

Week 4 - A New King

1 Samuel 7:3-8:22

Introduction

Last week we were in chapters 4 - 6, which showed us the defeat of Israel by the Philistines, the death of Hophni and Phinehas, the loss of the ark of God, and then the death of Eli.

God is not blessing them because of their idolatry, but they think they can force God to bless them by bringing Him into battle.

Instead, they are defeated and the ark is stolen - the glory of God departs. *Even though they get the ark back eventually, the idol worship does not stop.*

Samuel Leads the Repentance

READ 1 Samuel 7:3-4

Then Samuel begins doing burnt offerings again on the behalf of the people - worship is restored.

Immediately, God begins blessing Israel again.

READ 1 Samuel 7:13-15

Israel Demands a King

READ 1 Samuel 8:1-3

Samuel had appointed his two sons as judges in Beersheba. It seems Samuel was old and perhaps needed help since his role required him to travel.

They allowed the power of the position to corrupt them and they began taking bribes in order to make their decisions instead of doing what was right.

READ 1 Samuel 8:4-9

The elders were worried that after Samuel died, his sons would not lead the people well. Instead, they wanted to have a king like their Canaanite neighbors did.

At heart level, this is just another manifestation of idolatry in Israel. Now that they cannot predict a means of protection and security in Samuel's sons, they fall back on taking matters into their own hands.

Certainly, they said that they were just being realistic, practical, even wise. But God saw it as a rejection of Samuel, and a rejection of Him as their God. Even though God had always been faithful, His people trusted a king more than Him.

Why Not?

What's wrong with asking to have a king?

READ I Samuel 8:10-17

There are two reasons why the desire to have a king was wrong for them.

1. They wanted to be like their pagan neighbors. (vs 5)
2. They trusted a man more than God. (vv4-5)
3. Being ruled by a man instead of God will be very costly due to corruption (vv 10-17).

A People Set Apart

The Hebrew people were God's chosen people. They were His set-apart people. They were to remain distinct from the world around them.

Jesus changed that in the sense that Gentiles have been adopted into the family. But the "set-apart-ness" has not changed. **We are still to be separate in terms of who our reliance and allegiance is to.**

America and the Kingdom of God are not the same thing. There is no Christian political party. Maybe you think the Republicans are the Christian party. Maybe you think the Democrats are the Christian party. But now we can see that both parties are infected with all sorts of moral bankruptcy - just like Samuel's sons.

One of the glaring problems in the American church right now is that we feel more allegiance to our party than we do to the Church. We are willing to be silent on social issues with clear Biblical stances on because we are afraid of conceding a political point.

If you voted for Hillary, you should be the loudest voice defending the rights of the unborn. You should be the loudest voice for religious freedom over who we choose to marry in our Churches.

If you voted for Trump, you should be the loudest voice for better treatment of immigrants and refugees, as well as racial reconciliation.

Your positions on political issues should NEVER perfectly reflect the talking points of any political party, because no political party perfectly reflects the Kingdom of God.

I'll give you another example: I recently met a pastor from Guadalajara, Mexico. Guadalajara has thousands of migrants come through their city on their way to the US border each year. They are horribly mistreated. He and his church feed, clothe, and minister to these migrants several nights a week.

Israel and I got on the phone with him and we are trying to see how we can help him.

This is politically controversial, but is not controversial in the Kingdom of God. Look no further than the Good Samaritan to understand why.

My brother Sam and his wife Martha are planning to go help a church plant for arab refugees overseas. In raising support, he has encountered two people that I know of that have refused to give because they are helping Arab refugees.

Another test for this in your heart might be, if you can't conceive and appreciate why someone might vote for the other side then you are not thinking Kingdom. If you can't understand why Trump's election felt like bad news to a lot of people, you need to re-evaluate. Thinking this way doesn't require you to change who you support politically! It only requires you to be an open-hearted person.

WE ARE CALLED TO BE SEPARATE, HOLY, SANCTIFIED IN OUR POLITICAL THINKING, and not look to the world around us to tell us how we should be governed. The Israelites of Samuel's day looked to their pagan neighbors and trusted their thinking over God's.

I won't ever tell you how to vote, or what to think. Just be sure that you are thinking according to the Kingdom and not the world.

Political Idolatry

The second reason why Israel's demand to have a king was wrong, was that they were putting their trust in an earthly king instead of God. They were afraid of new enemies coming to destroy them, and so they sought earthly wisdom that was contrary to God's wisdom to secure their future.

How you feel after an election tells you a lot about where your heart is regarding this. If your people win, do you feel triumphalistic? Do you feel safe? Do you feel hope?

If you people lose, are you despondent? Do you lose hope? Do you feel betrayed?

Both reactions might indicate that you have placed your hope in the wrong place. No president, no governor, no representative, and no form of government will save us. When will the American Church learn not to align themselves politically? The term "religious right" never should have been coined.

There has been a mass exodus of young people from evangelical churches since Trump was elected. It's at least part of the price we are paying for making Jesus a Republican.

I believe the American Church needs to come to repentance over this. We have made Democracy and politics into idols. Despite the continual disappointments every 4 years, we continue to make treat our political leaders like mini "saviors".

Power Corrupts Corruptible People

The third reason the Israelites should not have demanded a king, was that kings become corrupt and then abuse the people.

Do I need to give you any examples to convince you?

READ I Samuel 8:11-22

Conclusion

There is good news. God would send a righteous and holy King not to ascend an earthly throne, but to usher in a new Kingdom altogether.

READ Matthew 2:1-6

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, 2 saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." 3 When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; 4 and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. 5 They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet:

*6 " 'And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who will shepherd my people Israel.' "*

READ Revelation 19:15-16

15 From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. 16 On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.

Where is your allegiance? Do you think and act like a citizen of Jesus' Kingdom, or the world?