

The Bible From 20,000 Feet Part 33

1 Samuel 8:1 – 16:23

Tuesday Night Bible Study, August 11, 2009

--OUTLINE:

- ISRAEL'S FLAWED REASONING IN THEIR DEMAND FOR A KING
- THE BITTER-SWEET CORONATION OF KING SAUL
- KEY PRINCIPLE IN THE RISE AND FALL OF KING SAUL
- CONTRAST BETWEEN SELECTION OF SAUL AS KING AND SELECTION OF DAVID AS KING

--ISRAEL'S FLAWED REASONING IN THEIR DEMAND FOR A KING

--1 Samuel ch. 8 provides the context of Israel's request for a king...

"8:1 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. 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. 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."

--God knew that the corrupt behavior of Samuel's sons was just an excuse, and the heart of the matter was their rejection of Him as their King

--in his speech during the coronation of Saul as king, Samuel reviewed how the Lord had led Israel through the ages and then highlights their rejection of Him as their king... "you said to me, **No, but a king shall reign over us,' when the Lord your God was your king.**" (1 Samuel 12:12)

--Israel as a nation could not walk the path of faith that was exemplified by Moses... "By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king [*Pharaoh*]; for he endured as seeing Him [*the Lord*] who is invisible..." (Hebrews 11:27-28)

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." 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.**" 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."

--in saying that they wanted a king to "go out before us and fight our battles" (8:20) they were forgetting that it was the Lord who fought their battles!

--and they didn't realize that the king would be able to lead them victoriously into battle only if the Lord was behind him!

--they wanted to have a king so that they "may be like all the nations..." but they also lost sight of the fact that many of the kings of other nations were harsh and oppressive, and many of Israel's kings would be no different.

--God wanted to rule directly over Israel and spare them the grief that would result from an intermediary ruler.

–THE BITTER SWEET CORONATION OF KING SAUL

--at the coronation of King Saul, rather than celebrating and putting the new leader on a pedestal like we see at many inaugurations today, Samuel gives a solemn speech and makes the people of Israel realize the sinfulness of asking for a king when the Lord had been their king from the beginning and will always be their king.

--then Samuel prays and God sends thunder and rain on Israel's coronation ceremony... 1 Samuel 12:16-19: "Now therefore, stand and see this great thing which the LORD will do before your eyes: 17 Is today not the wheat harvest? [*wheat harvest occurred during the dry season*] I will call to the LORD, and He will send thunder and rain, that you may perceive and see that your wickedness is great, which you have done in the sight of the LORD, in asking a king for yourselves." 18 So Samuel called to the LORD, and the LORD sent thunder and rain that day; and all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel. 19 And all the people said to Samuel, "Pray for your servants to the LORD your God, that we may not die; for we have added to all our sins the evil of asking a king for ourselves."

--Samuel then reiterates that the formula for Israel's success is no different now that they have a king than it was before they had a king... 1 Samuel 12:20-25: "Do not fear. You have done all this wickedness; yet do not turn aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart. 21 And do not turn aside; for then you would go after empty things which cannot profit or deliver, for they are nothing. 22 For the LORD will not forsake His people, for His great name's sake, because it has pleased the LORD to make you His people. 23 Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you; but I will teach you the good and the right way. 24 Only fear the LORD, and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you. 25 **But if you still do wickedly, you shall be swept away, both you and your king.**"

--side note about "For the LORD will not forsake His people, for His great name's sake..." (12:22)

--looking at the big picture of Israel's endless repetition of failure, a natural question that arises is WHY does God continue to put up with Israel and preserve them as a nation.

--Moses answered this question during the rebellion at Mt. Sinai when God revealed how without abundant grace He would have wiped out the entire nation and started over... Moses prayed, "Turn from Your fierce wrath, and relent from this harm to Your people. 13 Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel [*Jacob*], Your servants, to whom You swore by Your own self, and said to them, 'I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven; and all this land that I have spoken of I give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.'" (Exodus 32:12-13)

--and in God's words to Abraham, the reason He promised to make Israel into a great nation was to bless all the nations of the world with the opportunity for eternal salvation through the Messiah – "I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and **in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed...**" (Gen 26:4)

--so here were approximately 1000 years later in the book of Samuel and that is the reason God is putting up with Israel's endless cycle of rebellion!

--and even today God continues to preserve Israel because not only was the birth of the Messiah linked to their existence but His return is linked to their existence! (Zechariah 13:7-14:9 gives us a concise picture of this)

--when preaching to Jews in Acts ch. 13 Paul gave a brief overview of Israel's history and highlighted the purpose of bringing the Jesus the Messiah into the world: "Then Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said, "Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen: 17 The God of this people Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an uplifted arm He brought them out of it. 18 Now for a time of about forty years He put up with their ways in the wilderness. 19 And when He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He distributed their land to them by allotment. 20 "After that He gave them judges for about four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. 21 And afterward they asked for a king; so God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. 22 And when He had removed him, He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.' 23 **From this man's seed, according to the promise, God raised up for Israel a Savior — Jesus...**"

--KEY PRINCIPLE IN THE RISE AND FALL OF KING SAUL

--Saul's victories as the King of Israel were totally dependent on the Lord's strength and not his own strength. The Lord only empowered Saul to follow His will, and when Saul stopped following the Lord's will then He withdrew His power from Saul.

