

The Ever Faithful King

1 Samuel 8

I. Intro

- A. Genesis 1 and 2 present God as the King of creation.
 - 1. This King is so powerful and His word so authoritative that he speaks things into reality - issuing divine edicts
 - 2. In the garden of Eden, everything functioned in perfect harmony; everything operated in perfect submission to the King's rule.
- B. God originally created humanity to rule on His behalf.
 - 1. We were created to mediate God's rule to every part of His creation
- C. But Adam and Eve abused their freedom to make decisions counter to their king, and chose to reject God's leadership and rule
 - 1. With this simple act, God's rule on earth was challenged, and a new king was given power → Adam and Eve gave homage to the serpent, Satan.
 - 2. They rejected their king and, essentially, replaced him with a new one
- D. But we see God's universal kingship again when He led His people out of slavery
 - 1. Through the ten plagues, God showed that He was the supreme Ruler of this world, crushing Pharaoh and the Egyptian gods → the True King
 - 2. At Mt Sinai, God established terms for how his people would relate to him → God was the King, and Israel was His kingdom.
 - 3. In this kingdom, the tabernacle (and then the temple) sits as the dwelling place for God → his palace
 - a) The ark is seen to be the footstool of God's throne
 - b) As we saw a few weeks back, the tabernacle and ark are a reminder of God's presence and not some good luck charm
 - 4. Essentially, the tabernacle & temple acknowledge the kingship of God
 - a) They were supposed to be a reminder that God was in the midst of His people, ruling over and caring for them.
- E. Sadly, after God led Israel victoriously into the PL, the people consistently chose to move away from God's clear commands and follow their own perspectives.
 - 1. We read in the book of Judges: "In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (17:6, 21:25).
 - 2. What's the message? Israel needed a king.
 - 3. God was the rightful King of Israel, but they were unwilling to follow him
- F. This is the background for 1 Samuel 8, a pivotal moment in Israel's history
 - 1. In 1 Samuel 8, the Israelites demand a king to rule over them like other nations. Samuel, the prophet and judge of Israel, is dismayed by their request but takes it to God in prayer. God warns Samuel about the consequences of having a king: oppression, conscription of labor, and loss of freedom. Despite the warning, the people persist in their demand, and God instructs Samuel to grant their request.

II. 1 Samuel 8

A. [1] When Samuel became old, he made his sons judges over Israel. [2] The name of his firstborn son was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; they were judges in Beersheba. [3] Yet his sons did not walk in his ways but turned aside after gain. They took bribes and perverted justice. [4] Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah [5] and said to him, "Behold, you are old and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint for us a king to judge us like all the nations."

1. No clear succession for Samuel. Right or wrong, he does the next clear thing - appoint his sons. Should he have waited until God made it clear?
2. Samuel has been a great leader, but that's no guarantee for our kids
3. His sons are corrupted by power, similar to Eli's sons before Samuel
4. In comparison, it might seem like a good idea for Israel to have a king.
 - a) The period of the Judges was the wild west - it might make sense to establish a clear ruler who would lead and govern the people.
 - b) Besides that, every nation that surrounded Israel had a king, so they must have felt like the oddball.
 - c) All they had was a tent and a ridiculous track record of imperfect leaders that were appointed by God, leading in their weakness
 - d) Wouldn't they be better off with a human king?
5. But remember how chapter 7 ended: They repented, God routed their enemies, and they celebrated w/ a memorial to remember: "Till now the LORD has helped us."
 - a) Yes, your leaders are imperfect. Yes, they make mistakes. Yes, they make some BIG blunders... but also:
 - b) Yes, Israel, He has. He made you. He sustained you. He rescued you. He forgave you. He made you prosper. He fought for you.
 - c) Isn't God leading you? Isn't God in charge? Aren't his ways better? Hasn't he "helped you until now?" Then why abandon him?
6. Let's not judge them too quickly. Isn't this what we do all the time?
 - a) We are thankful for what you are doing, Lord, but can you do it faster? Can you do it in a bigger way? Can you do it in a way that makes us more famous? Can you do it in a way that makes me more money? Can you do it in a way that hurts less?
7. What's the heart of their request? Two things
 - a) Distrust
 - (1) Note: they trust Samuel; they ask him to exact the change
 - (2) The irony is they don't trust the LORD
 - (3) Friends, do you really trust God to do what he says he will do in you, in your family, in your life? Or do you want to take matters into your own hands? This was their sin.
 - b) Misplaced Desire
 - (1) Israel wanted a king so they could be "like every other nation."

- (2) But Israel had never been like the other nations—and that is basically the point throughout the Old Testament.
- (3) Israel was to be unique because their God was unique.
- (4) They were set apart from everyone else because they had Almighty God dwelling in their midst.
- (5) Becoming like the other nations was a huge step in the wrong direction.
- (6) Ministerially, I cannot help thinking of some podcasts and books that come out today to make the church more efficient, strong, and effective.
 - (a) Didn't Jesus say he would build his church? Is he biting his nails worrying how we will do it? Hasn't he already told us what and how to function as disciples and disciple makers?
 - (b) I wonder whether we whine like the elders of Israel, "Give us a king . . . like all the other nations."
- (7) Maybe a better request is: "JUST GIVE US THE KING!"

