

THE BACKGROUND OF ISRAEL'S DESIRE FOR A KING

Introduction:

1. The 7th chapter of this book brings Samuel back to the foreground of study.
2. We begin to see him as the deliverer of the nation – the last judge, victorious with spiritual strength.
3. Then, in chapter 8, we learn of the nation's demand for a king to rule over them.
4. Before we study these two chapters, some background information is necessary.
5. Let us consider Samuel as a man who led during a time of transition.

I. From Judges to Kings

- A. The story of the Bible is that God is ruler of the universe.
 1. Genesis 1 – 2 – *God is Creator*
 2. Genesis 3 – *Sin begins, God's plan of redemption begins*
 3. Genesis 4 – 11 – *Consequences of sin*
 4. Genesis 12 – 38 – *God's plan through Abraham, Isaac & Jacob*
 5. Genesis 39 – 50 – *Joseph in Egypt: a transition*
 6. Exodus – *God rules through Moses*
 7. Leviticus – *God rules through Law*
 8. Numbers – *Israel's failure, yet God still rules*
 9. Deuteronomy – *God rules a new generation*
 10. Joshua – *God rules through Joshua and the priests*
 11. Judges – *God is the rejected King*
 12. Ruth – *A faithful few who serve God as King*
- B. The first 7 chapters of First Samuel take place during the time of the Judges.
- C. Samuel was the last of the Judges and oversaw the transition to the time of the Kings.
 1. In the book of Judges, those who delivered Israel were men of physical strength but often spiritual weakness (cf. Samson).
 2. Samuel is a man of great spiritual strength – what truly was needed to lead the nation.
 3. Compare Saul (man's king) with David (God's king)
- D. Chapter 8 records the beginning of the Kingdom of Israel.
 1. 1 Samuel 8 – 1 Kings 11 – *The United Kingdom*
 2. 1 Kings 12 – 2 Kings 18:12 – *The Divided Kingdom*
 3. 2 Kings 18:13 – 25:21 – *The Kingdom of Judah*
- E. The nation of Israel needed Judges because they rejected God as their King.
- F. The nation desired a human king because they rejected God as their King.

II. From Tribes to Kingdom

- A. The earliest references to kings in the Bible are all associated with the nations of the world.
- B. It is not until Genesis 36:31 that they are associated with the descendants of Abraham.
 1. Esau was a worldly man (Hebrews 12:16-17).
 2. His descendants followed man's wisdom, not God's wisdom.
- C. Yet, the nation of Israel was to be different from the nations of the world (Exodus 33:16; Leviticus 20:26; Numbers 23:9; Deuteronomy 7:6).
 1. God was to rule over them as King (Exodus 19:5-6).
 2. His presence would be with them at the Tabernacle.

1 Samuel 8:4-5

3. He would give them His Law to govern them.
 4. They were to be a kingdom of priests – who would instruct the people in the Law of the Lord.
 5. The priests were to dwell among the people in every tribe that they might teach them (Joshua 21:1-8).
- D. However, Israel failed in every regard.
1. They rejected God as their King and worshipped idols.
 2. They corrupted the Tabernacle and its services.
 3. They disobeyed the Law of God.
 4. The priests became more and more corrupt and did not teach or practice God's Word.
- E. So, as Israel became more like the nations around them, they desired a king like all the nations around them.
1. God had already anticipated this and sought to regulate them if they ever chose a king (Deuteronomy 17:14-20).
 2. In the time of the Judges, the people wanted Gideon to become their king (Judges 8:22-23).
 3. In fact, Abimelech was the first king over a part of the nation of Israel [the city of Shechem] (Judges 9:1-6).
- F. There are many similarities between God's plan for the nation of Israel and his plan for locally autonomous congregations of the Lord's church.
- III. From Priests to Prophets
- A. With continual corruption in the priesthood, God chose to speak to the nation through Samuel the prophet (1 Samuel 3:1, 11, 19-21).
- B. Even when Israel would have a king, God would speak to the prophet and the prophet would speak to the king.
1. This illustrated the fact that God was still in charge, not the man who ruled as king.
 2. From this time forward, the prophets would become central to the history of God's people (cf. Acts 3:22-24).
 3. They would cry out for the people to remain separate and different from the world.
 4. They would plead with them to return to Jehovah and serve Him faithfully.
- C. Thus, Samuel established the "school of the prophets" (cf. 1 Samuel 19:18).
- D. They would do the work of teaching that the priests failed to do.

Conclusion:

1. Whether men want to believe it or not, God is still King of the universe.
2. The many heartaches, failures and sufferings endured by the people of Israel were a direct result of their rejection of God as King.
3. May we learn from their mistakes and surrender ourselves to the Almighty God.