



Repentance Tabernacle Church

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Samuel and Saul!

Lesson Text: 1 Samuel 8-10

Focus Verses: 1 Samuel 8:7-9 - ⁷ And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, 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 unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee. ⁹ Now therefore hearken unto their voice: howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them, and shew them the manner of the king that shall reign over them.

Truth About Covenant: God's plans for His people are better than their own plans.

Covenant Context: Following a failed period of leadership known as the Judges, Israel rejected their covenant with God by asking for a human king to lead them. God relented and gave them what they asked for, but they soon discovered they already had what they needed; they just needed to follow God's will rather than their own.

The Israelites wanted a king so they could be like all the other nations, but they forgot they were not like the other nations because they served the God of the universe. They made one of the worst trades in the history of humanity. Israel wanted to transition from a theocracy where the Lord ruled to a monarchy where a king held sway over them. Rather than trusting the covenant God had made with them—and kept by protecting them and fighting for them time and time again—the Israelites pressed for a king they could see. This visible leader would fight for them and subdue their enemies. They would soon watch their king face severe internal battles that would shake the nation of Israel to its core.

Long before Isaiah's prophecy that Jesus would be despised and rejected of men (Isaiah 53:3), the Lord felt the sting of the Israelites' rejection. Almighty God does not force people to follow His plan. We, however, must make our own personal decision to live a life that gives God glory. Despite our best intentions, our inclinations may prove to be wrong. In many cases we may feel like we have a good reason for our decisions. However, we would do well to consider this cautionary tale of the Israelites in 1 Samuel 8. Their plan for a king seemed like a good idea, but they failed to fully consider all the ramifications.

After Israel made their request, God reluctantly answered yes and created a scenario to crown Saul as the first king in Israel. Samuel poured anointing oil over him to signify he was the one God had chosen to lead His people. God's Spirit would empower him to lead the people. The young man seemed to possess all the attributes the people would want in a king. His towering presence hid his inner insecurities. Saul initially acted in humility but later grew prideful. Saul's story is a warning. Even if we have experienced the power of the Spirit through the infilling of the Holy Ghost, we must consistently seek the will of God. We need God in every moment, not just in the public moments everyone can see.

Unfortunately, the people did not have the vision to recognize they had traded the glory of their heavenly King for the psychosis of an earthly king bent on destroying himself and others. Saul's poor leadership demonstrated that Israel should have trusted God's plan instead of demanding their own will. The fast deterioration would soon lead to a rivalry between Saul and David and eventually pit brother versus brother in Israel's own brutal civil war. Kingship would be known more for division than unity.

If we separate ourselves from God, we will find it difficult to maintain unity with our brothers and sisters in Christ. Sometimes divisions that arise may be a sign of not being as close to the Lord as we need to be. While we may blame our fellow brothers and sisters for the problem, perhaps we should first take a close look and ask if we are the problem.

God wants sole possession of our hearts, but we can become distracted by the things of this world. We can put possessions or even other people on the throne of our hearts. Worse yet, we can become prideful and conceited like Saul and make ourselves the king or queen of our own personal kingdom. We must avoid the trap of pride. We must trust God's plan for our lives even when the will of God seems counter to our own plans, especially when it is counter to the world's plans.