B. [6] But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." And Samuel prayed to the LORD. [7] And the LORD said to Samuel, "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. [8] According to all the deeds that they have done, from the day I brought them up out of Egypt even to this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are also doing to you. [9] Now then, obey their voice; only you shall solemnly warn them and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them."

- 1. Samuel sees that this is a bad idea and brings it to the LORD
- 2. What does God say, "Don't get upset, Samuel. They are rejecting me."
- 3. Poor God. Rejected since the Garden... continually
- 4. Obey their voice! What a crazy idea. This is what happened in Genesis 3.
 - a) Adam obeyed Eve's voice instead of God's
- 5. Since then we've been speaking LOUDLY trying to leverage our voice over God's
- 6. God essentially says, "Give them what they want, but warn them."

C. [10] So Samuel told all the words of the LORD to the people who were asking for a king from him. [11] He said, "These will be the ways of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and appoint them to his chariots and to be his horsemen and to run before his chariots. [12] And he will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and some to plow his ground and to reap his harvest, and to make his implements of war and the equipment of 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 orchards and give them to his servants. [15] He will take the tenth of your grain and of your vineyards and give it to his officers and to his servants. [16] He will take your male servants and female servants and the best of your young men

and your donkeys, and put them to his work. [17] He will take the tenth of your flocks, and you shall be his slaves. [18] And in that day you will cry out because of your king, whom you have chosen for yourselves, but the LORD will not answer you in that day."

1. Sounds like a great deal, right?
2. God warns them of what will happen with a king, and it draws a contrast for us with what kind of king God is vs. a human
3. God doesn't need armies, servants, wives, chefs, or anything else
4. God requires a tithe in order to provide for the Levites, care for the tabernacle, and cleanse the sacred space so that worship can continue, but a king will add another tithe (10%) to cover his expenses
5. In choosing a human king, Israel was rejecting God as their king. So, when they cry out for help, God will say, "You made your bed; lie in it."
6. Sometimes God gives you what you want...

D. [19] But the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel. And they said, "No! But there shall be a king over us, [20] that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles." [21] And when Samuel had heard all the words of the people, he repeated them in the ears of the LORD. [22] And the LORD said to Samuel, "Obey their voice and make them a king." Samuel then said to the men of Israel, "Go every man to his city."

1. Despite the warnings, they don't want to listen.
2. They want a king just like everyone else
3. They want a king who will tell them what to do (as long as it's not what God told them to do) and fight their battles (hello - remember last chapter?!)
4. God's conclusion, "They don't want to obey me, so go ahead and obey them. Give them what they want."

III. SUMMARY:

- A. So this marks the "end" of the theocracy as we know it
- B. I mean God is still king, but now Israel will have a steward / a mini king who will reign in the Land as God's representative → will he be a good king? A bad?
- C. Next chapter we will get introduced to the first human king, Saul, and he's kind of a dummy, and Israel will be stuck with him for a generation until God raises up the king HE wants - David (who is an ancestor of Jesus, the King we NEED).
- D. That's what this story is all about - the proper interpretation. But what does it mean for us? I want to highlight a few things:

1. Jesus is the leader you need (primary season)

- a) It's an election year, and this is when people from every political bent prop up fake messiahs
- b) I am not saying not to vote, not to be political, or not to be informed → you shouldn't hide your head in the sand
- c) What I am saying is this: be realistic; NO candidate will live up to what we actually need, b/c what people need is Jesus

- d) Psalm 146:3-5, Do not put your trust in princes, in human beings, who cannot save. When their spirit departs, they return to the ground; on that very day their plans come to nothing. Blessed are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord their God.

2. Be careful what you ask for

- a) Sometimes God gives you what you want b/c you ask for it even if it's not the best for you (e.g. King Saul)
- b) Gina and I keep this in our mind when we are praying b/c we think we want something
- c) We ask God not to give it to us if it's a King Saul
- d) If God is your primary desire, and his kingdom, then you are okay living life with open hands and letting the other stuff go
- e) "Send me where I will bring you the most glory..."

3. Remember God's faithfulness

- a) God knew Adam and Eve would sin... (Lamb who was slain before the foundation of the world)
 - b) God knew they would demand a king... (Judah's prophecy)
 - c) God knew they would abandon him... (Deuteronomy warnings)
 - d) God knows what's in a man's heart, "Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people..." (Jn 2:24)
 - e) Despite all of our unfaithfulness from Adam to this present day, God is faithful. It's who he is - he cannot change that reality
 - f) Despite the abandonment, the rebellion, the rage, and the hatred towards the Creator, God continues to pursue, to woo, to chase, to love, to be kind, to show grace and mercy → it's who he is
 - g) *[Even when] we are unfaithful, he remains faithful, for he cannot deny who he is. (2 Timothy 2:13 NLT)*
- E. We do not deserve the love of God. We run from God. We keep rebelling against God.
 - F. But through that all, God is still faithful to faithless people - he's following through on his covenants
 - G. And that's what sustains his relationship with us → his covenant faithfulness
 - H. It's a strange comfort b/c we might feel like, "There's no way he will forgive this one..." But 1 John 1:9...
 - I. As you walk through life (your struggles, others), remember to stop and praise God for his faithfulness towards us! Through the dark valleys and struggles
 - J. Cling to the promises b/c even with all the rebellion he remains faithful
 - K. This restorative faithfulness that he shows is what sustains broken sinners through the trials of life!