

9. Who is in charge?

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One of the favorite sayings by one of our daughters, when she was a teenager, was, "Don't tell me what to do." Now she is a mother of three precious children, she has a five years old daughter who tells her the exactly same thing to her face.

We are not creatures which want to be ruled by anyone but ourselves. The last thing we have in mind is that we bow down to someone other than ourselves and be ruled by that person. Because we are egoistic and self-centered.

However, we as born-again Christians must be submissive to our God completely. Because Jesus bought us with His atoning sacrifice for our sins. In other words, He paid our ransom with His own life and He owns us now. And He is our Ruler throughout eternity whether we admit the fact or not.

Again, we find the Israelites forgot that who their ruler is. They wanted to have a king just like their neighbor kingdoms.

A. SAMUEL'S SONS

1 Sam 8:1 Now it came to pass when Samuel was old that he made his sons judges over Israel.

Samuel was one of the most godly men in the entire Bible. He is never specifically said to sin. Yet, I believe that this may be a sin on his part. We never have the pattern of judges being appointed by men, or of the office of judge being passed from father to son. Samuel was not right in appointing his sons judges over Israel.

1 Sam 8:2-3 The name of his firstborn was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; they were judges in Beersheba. But his sons did not walk in his ways; they turned aside after dishonest gain, took bribes, and perverted justice.

This is why Samuel was wrong to appoint his sons as judges over Israel. This kind of nepotism (favoritism shown to members of one's family) is a common, but harmful mistake many leaders in ministry make, especially as they grow older. Sometimes, I see this kind of things happening in Calvary Chapels. I am not against a son who is capable to teach the Word of God works in the father's church. But if the son is not qualified to be the senior pastor as the father retires, he should not be in that position. Because the church is not any individual's kingdom, but God's.

B. WE WANT TO BE LIKE THE JONES

1 Sam 8:4-5 Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah, and said to him, "Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations."

This was wise for the elders of Israel to do this. They did not have to accept leaders who were obviously ungodly and unfit to lead.

While it is was wise for the elders of Israel to reject Samuel's sons as leaders, it was wrong for them to say, "Now make for us a king to judge us like all the nations."

In and of itself, the desire to have a king was not bad. God knew that one day Israel would have a king. Four hundred years before this, God gave instructions to Israel about their future king (Deuteronomy 17:14-20). A king was in God's plan for Israel.

Yet, the reason Israel wanted a king was wrong. Being like all the nations is no reason at all. We often get into trouble by wanting to be like the world, when we should instead be transformed into the image of Jesus Christ (Romans 12:1-2).

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

The church struggles with the same issue today, too often wanting to be like the world. Many of evangelical churches embrace the concept of fun and seeker sensitive churches. I am not saying that God's church should be boring and rigid. But I am saying is that the church of God should not be turn into social gatherings or feeling good places. These seeker sensitive churches want to bring non-church people to churches. I don't have a problem with that. But when people come in, they don't want to offend them by calling sin 'sin.' They might call sin as mistake. So they make non-church goers to feel good in coming to church by tickling their religious tummy. Instead of telling them that they need to repent from their wrong doings and sins and turn to Jesus, they tell to be nice to one another. That is a heresy. I will make this very, very clear to you. All humans are sinners and need Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior and no one can go to heaven but through Him. If they don't receive Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, their sins will condemn them to hell that is eternal death.

'Like all nations' they said. They wanted to be like other nations with frail human kings who often became dictators. They wanted to like Jones. They said, "The other side of grass is greener." Oh yeah, the grass is greener especially around the septic tank.

The styles of government can be divided in five different ways:

1) Social government - Known as a communist government. Under the concept of sharing everything equally, nobody gets anything. The result of this communist government is rather clear in Russia.

2) Monarchy - A system of government in which the chief ruler is a monarch

3) Democracy - Government by the people, exercised either directly or through elected representatives. It runs by the majority vote.

4) Utopia - An ideally perfect place, especially in its social, political, and moral aspects.

If it is run by humans, there is no such a place is "Utopia." It only exists in lala land people's dreamy concept.

5) Theocracy - A government ruled by or subject to God Himself

C. KING VS. JUDGE

What was the difference between a king and a judge? This judge was not the same kind of judicial judge like now, but it was a leader raised up by God, usually to meet a specific need in a time of crisis. When the crisis was over, usually the judge just went back to doing what he was doing before. A king not only held his office as king as long as he lived, he also passed his throne down to his descendants.

In Judges 8, Gideon was offered the throne over Israel. He refused it, and saying, *"I will not rule over you, nor shall my son rule over you; the Lord shall rule over you."* (Judges 8:23) This was the heart of all the judges, and why Israel went on some 400 years in the Promised Land without a king.

D. UNGODLY DEMAND & GOD'S ANSWER

1 Sam 8:6 But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." So Samuel prayed to the Lord.

No doubt, Samuel was stung by the rejection of his sons. But even more than that, Samuel saw the ungodly motive behind the elders' request for a king. The Israelites decided that they were going to fire God as their leader and wanted to hire a man as their new leader.

With hurt and disappointment, Samuel went to the Lord. This is the right thing to do whenever we are displeased. Surely it is the mistake of our life, that we carry our burdens instead of handing them over to our God. However, we'd rather worry instead of trusting our God and we pray so little.