--Saul's failure to carry out the command of the Lord in the battle against the Amalekites (1 Samuel ch. 15) was the final mistake that led to God revoking Saul's commission as King of Israel and giving it to David.

--as we'll see throughout the rest of 1 Samuel, after Saul loses His commission as King of Israel, He then runs headlong into rebellion and tries to prevent the throne from passing to David.

--Samuel gives us an insight into one of the underlying problems in Saul's life: after Saul lost his commission as the King of Israel, Samuel told him, "when you were little in your own eyes, were you not head of the tribes of Israel? And did not the Lord anoint you king over Israel?"

--Saul lost sight of the fact that his role was, in a sense, a little role... He wasn't the ruler. God was the ruler and Saul's role was to simply carry out God's rule.

--in our lives this is an important reality check for ministry... the essence of ministry is God working through us - we are simply vessels in His hands! The apostle Paul had a solid grasp of this principle: "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase." (1 Corinthians 3:5-8)

--The empowerment and withdrawal of God's power are like **two bookends** to Saul's commission as the King of Israel:

--1. the Lord empowered Saul...

--after Samuel anointed Saul, he told Saul, "... Then the Spirit of the LORD will come upon you, and you will prophesy with them [prophets referred to earlier in their conversation] and be turned into another man. ...' 9 So it was, when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, that God gave him another heart; and all those signs came to pass that day. 10 When they came there to the hill, there was a group of prophets to meet him; then the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them. 11 And it happened, when all who knew him formerly saw that he indeed prophesied among the prophets, that the people said to one another, "What is this that has come upon the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?" (1 Samuel 10:6-11)

--2. the Lord withdrew His power from Saul...

--1 Sam 16:14: "But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and a distressing spirit from the LORD troubled him."

--important side note: the Spirit of the Lord departing from Saul shouldn't be confused with the reality of God's Spirit in our lives or the idea of being able to lose our salvation.

--after Christ died and rose from the grave, a new dimension was opened to the working of the Holy Spirit.

--the New Testament speaks of the work of the Holy Spirit as not only empowering us for ministry (Luke 24:49), as in the Old Testament, but also "sealing" us and being a guarantee of our salvation (Ephesians 1:13)

--Ephesians 1:13-14: "**In Him you also trusted**, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; **in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise**, who is the guarantee of our inheritance..."

--the sealing of the Holy Spirit is a supernatural work in us that happens the moment we place our trust in Jesus Christ.

--nowhere does New Testament speak of our being sealed by the Holy Spirit as being something that we can lose!

--Saul could lose the empowerment of the Holy Spirit because it was dependent on his obedience.

--we too can lose the fruits of the Holy Spirit that are dependent on obedience.

--but we cannot lose the sealing of the Holy Spirit because our salvation and the sealing of the Holy Spirit are not dependent on our righteousness but rather they are dependent on the righteousness of Christ that is "credited" to us! (Romans 4:24, Romans 3:21-26)

--looking at it from another angle, Jesus spoke of the supernatural change brought about in our lives by the Holy Spirit when we trust in Him as being "born of the Spirit" or "born again" (John 3:5-8) and nowhere does the New Testament speak of the possibility of being unborn or dying to the Spirit after being born of the Spirit.

--CONTRAST BETWEEN SELECTION OF SAUL AS KING AND SELECTION OF DAVID AS KING

--the Lord selected Saul based on the qualities that the general population of Israel valued (physical qualities), but He selected David based on qualities that He valued (spiritual qualities).

--Saul turned out to be a gross failure and ended up completely forsaking God's will and chasing after His own will to kill David whom God chose to replace him.

--in reality God's choice of Saul as king was a form of judgment to teach Israel the folly of putting their will above God's will.

--David had his share of mistakes, but he always turned back to the Lord – he was *a man after God's own heart* (1 Samuel 13:14, Acts 13:22)

--Saul...

--1 Samuel 9:2 describes the quality that made Saul attractive to the nation of Israel: "There was not a more handsome person than he among the children of Israel. From his shoulders upward he was taller than any of the people."

--David...

--1 Samuel 16:1-13: "Now the LORD said to Samuel, 'How long will you mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill your horn with oil [*to anoint the new king*], and go; I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite. For I have provided Myself a king among his sons. ... 7 ... **Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature** [*Saul was the most attractive person in all of Israel!*], because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; **for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.**" 8 So Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one." 9 Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one." 10 Thus Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen these." 11 And Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all the young men here?" Then he said, "There remains yet the youngest, and there he is, keeping the sheep." And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and bring him. For we will not sit down till he comes here." 12 So he sent and brought him in. **Now he was ruddy, with bright eyes, and good-looking. And the LORD said, "Arise, anoint him; for this is the one!"** 13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward..."

--may the contrast between the end result of Saul and David's lives help us learn the lesson of praying for God's will and not our own – seeing things in terms of spiritual qualities rather than qualities of the flesh!

--in Psalm 40 David gave us an example of praying for God's will... "I waited patiently for the LORD; And He inclined to me, And heard my cry. 2 He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, Out of the miry clay, And set my feet upon a rock, And established my steps. ... 8 I desire to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart."

--when we follow God's will our feet are set upon a rock – a sharp contrast to the path of sin that leads to a *horrible pit and miry clay!*

--God's way is always best!