

## Message #18

## I Samuel 8:6-9

In many churches today there has been a change promoted by leaders to be more contemporary and more relevant to culture. This change has been promoted and supported by leaders of a church and frankly, it is evil. No longer are people carefully and systematically taught God's word.

No longer in many churches is there a reverence for God and His word. Some of the leaders of these churches see other churches putting bands on stages and they want to be like them. They are no different than the leaders of Israel in Samuel's day and their evil one day will be fully exposed.

When you are a true leader for God, trying to lead according to the word of God, there will be times when people will disappoint you. In fact, there will be times when some may rise up in defiance of you and your leadership. People will do and say things and promote things you know are wrong. When this kind of thing happens, it will break your heart. You will feel like a loser and you will feel as if everything you worked for means nothing. **In those moments leaders need to remember God is still sovereign.**

This kind of thing happened to the Apostle Paul with the Galatian churches. This kind of thing happened to Martin Luther with the religious world. This kind of thing happened to Jesus Christ Himself with almost everyone. This kind of thing happened to Samuel.

Samuel had been a great man of God and a great leader. He brought Israel back to a right focus and right relationship with God. He had walked with God for years, ever since he was a little boy. But he was aging and the majority of the people wanted something else and wanted someone different. This deeply hurt Samuel.

The nation Israel did not want to be led by a man of God who knew the word of God anymore. They wanted a king so they could be like all the other nations. What is so tragic is that it was the Elders of Israel who promoted this idea.

But we do learn an important lesson:

**WHEN ONE WHO HAS FAITHFULLY SERVED GOD FINDS HIMSELF FACED WITH GREAT OPPOSITION, HE NEEDS TO REMEMBER GOD IS STILL SOVEREIGN.**

**Please understand this; Samuel is not the one who is wrong here. The leaders of Israel are wrong. The congregation of people is wrong** and God will let Samuel know God is on Samuel's side. There are times when the majority is wrong. There are times when following the majority is wrong. This was one of those times. Samuel was not the problem, the people were the problem. God will clearly reveal that to Samuel.

The United States was founded as a nation by an original group of people who loved God and the word of God. The original intent of the pilgrims around 1620 was to govern self by the word of God. That all changed in 1776, when 13 colonies decided they needed a ruling body and a President.

What has happened to this country since then is evil. God has been taken out of most schools. False religions are now promoted more than Biblical Christianity. Sin is flaunted, lawlessness is escalating and we have totally lost our way.

That decision to move away from the word of God and have a government apart from God has made a mess of things in our country just like it did for Israel in Samuel's day. But even with this, God was still sovereign. Now the context is that the people wanted Samuel to appoint a king over them. Samuel was aging and his sons were not godly like Samuel so they wanted a king, like the other nations.

The Elders went to Samuel and informed him they wanted a king. Now this is not just a request for a new leader; this is a request for a major change of government structure.

These leaders are moving away from God. They did not want Samuel consulting God on this. They did not want him to ask God what His will was on this. They just wanted a government leader like the other nations.

In this text both Samuel and God respond to this request.

There are two responses:

**RESPONSE #1** – The response of Samuel to the people's request. **8:6**

In **verse 6**, there are two ways Samuel responded to the people's request:

**Way #1** - Samuel was displeased with the people's request. **8:6a**

Samuel was not happy about this request; in fact, it "displeased" and hurt him deeply. That Hebrew word means that Samuel was very grieved, pained and afflicted (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 646).

Samuel understood the weight of this. To this point, in Israel's history, God had raised up a man to lead and judge. God would raise up a man, who revered Him and His word, and that man would lead the nation right back into God's blessings.

This request was a big threat to that. It did not sit right with Samuel. This was a major change. These Elders thought they were being innovative and appealing, but Samuel sensed this is wrong.

Samuel had been a very faithful leader for years and even though he could not keep up the pace he did as a young man, he was still a very faithful man and he was very hurt by this request. It is as if the people were saying to Samuel, we don't want you or your system of leadership any more.

It is true that Samuel had appointed his sons to take some of the pressure off of himself (8:1) and his boys had let him down and God down (8:3) and he certainly felt bad about that. But Samuel had been a tremendous man of God and this group wanted him to appoint a king so he could retire.

When the Elders of the people proposed this, they are basically saying we do not want some older spiritual man of God's choosing leading us and judging us; we want a king. We don't want a man leading us who just prays and teaches us the word of God, we want some political leader who is sophisticated and educated and is like a CEO. We need a king who is an organizer and a promoter and an ambassador. That is what we want.

