long after, moved by the same spirit, shouted, 'We have no king but Caesar!' but they prepared the throne for the true King, for whom they destined a Cross.

Man's greatest sin, the rejection of the visible King of the world, brought about the firm establishment of His dominion on earth and in heaven. The cross is the great instance of the same law as is embodied in this history, -- **the overruling providence which bends the antagonism of men into a tool for effecting the purpose of God.**

Alas for those who only thus carry on God's designs! They perish, and their work is none the less their sin, even though God has used it. How much better to enter with a willing heart and a clear intelligence into sympathy with His designs, and, delighting to do His will, to share in the eternal duration of His triumphant purpose! 1 John 2:17 (NIV84) The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.”

You and I must always remember that our Savior is King of kings and Lord of lords. There is no

higher authority. When we reject or disobey the Holy Scriptures, we are rejecting that authority. Jesus reminded his disciples, if you love me, you will abide in my word; you will dwell in my word. We cannot presume upon the blessings of the Holy One of Israel while rejecting His authority.

Revelation 1:4–6 (NIV84) *Greetings and Doxology*

⁴From John,

To the seven churches in the province of Asia:

Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne,⁵ and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and **the ruler of the kings of the earth.**

To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood,⁶ and has **made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father**—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.

Amen and amen. Let us pray.