



The LORD said to Samuel, "Obey the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them." (1 Samuel 8:7)

Loving God, you bring the mighty down from their thrones and lift up the humble. Forgive us, Lord, when we neglect to have a servant's heart. Thank you for sending us your Son to serve us and to give his life as a ransom. In Jesus' holy name we pray.

Introduction

The Prophet Samuel had led God's people for many years, speaking the word of the Lord. But the people wanted a warrior king to lead them in battle, like all the nations around them. God allowed it, but warned them what it would mean to live under a king.

Read: 1 Samuel 8:4-18, 9:15-17

On reading these verses, what are some of your initial impressions and questions? What stands out to you?

The Biblical Context

The books of 1 and 2 Samuel and the books of 1 and 2 Kings tell the story of Israel as a united nation and the subsequent division into north and south kingdoms. Part of the biblical books of History, some of this same content is repeated in 1 and 2 Chronicles in a more abbreviated form.

In the time prior to the Monarchy, God raised up the great prophet Samuel to guide his people in faith. His birth was an answer to prayer, and Samuel ministered to God's people his whole life, beginning with his service in the temple as a child.

When Samuel grew old, the people clamored to have a king, which God said was a rejection of his own divine Lordship. But God gave them what they wanted. The reign of King Saul proved God's warning was right.

Discussion Questions

1. What were the names of the prophet Samuel's sons? Why were they not acceptable as successors to their father (v. 3)?
2. From what you see in verses 4-6, for what reason do you think the people wanted a king in Israel? Do you think they hoped this would make their lives better?
3. In verse 7, Samuel says the people have rejected him. How does God respond? Why was the request of the people an offense to God himself?
4. Was this rejection of God a new thing for the Israelites? How does God describe their behavior in the past? What example does God use?
5. There's an old saying, "Be careful what you ask for." Why do you think God relented and gave the people what they wanted? In what sense was this actually a form of punishment?
6. What things does Samuel warn the people will happen when a king takes power? Do you think the people understood these implications?
7. Read Mark 10:42-45. How does Jesus describe the way leaders often act toward their people? In what way was Jesus himself different? What did he come to do for us?
8. What should people of faith do when authorities order us to disobey God's commands? Can you think of any real-life examples in which this has happened or might happen in the future?