

1 Samuel 8
Israel Demands a King

Review:

1 Samuel 8:1-22 [8:1] 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.**" [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."

[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.**"

[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."

More sin. There will always be more sin.

Samuel's sons are corrupt just like Eli's sons.

The elders call for a king.

The elders are seeing their future with these corrupt judges and want to change their impending future by calling for a king.

They use the excuse: To be like other nations.

But Israel is NOT like other nations. They are God's people.

We are different as well. We serve God. We are a peculiar people. Set apart with a special purpose. Just like Israel.

God tells Samuel to warn them.

He tells them what life will be like under a king.

Sons, Daughters, livestock, land, crops, taxes, war, cronyism, nepotism, corruption.

You will call upon God to deliver you because of your king... and He will not hear you.

Refined Depravity

We have a desire for good things don't we. But even good things can be rebellion against God.

Israel's desire for a king is not necessarily wrong. Deuteronomy, Moses provides a process for a king. But Israel doesn't want a king for the right reasons. They want a king for all the personal benefits, not because God wants it.

When you vote in an election, do you vote for yourself, or do your vote for God? Do you vote for your benefit or do you vote for God's statutes, his glory, his namesake? Do you vote for what you **think is right** or what **God says is right**?

Psalm 118:8-9

It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man. It is better to take refuge in the Lord **than to trust in princes.**

Israel wants a substitute for God. They are doing what many of us do. Some of us live this way, some of us just dabble in it, but the truth is **We ALL Love Substitutes!**

The real thing is scary. It's unknown. It's difficult. It's hard.

A real relationship with a real God is foreign to us. And it can be hard to understand.

We like to think that we can figure God out.... Don't we. We kind of get settled in our routines of life, our beliefs and we get comfortable, or at least we try to. We shore up our "God relationship deficiencies" with human and earthly substitutes.

We compartmentalize our relationship with God just like we think of our individual sins. We rate ourselves and feel good about our "God" relationship based on that rating.

Just about anything can be a substitute for God. Another term for a substitute in this sense is what we call an "idol".
Common Substitutes:

Money, comfort, power, ease, safety, drugs, alcohol, sex, pornography, food

But what about the "good" substitutes: Even on the walls of the school where we meet. "My Natural High is..."

We compartmentalize our substitutes don't we. Some are "good" substitutes and some are "bad" substitutes.

We've listed some "bad" substitutes, here are some of the so called "good" substitutes...

Sports, Music, Education, Love, Friendship, Romance, Fun, Laughter, Excitement, Reading, Imagination, Artistry, Creativity, Happiness, Hobbies, Government, PMA, Oprah, 12 steps, Dave Ramsey

And how about some of the Christian world's favorites:

Family, Children, Good Parenting, Church, Bible Study, Men's Ministry, Women's Ministry, Christian Education, Preaching the Word of God, doctrinal purity, theological unity.

And what about Good Causes: Feeding the hungry, helping the poor, the down trodden, Clean water projects, Social justice, Unity, racism, equality, even pro life agendas and adoption can be substitutes.

Now maybe you're surprised and even a bit upset with me right now. You might be thinking, "these are all good things Chuck. Aren't we supposed to do good works? They will know we are Christians by our love? You know, preach the gospel and if necessary... use words?"

I'm not trying to denigrate good works. These are all good things to do. But they are just that, things to do. When we put the emphasis on the thing we are doing instead of the God we are serving, we have just created an idol.

The Israelites are not wrong to want a King. Moses in Deuteronomy even makes a provision for Israel to choose a king. **It is their motivation.** And that's what I'm talking about.

What is your motivation? Why are you doing what you are doing? Are you creating a substitute for God? For His leadership? For His kingship? For His relationship with you?

Israel is looking for a mechanical provision for her security. In the last chapter we saw Israel turning to God through repentance and prayer. God expressed His pleasure with this and blessed them with abundance and peace. But the people see corruption on the horizon and fear they will have trouble again. They **don't trust** that God will take care of them. They think that now that they have "learned" what to avoid, they will avoid it. But they do not do so through seeking after God and submitting to His leading, they are taking things into their own hands. They are going to make sure they don't need to be "saved" by God again.

Israel's situation has some great instruction for us: Here are four things we can learn

1. We assess our problems mechanically instead of spiritually. Our first impulse is to assume there is something wrong in **our techniques**. There is a **need for adjustment**, not repentance. How many churches look for a new gimmick or marketing strategy, **rather than cry out to God**.

2. Instead of looking to God for help we are more interested in prescribing what form God's help must take. Our attention is not on God's deliverance in our troubles but on specifying the method by which he must bring that deliverance (**therefore we trust the method**). We are not content with seeking a saving God but desire **to direct how and when he will save**.

