

## **1 Sam 8:1-22 [12]-WE WANT a KING at ALL COSTS**

PRELIMS. Israel having sinned against the Lord so much, have now turned to the Lord, and Samuel has been touring around **ministering systematically** in Bethel, Gilgal, Mizpah, Ramah!

Unfortunately, good men get **old!** No one lives forever. In the church as well as the State, heroes get frail and grow beyond their ‘sell-by’ date! So it was here. The great Samuel grew old.

Although Samuel served in the Temple, he was **not a priest**. He was considered the last judge, and the first prophet, although not ‘officially’ appointed by God as such. Remember his mother made a vow and brought him to the Temple.

Sam is seen as a ‘prophet’, but there was **no prophetic office!** The prophet was someone God raised up and put His words into the prophet’s mouth. The prophet could be a priest, as Ezekiel. The prophet could be a king, as David. But there was **no distinct office** for the prophet. They had schools which they set up themselves for teaching. The ‘prophet’ was **not** like the priesthood which God had instituted and ‘called’ men (sons of Aaron) to the particular work of administering the holy and sacred sacrifices! The prophet could be almost anybody whom God chose to give His Word for announcing to the people.

The prophet was like the **judge** whom God raised up for a **special** work at a special **time!** Judges were **leaders** whom God raised up, now and again to save Israel from a particular situation. But they had no office in the Church of God.

Now Sam was old, and he **appointed** his own sons as **judges!** “he **made** his own sons **judges** over Israel”[1]. Samuel did not necessarily sin by appointing his sons as ‘judges’ because there was **no clear mandate** from God about successors. Sam saw a **need**, and was deeply **concerned** about the **future** – there was no obvious ‘raising star’ so he did what he **thought** was best, no doubt with much prayer. God was **silent** re the way ahead!

Here is **development** and **progress** for God's covenant people! As in bringing up children, early on, children live by **law!** 'Don't do this, don't do that. You **must** do this...' Children were **not** to **think** for themselves. They were too young, too ignorant, too inexperienced! They were **told everything** and all they had to do was **just obey**. Do what you are told.

But Israel were getting a bit older now, and just as children who get older, and are taught to **think** for **themselves** and given some **responsibility**, so Israel were. God was bringing on and **developing** His covenant children. There were no '**laws**' regarding the **new situations** Israel found themselves in. So they **had** to learn to use their own judgment and to **trust** God!!

Israel were once again in a **bad spiritual** state and needed good leadership. Their situation demanded **strong leadership**. Every age and generation needs leaders. But Sam's decision to appoint his sons, went **badly wrong**. No one is perfect. The best do make mistakes! Perhaps he thought God's plan was for **hereditary rule!** But sadly, his sons were not like himself. They were **not godly**. They did "*not walk*" in God's way "*but turned aside after gain. They took bribes and perverted justice*"

**APP** Nothing new – just like our Westminster Parliament, the policy makers are in it for the **money and perks!** \*Also learn people **do need** leadership of one kind or another! **Muggeridge** said 'People would rather **tyranny** than **anarchy**. Either Left or Right, but leadership of some kind!' Israel after leaving Egypt wanted back! Why? Because, although it was slavery, they knew where they were and who was boss and some concept of the future. 'the devil you know...!' The **unfamiliar** is a threat! Having to make decisions and be **responsible** for them was too much of a burden! There is a **security** in having an **authority** over us. Society **needs leadership** – someone to **blame?!**

Israel showed **respect** to Sam. They **asked** him to appoint a king to rule them. They did **not** try to **bow him over** as some

politicians do now!! **No coup** or seizing of power or anarchy, or revolution! But they most definitely wanted a **king**! They said “*your sons do not walk in your ways*”[5] Perhaps they **patronised** him, professing a **spiritual concern**! Anyway, that was the **reason** they **gave** - but it was not the **real** reason! Just like our own MPs in Westminster who resigned last week, the reasons they gave were not the real reasons! Their real reason was to bring Gordon Brown down. The real reason Israel wanted a king was not to bring Sam down, but to **be like the rest of the nations around** them “*like all the nations*”[5c]! They had a problem with being **different**! What an **impact** the **community/culture** makes! Many Xns today, I am sorry to say, do not like being different from the world!

You see, **God** was their **king**! When Judge Gideon destroyed the Midianites, Israel asked him to ‘Rule over us’, but he replied “*I will not rule over you, and my son will not rule over you; the LORD will rule over you*”[Jud 8:23] Later on, Sam **rebuked** Israel for **wanting** a king saying “*the LORD your God was your king*” [12:12] **APP** You see, it was not really a **replacement** for Sam they wanted, they wanted a replacement for **God**! They wanted to **change** their God! Israel already had a King, the King of kings, but He was **invisible**! There was no **open show**! Like our own culture, they wanted **glamour** and spectacle/pageantry/pomp/ceremony – something to **show-off**!

Israel were ruled, **not** by a **democracy** (rule by the 51% of the people), but by a **theocracy** (rule by God)! In Israel, **both** Church and State were **subject** to God’s Law! That is the way it is meant to be still! Ministers in the **civil** realm as well as in the ecclesiastical realm are ministers of God. See [Rom 13]! **Both** Church and State are to take their ‘rules’ from God’s Word! Shaeffer said ‘democracy can degenerate to **tyranny** by the 51%’! Remember **Hitler** was elected to public Office! Governments **can** oppress the **minority** groups by enacting ‘appropriate’ laws – as indeed we **have now** in the UK! What

an **account** both our UK Church **and** State have to give to God!

Sam **prays** and God replies “*Obey the voice of the people...they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being King over them*”[7]! \*But Sam is instructed to **solemnly warn** them “*obey their voice, only solemnly warn them and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them*”[9] **APP** Note the solemn **doctrine** involved. God can give us what we pray for, but it is **not** a sign of His **favour** but of **judgment**!

Israel were to be warned the type of king they would get if they were determined to choose one now! **Self-centred**! Consider his own wishes, not the people’s! **Greedy**! Taking more and more from the people, “*the best of your fields...vineyards*”[14] **Oppressive**! “*take the best of your young men and put them to his work*”[16] **Thieving**! He will take from **your** resources “*implements of war...equipment...you shall be his slaves*”[12]

Sam was to **warn** them that they “*will cry out because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves*”[18b] But, despite the clear warning “*the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel. And they said ‘No! But there shall be a king over us, that we may be like all the nations...’*”[20]! As is still the case, **we** in our rebellious state want **our** way - at all costs!

And God gives it to us! We ‘make our own bed’ so we have to lie on it! **APP** How often have **you/I** gone ahead with what was not God’s will! The young girl going ahead with **that** marriage because he is a ‘good catch’! Buying that article which is ‘beyond’ your means because of your ‘hunger and thirst’ for materialism. Turning away from Christ in the gospel when you know it is the best thing you can do?

**Thankfully** God does **not always allow** us to have our own way! Thankfully “*God...being rich in mercy...when we were dead...made us alive*” in Christ. He “*saved us*” from ourselves, by the “*immeasurable greatness of His power*”![Eph 1:19]