**Way #2** - Samuel prayed about the people's request. **8:6b**

**Samuel did what none of these people did; he prayed.** Even though he was emotional and hurt, he prayed to God. He did not let his own personal feelings govern the situation; he wanted to know God's word and will and he prayed.

We are not told what he prayed. But we may be certain that he expressed his deep concerns.

This is exactly what we should do when we find ourselves under attack. We need to pray.

**RESPONSE #2** – The response of God to Samuel's prayer. **8:7-9**

Before we analyze this, I want to point out that God spoke to Samuel, and not the Elders. These Elders were totally out of touch with God. Samuel was the only person who really prayed. The Elders who appeared to be so concerned had not prayed about anything. They had not sought God's word or will. They are not spiritual (8:5, 19-20). They wanted to become a nation that was like all the other nations.

Samuel prayed and God spoke with Samuel. God gave Samuel direct revelatory response to this.

God does not directly reveal things to us when we pray like He does here to Samuel. However, when we find ourselves in difficulties, we certainly have the Word of God and we have the Holy Spirit that is able to convict us and help us. God is certainly able to lead us to understand that the reason for the difficulty is because we have done something wrong or not because we have done anything wrong. We are able to analyze ourselves and say like Paul, "my conscience knows nothing against itself." If we find ourselves surrounded by hostile forces and we analyze ourselves and come to the conclusion we did not do something to bring this on, then we aren't the problem. We need to pray and ask God to lead us according to His word and will.

Now Samuel prayed and God gave him four revelatory messages:

**Message #1** - Listen to the voice of the people and do what they say. **8:7a**

Now quite honestly, this is a shocking answer that you don't expect. Samuel saw this as evil and God saw this as evil and yet God says, "go ahead and listen to them."

God sovereignly knew where all of this was headed. This nation could have experienced all of the blessings of God had they listened to the word of God and obeyed it. That wasn't good enough for them so God said fine, I'll give you what you want. God says I will sovereignly permit the will of the majority to succeed even though it is not My perfect will.

Now here is where this gets amazing. It was God's will for her to have a king. Prophecies dating back to the days of Moses clearly indicate this—Gen. 49:10; Num. 24:17; Deut. 17:14-20. But the prediction of God raising up a king was to be in His time and His way. God's king would come from the tribe of Judah, not Benjamin. It was not God's perfect will at this time. What Israel is doing is wrong. But even though she was doing wrong, it was still under the sovereignty of God.

**This teaches us a tremendous lesson: God may permit someone to appear to succeed when they are doing wrong, but eventually there will be payback remuneration.**

By the way, look at Israel right now. Have any of her political leaders ever been able to produce a lasting peace and given Israel the Promised Land? Obviously the direction Israel has gone is not working and cannot be the will of God.

**Message #2** - The people have not rejected you Samuel, they have rejected Me. **8:7b**

Do you see this? These people had rejected God from being king over them. Ever since the nation began, the emphasis has been on the fact that we need to be right with God so He will bless us. Abraham's call was a call to blessing. Now this entire nation is rejecting God and wants to be like the other nations.

Proverbs 24:21 says, "My son, fear the LORD and the king; do not associate with those who are given to change; for their calamity will rise suddenly, and who knows the ruin that comes from both of them" (LORD and king).

Samuel was God's man and they had rejected Samuel and God, and their calamity would come.

This verse has been a comfort to many a minister and many a God-honoring political leader. When people rise up and rebel against God-ordained and God-appointed leadership, there will be serious, devastating consequences for those involved in the rebellion.

God's people need to realize that there is culpability and accountability to leadership that God has appointed.

**Message #3** - The reason why the people are doing this is because they are rejecting you just like they have always rejected Me. **8:8**

This is a repeated pattern. Israel has had a habit of rejecting the men of God and the word of God.

This is a very serious verse. God viewed what these people were doing—rejecting Samuel and his leadership—as serving another God. Keep in mind it was the Elders of Israel who promoted this idea. They became convinced they were right and they led others to think they were right.

They were wrong and they will suffer the consequences for it.

**Message #4** - Listen to the people but solemnly warn the people. **8:9**

Samuel had a responsibility to warn the people that they would suffer serious consequences for their actions. This was not just some difference of opinion about having a king or not having a king; this was blatant rebellion against God and against Samuel and they were warned they would pay a high price.

So the fact that God told Samuel to listen to these people was, in fact, a judgment against them.

God can actually allow His people to make wrong decisions and the result of those decisions becomes their own judgment.