1 Sam 8:7 And the Lord said to Samuel, "Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them.

God was not surprised. God told Samuel to fulfill the people's request. This was not because their request was good or right, but because God was going to teach Israel through this. Sometimes, when we insist of having something bad, God will allow us to have it, and then learn the consequences.

It is easy for God's servants to take such rejection personally when they should not. Jesus warned His disciples, *"he who rejects you rejects Me."* (Luke 10:16) As long as we are not being personally offensive or obnoxious, we shouldn't take such rejection personally.

1 Sam 8:8 According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt, even to this day--with which they have forsaken Me and served other gods--so they are doing to you also.

There is a sense in which their rejection of God as their king is prophetic. When Jesus stood before Pilate, the assembled Jewish mob declared, *"We have no king but Caesar."* (John 19:15) Jesus was a rejected King also.

1 Sam 8:9 Now therefore, heed their voice. However, you shall solemnly forewarn them, and show them the behavior of the king who will reign over them."

Information creates responsibility. In telling Israel this, Samuel was not only helping them to make an informed choice, but also he was increasing their accountability for making the right choice. Later They couldn't say, *"We didn't know, because you didn't tell us this before."*

E. YOU'VE BEEN WARNED

*1 Sam 8:10-18 So Samuel told all the words of the Lord to the people who asked him for a king. And he said, "This will be the behavior of the king who will reign over you: He will **TAKE** your sons and appoint them for his own chariots and to be his horsemen, and some will run before his chariots. He will appoint captains over his thousands and captains over his fifties, will set*

some to plow his ground and reap his harvest, and some to make his weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. He will **TAKE** your daughters to be perfumers, cooks, and bakers. And he will **TAKE** the best of your fields, your vineyards, and your olive groves, and give them to his servants. He will **TAKE** a tenth of your grain and your vintage, and give it to his officers and servants. And he will **TAKE** your male servants, your female servants, your finest young men, and your donkeys, and put them to his work. He will **TAKE** a tenth of your sheep. And **YOU WILL BE HIS SERVANTS**. And you will cry out in that day because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, and the Lord will not hear you in that day."

In Israel's view, they had problems that would be solved by having a human king. But God wanted Israel to know there would be problems connected with having a king.

Many people fail to do this properly today. When a problem come up, they think up an answer that brings worse problems with it. But they don't maturely look at the situation and anticipate the problems the solution will bring. Others will never do anything unless they can come up with a "perfect" solution - one that has no problems. There rarely is a perfect solution, but that doesn't mean we should do nothing. It means we should maturely look at, and measure the good and the bad, pray for guidance, wait on the Lord, and step out in faith.

If you've noticed, there are a lot of "TAKE" from people to this human ruler. Most kings are takers, not givers, and they come to be served, not to serve. If Israel wants a king, they must realize he will be a taker, not a giver, and they will be his servants.

Not every king is a "taking" king. The King of Kings is a giving King. Jesus said of Himself, "the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve." (Matthew 20:28) Paul carried the same thought in Philippians 2:5-8.

Philippians 2:5-8 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

F. THEY JUST DON'T GET IT

1 Sam 8:19-20 Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, "No, but we will have a king over us, 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."

Some people are so stubborn in their ways, they could care less what is right or wrong. They are willing to risk everything for the sake of their own ways. We all have been in there. This is the case in point.

God gives Israel "their" king: Saul. Later, after "their" king fails, God will give Israel "His" king: David.

God never insists His ways over ours. If we demand our ways, He allows us to have our ways. As an idiot who have insisted my own ways over God's a long time ago. I miserably failed and ended up with \$10,000 debt. I highly recommend you to listen to God's advices. Because He will not give us any wrong advise.

1 Sam 8:21-22 And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he repeated them in the hearing of the Lord. So the Lord said to Samuel, "Heed their voice, and make them a king." And Samuel said to the men of Israel, "Every man go to his city."

Israel had the Lord God as their king. But they wanted a human. What the Israelites wanted was the image of a king. Their desire for a king was really the desire for someone to look at with their own eyes that looked like what they thought a king should look like.

G. APPLICATIONS

1) Let's not try to be like the people who don't have Jesus in their hearts.

Remember, once we were like that. We were miserable, then why do we want to go back to that cesspool? We say, "We want to be cool like the rest of the people in the world. Having fun instead of following what it says in the Bible. We are tired of the God stuff." So, we call it fun. Is it really fun? Puking our guts out in the morning and having a major hangover from drinking too much the night before; sleeping with somebody and hoping that we don't get sexually transmitted diseases; under the name of relaxing, we get into gambling after gambling until the entire paychecks are gone. The list can go on. I don't call that fun. It is self-destruction. What is the benefit? If you think that the world can offer more and better than our God, I say, "Go for it. But you can count on this: The world will disappoint you, but God won't." We can find true joy and peace in Him.

2) We should submit God's ruling in our lives

If we decide to do the things against the Word of God even though we know what we are supposed to do, we are doing the exactly same thing like the Israelites.

3) If we put a human as our ruler of our hearts, it is the same as we put satan in that position.

Because no one can replace our God. But if we insist to have a human ruler in our hearts, that is nothing more than an idol and we will be controlled by satan.

4) If we insist our way, God will allow us our ways over His in our lives.

But we should expect the miserable consequences to follow.

5) But if we keep Jesus in our hearts and continuously obey Him, God will protect us and guide us.

Even though we may make wrong choices, we can still run to Him to receive His forgiveness. Because He is our loving Father and wonderful God.