

When You Make Government Your God

First Samuel 8

Don Ruhl • Savage Street, Grants Pass, Oregon • December 7, In the year of our Lord, 2014
Scripture Reader and Reading: Wayne Duncan – Isaiah 31.1–3

Prelude:

I. Many people want the government to run their lives,

- A. not realizing that once the government gets its foot in the door,
- B. there is no stopping it.

II. The government never says, “Enough.”

- A. Listen to Proverbs 30,

**15 The leech has two daughters—
Give and Give!**

**There are three things that are never satisfied,
Four never say, “Enough!”:**

**16 The grave,
The barren womb,
The earth that is not satisfied with water—
And the fire never says, “Enough!”
(Pro 30.15–16)**

- B. We could add government to that list.

- 1. Though it does happen from time to time, yet,
- 2. typically a government never says, “Enough.”
 - a) Israel wanted a king and
 - b) the Lord wanted Samuel to show Israel
 - (1) the relentless hunger of government.
 - (2) Government has its place, but it does not always know its place.
 - (a) Government serves God, but
 - (b) government is not God.

- C. Not only does government need to know those things,

1. we need to know those things,
2. which is the point of First Samuel 8.

Persuasion:

I. First Samuel 8.1–3 – The Sons of Samuel

1 Now it came to pass when Samuel was old that he made his sons judges over Israel. 2 The name of his firstborn was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; they were judges in Beersheba. 3 But his sons did not walk in his ways; they turned aside after dishonest gain, took bribes, and perverted justice.

- A. Samuel could see that he would not live forever on the Earth,
1. therefore, he made his sons judges.
 2. Samuel was planting trees under whose shade he would never sit.
 - a) He did not think of himself, but
 - b) he thought Israel's future.
- B. However, Joel and Abijah did not live and judge as their father did.
1. This sounds too much like Eli and his sons.
 2. Here the writer revealed three problems of these men:
 - a) They turned aside after dishonest gain.
 - b) They took bribes.
 - c) They perverted justice.
- C. It is surprising that we do not know Samuel's sons names well, because
1. it was their evil that prompted Israel to make a request
 2. that would forever change Israel's history.
 - a) Two relatively unknown men
 - b) changed the future of their nation for centuries to come.
 - (1) Likewise, what we do now,
 - (2) affects future generations.

- (a) What are you doing now?
- (b) Will you change history for the better or for the worse?

II. First Samuel 8.4–6 – When Something Displeases You

4 Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah, 5 and said to him, “Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now make 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.” So Samuel prayed to the LORD.

A. Abraham Lincoln, a government person by the way, said of prayer,

“I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go.”

1. You and me both, Mr. President.
2. Evidently, Samuel too.
 - a) The request of the elders must have stunned Samuel.
 - b) That is why we have no recording of his response to Israel.
 - (1) However, the Bible does show him in prayer.
 - (a) It was God’s nation.
 - (b) It was God who put into place the system of judges.
 - (2) Where else could Samuel go?

B. The elders saw an opportunity to get what they wanted.

1. Samuel could not, in their eyes, continue much longer as judge.
2. His sons were not worthy of judging Israel.
3. Therefore, the elders wanted a king to judge them like other nations.

C. Samuel felt a personal rejection, as we will see.

1. Samuel could also see that they were not happy with the Lord’s way.
2. Beware and be displeased when the Lord’s people decide

- a) that the Lord's way is not enough for them anymore and
- b) that they want to do things like the rest of the world.

D. That is time to pray to the Lord.

- 1. Why do we forget to pray to the One who created everything?
- 2. Why do we think we can find our own solutions?

E. Be like Samuel and stay connected with the Lord always.

- 1. The Lord listened to Samuel, because
- 2. Samuel listened to the Lord.
 - a) Samuel lived his life for the Lord.
 - b) Therefore, the Lord listened to Samuel.

III. First Samuel 8.7–9 – Rejecting the Lord

7 And the LORD said to Samuel, "Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them. 8 According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt, even to this day—with which they have forsaken Me and served other gods—so they are doing to you also. 9 Now therefore, heed their voice. However, you shall solemnly forewarn them, and show them the behavior of the king who will reign over them."

A. Sometimes the Lord gives us what we think we need or want.

- 1. Reasoning and the Scriptures
 - a) will not persuade someone who thinks
 - b) the Lord's way does not bring success.
 - (1) We think we want something better and
 - (2) so we will not listen to Scripture or reason.
- 2. Therefore, He gives it to us that we might learn that His way is right.

B. Samuel needed to know

- 1. that the people were not truly rejecting him, but

2. they were rejecting the Lord.

16 “He who hears you hears Me, he who rejects you rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me” (Luke 10.16).

