

ISRAEL DESIRES A KING

“MAKE US A KING ... LIKE ALL THE NATIONS”

Introduction:

1. For many years, the nation of Israel had rejected God as their King.
2. Chapter 7 records a brief restoration when a generation arose that was willing to repent and seek God.
3. However, the nation soon rebelled again by desiring a king like the nations around them.
4. Thus, with chapter 8 we have the beginning of the process that will produce the united kingdom of Israel.

- I. The Request of the People (8:1-5)
 - A. First, we are given a brief background to set the stage for what follows.
 1. Some time has passed and Samuel is now an old man.
 2. During the time he judged Israel from Ramah (and the circuit he traveled), Samuel appointed his sons as judges in Beersheba.
 - a. They were not judges in the same sense that Samuel was a Judge.
 - b. Instead, they were local judges on the southern border of the tribe of Judah (Beersheba was about 50 miles south of Jerusalem).
 3. Sadly, Samuel's sons were not as faithful as he had been (cf. 12:1-5).
 4. They were covetous for money and took bribes in a perversion of justice.
 5. However, verse 3 seems to indicate that they had not lived this way until they came to Beersheba (cf. "his way" – singular).
 6. Furthermore, 1 Chronicles 6:27-28, 33 seems to indicate that Joel repented; for, his son was a servant in the Temple.
 - B. At this time, the elders of Israel came to Samuel with a demand for a king.
 - C. Their justification for this request was threefold.
 1. First, they claimed that Samuel was old and, therefore, unfit to continue as Judge over Israel.
 2. Second, they focused on the sins of Samuel's sons and the fact that he had no one to succeed him.
 3. Third, they wanted to be like the nations around them.
 - D. Each of these excuses is worthy of further consideration.
 1. By judging Samuel according to his age, they were looking at the outward man instead of the will of God.
 2. Had their trust been in God, they would have served Jehovah with or without a successor to Samuel.
 3. Keep in mind that enough time has passed for a new generation to arise.
 - E. However, their primary motivation was a desire to be like the nations.
 1. A generation raised during the peace of Samuel's rule might have grown complacent and arrogant – thinking they did not need God.
 2. There was a fear of defeat in military conflicts (cf. 8:20); so, they wanted a man to lead them into battle.
 3. Their desire for material wealth caused them to reject God as their King.

1 Samuel 8:1-22

- F. How often do we face this same problem in our world today?
1. In politics
 2. In the church
- II. The Response of Lord (8:6-9)
- A. Samuel was greatly displeased with the words of the elders.
1. Literally, it caused his eye to tremble – was evil in his eyes.
 2. Certainly, this was a personal affront to Samuel who had served the nation since he was a child.
 3. Now, he was being cast off with little respect or appreciation.
 4. However, greater than this was his concern over their rejection of God as their King.
- B. Yet, his response was to pray to the Lord.
- C. God's response to Samuel was both encouraging and disheartening.
1. He told Samuel to give heed to what the people wanted.
 2. He encouraged him by reminding him that they were rejecting God, not Samuel.
 3. He reminded them that this had been their downfall throughout their history.
- D. Thus, God commanded Samuel to give the people what they wanted – after he had warned them of the dangers they were inviting upon themselves.
- E. God had already devised a plan for the nation to have a king.
1. It had been prophesied (Genesis 35:11; 49:10).
 2. God attempted to regulate it (Deuteronomy 17:14-20).
 3. If they were to have a King, God was to be the one to choose him (cf. David).
 4. Yet, they rejected God's plan and timing (cf. Hosea 13:10-11).
- F. Interestingly, God's punishment for the people was to give them exactly what they wanted.
- III. The Report of Samuel (8:10-18)
- A. Samuel obeyed the Lord and reported God's message to the nation.
- B. He pointed out the many sacrifices they would have to make in order to have a King like the nations.
- C. He even warned them that when things got bad and they complained, God would not hear them.
- IV. The Rebellion of Israel (8:19-22)
- A. Yet, the people persisted in their rebellion, stating: "We will have a king."
- B. Samuel reported their decision to the Lord and God instructed him to grant their wish.
- C. Thus, Samuel sent the elders back home to their cities.
- D. Sadly, this was not the last time Israel would reject God as their King.
1. Speaking of Jesus, Pilate said to the Jews, "Behold your King!" (John 19:14).
 2. He asked, "Shall I crucify your King?" (John 19:15).
 3. They replied, "We have no king but Caesar" (John 19:15).
 4. But, the truth was written on a title placed upon the cross – "JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS" (John 19:19).

Conclusion: *Are you a faithful servant of the King of kings?*