3. God will sometimes give us our request to our own peril. God's granting our request may not be a sign of his favor but of **our obstinacy**. Sometimes God's greatest kindness is in **not** answering our prayers exactly as we desire.

4. In light of the current situation and danger, Israel's request for a king was perfectly rational, yet God viewed it as rejecting his kingship. Our proposals and solutions **can be completely reasonable**, clearly logical, obviously plausible- **and utterly godless**.

Much of our idolatry is so sophisticated and appears so reasonable, it can be extremely difficult to detect. Pause.

Why do we look for substitutes?

We have an aversion to Holiness. We want to be loved by the world.

Israel wants to be like the rest of the world. Be respected and have a "place" with the rest of the nations.

We don't want to be distinct do we? We want to blend in.

Even after Samuel told Israel what life would be like with a king, Israel refused to budge.

We will fit. We will belong. We will be respected.

But Israel is unique. Israel is different. Israel could not escape being different. But they could try.

We can try too can't we. Try to fit in. Try to agree politically or culturally. Take the popular position. But in the end we must make a choice. Do we serve God or the world.

Have you noticed how the church seems to look more and more like the world?

Churches look more like malls and theme parks than a church. They design themselves to provide a vast array of goods and services so that all your earthly and social needs can be met by one group of buildings, one assortment of programs and ministries.

Got a hobby? There's a ministry for that. Got a child? There's a ministry for that. Single, married, old, young, kids, no kids? There's a ministry for that. Addiction, overweight, financially struggling? Ministry for that. We turn our churches into one stop shops so that for whatever you need, you can come to the church campus... we will provide it for you.

Bible classes, women's ministry, youth, seniors... you name it, we can compartmentalize your needs and meet them accordingly.

Now where are we? We're back to making substitutes for Jesus. Substitutes for His will and desire for our lives.

And we tell ourselves that we're being smart marketers using a sharp business model. We hire executive Pastors who don't necessarily pastor people... many of them are pastoring buildings, facilities and the all important dollar. Is that what a pastor does?

More and more the church looks like a business. And the worst part is that we start to define the church's success like the success of a business. It's about growth, money, possessions and the bottom line.

Oh sure we add in conversions and baptisms to make it seem more spiritual. We count everything. Nickels and noses.

**But you know what God says to His people in Leviticus 19:2?
You shall be different, because I, your God, am different.**

Why should Israel be different? Why should we be different?

Why purity in our conversations? Why faithfulness in marriage, or chastity before it? Why seek for justice for the helpless or compassion to the neglected? Why worship over entertainment?

Because God is different. And because our God is different, we must be different.

What kind of a God would He be if He just went along with the garbage of this world? If He blended in? Why would anyone need a God to just confirm the status quo of our sin and depravity? There is no salvation in just going along.

"It is a very ill omen to hear a wicked world clap its hands and shout "Well done" to a Christian man." Charles Spurgeon
Pause

Substitution is going to happen: We will substitute a false god for the real thing. It's going to happen. The question is, are we going to recover? Are we going to repent, be reconciled and restored?

This is the stuff, the meat of the Christian life. You're never going to have it all together. We're always going to be rebelling, repenting and being reconciled and restored. And it's all because of the great substitution that God has already made on our behalf.

God's Glorious Substitution:

"I have always considered that the sum and substance of the gospel lies in that word Substitution,—Christ standing in the stead of man. If I understand the gospel, it is this: I deserve to be lost forever; the only reason why I should not be damned is, that Christ was punished in my stead, and there is no need to execute a sentence twice for sin. On the other hand, I know I cannot enter Heaven unless I have a perfect righteousness; I am absolutely certain I shall never have one of my own, for I find I sin every day; but then Christ had a perfect righteousness, and He said, "There, poor sinner, take My garment, and put it on; you shall stand before God as if you were Christ, and I will stand before God as if I had been the sinner; I will suffer in the sinner's stead, and you shall be rewarded for works which you did not do, but which I did for you." I find it very convenient every day to come to Christ as a sinner, as I came at the first. "You are no saint," says the devil. Well, if I am not, I am a sinner, and Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. Sink or swim, I go to Him; other hope I have none. By looking to Him, I received all the faith which inspired me with confidence in His grace; and the word that first drew my soul—"Look unto Me,"—still rings its clarion note in my ears. There I once found conversion, and there I shall ever find refreshing and renewal." Charles Spurgeon

Closing:

Christ will do everything for you or nothing. He's either all of your righteousness or none. Tim Keller
Let's, once again, repent and turn back to Christ. After all... didn't Christ come to save sinners?