8 Therefore he who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit (1Th 4.8).

C. What was it that they rejected about the Lord?

1. They did not want Him to reign over them.
2. In Luke 19, you will find a parable by Jesus,
 - a) showing that He knows
 - b) that people do not want him to reign over them.
3. Psalm 2.3 is a prophecy of the world and Israel
 - a) wanting to cast away the Lord’s restrictions on them.
 - b) That desire led to the crucifixion, according to that Psalm.

D. The Lord reminded Samuel that the people were doing

1. what they had always done
2. since the days of the Exodus out of Egypt,
 - a) forsaking Him and looking for something else.
 - b) While in this incident they were rejecting the Lord’s reign,
 - (1) later it would turn to idolatry.
 - (2) Forsake the Lord, and you will make something else your god.

E. Therefore, the Lord told Samuel to listen to the people,

1. to forewarn them where their request would lead them, and
2. to show them the behavior of the king they wanted.

IV. First Samuel 8.10–18 – The Government Will Consume What You Have

10 So Samuel told all the words of the LORD to the people who asked him for a king. 11 And he said, “This will be the behavior of the king who will reign over

you: He will take your sons and appoint them for his own chariots and to be his horsemen, and some will run before his chariots. 12 He will appoint captains over his thousands and captains over his fifties, will set some to plow his ground and reap his harvest, and some to make his weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. 13 He will take your daughters to be perfumers, cooks, and bakers. 14 And he will take the best of your fields, your vineyards, and your olive groves, and give them to his servants. 15 He will take a tenth of your grain and your vintage, and give it to his officers and servants. 16 And he will take your male servants, your female servants, your finest young men, and your donkeys, and put them to his work. 17 He will take a tenth of your sheep. And you will be his servants. 18 And you will cry out in that day because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, and the LORD will not hear you in that day.”

A. Samuel told the people what the Lord said:

1. The king would draft their sons into his army.
2. The king would draft their sons to work in his fields.
3. The king would draft their sons to make weapons of war.
4. The king would draft their daughters to be perfumers, cooks, and bakers.
5. The king would take the best of their property and give it to his servants.
6. The king would tax them 10% of their harvests and give it to his servants.
7. The king would take their servants, their finest young men, and their donkeys and put them to work.
8. The king would take 10% of their flocks.
9. The king would make them his servants.

B. Later, Israel would finally see the evil of having asked for a king, and

1. they would cry out to the Lord, but
2. He would not hear them when that time arrived.
 - a) If the Lord insists that we do something a certain way,
 - b) then we insist that we are going to do it another way,
 - (1) why do we think He will soften up and

(2) rescue us when we have gotten ourselves into trouble?

V. First Samuel 8.19–20 – Israel Insisted on a King

19 Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, “No, but we will have 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.”

A. They insisted on having a king over them,

1. making them like the rest of the nations,
2. that the king might
 - a) judge them and
 - b) lead them in battle.

B. Israel already had those things.

1. Why did they think they needed a king to do those things?
2. Their current system had
 - a) brought them out of the Land of Egypt,
 - b) given them victory against the Canaanites, and
 - c) provided them the problem-solving they needed among themselves.
 - (1) The problem was they looked different than the rest of the world.
 - (2) They wanted to be like the world.
 - (3) They did not think the thoughts of the Lord, Samuel did,

35 “Then I will raise up for Myself a faithful priest who shall do according to what is in My heart and in My mind” (1Sa 2.35).

VI. First Samuel 8.21–22 – People Have to Experience Their Choices

21 And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he repeated them in the hearing of the LORD. 22 So the LORD said to Samuel, “Heed their voice, and make them a king.” And Samuel said to the men of Israel, “Every man go to his

city.”

A. Samuel faithfully repeated

1. the words of the Lord to Israel, and
2. the words of Israel to the Lord.
 - a) He did not water down the Lord’s words to Israel,
 - b) nor did he excuse the words of Israel to the Lord.

B. Again, the Lord told Samuel to do what the people wanted.

C. Therefore, Samuel sent the people away,

1. not arguing with them anymore,
2. not trying to dissuade them, but
 - a) looking for the opportune time
 - b) to give them their king.

Exhortation:

I. If only that generation would have accepted the word of the Lord.

- A. If only they had looked to the future,
- B. as the Lord wanted them to do.

II. Brethren, think of Israel’s downfall in later generations.

- A. It came about in both Israel and Judah, because
- B. of the leadership in their respective governments.

III. Yes, Romans 13 says that the Lord has ordained government.

- A. No, you will not read anywhere
- B. that government should replace the Lord.
 1. Governments sometimes think that they are the Lord, but
 2. let us never make the government Lord of our hearts.