



June 22, 2014

1 Samuel 8

“Making of a King, Journey of a Christian”

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In **1 Samuel 8:1-9**, Samuel warned the people about the negative impact they would experience first-hand when they came under the rule of a king. He told them their king would take their sons and daughters and make them serve in his palace and his army, as well as the fact that he would seize some of their fields and vineyards, and require them to give 1/10th of their grain and 1/10th of their flocks for his personal use. And, if these things were bad enough, Samuel told them their beloved king would make slaves of some of them!

In this study we'll learn more about the reasons the people of Israel longed to have a king rule over them, how Saul was chosen to be Israel's first king, and how Saul's life is a model of the journey of a Christian.

Historical Background

1. **1 Samuel 8:18-22** - “ *‘When that day comes, you will cry for relief from the king you have chosen, and the Lord will not answer you in that day.’ But the people refused to listen to Samuel. ‘No!’ they said. ‘We want a king over us. Then we will be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles.’ When Samuel heard all that the people said, he repeated it before the Lord. The Lord answered, ‘Listen to them and give them a king.’ Then Samuel said to the men of Israel, ‘Everyone go back to his town.’ ”*
2. The people of Israel no longer wanted God to rule them through judges; they wanted a king to rule over them, and so it was that Israel moved into the period of the monarchy.
3. Their ultimate rejection wasn't Samuel; it was God.

4. They had no idea what they were asking, and it's obvious they didn't know how good they had it with God.
5. It's as though God said, "If you want a king, I'll give you a king, but when it doesn't work out like you thought it would, don't come crying to me, because I won't answer you."
6. Their primary motivation for wanting an earthly king was to be just like the other nations around them.
 - a. **1 Samuel 8:5** - *"They said to him, 'You are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways; now appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have.' "*
7. Sadly, they were driven by a longing to be just like other nations, instead of having a desire to be a distinctly different people under the rule of God.
8. We need to be mindful of the fact that an imminent threat to our relationship with God will arise when we develop a desire to be like everyone else, and there is mounting pressure in our culture to do just that!
9. We are being pressured and we will continue to be pressured to be in-step with the ever-evolving views of mainstream society, and if we find ourselves out of step with the way the culture views things, we need to be prepared to find out just how intolerant their message of tolerance is toward us.
10. The Bible doesn't teach conformation; it teaches transformation.
11. **Romans 12:2** - *"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."*
12. The Christian life is a changed life, a different life, and an uncommon life, and that's what makes it attractive!
13. If you don't feel a little out of place where you work or go to school, it may be the case that you have conformed *"to the pattern of this world."*

Israel's First King

14. **1 Samuel 9:1-2** - *There was a Benjamite, a man of standing, whose name was Kish son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Becorath, the son of Aphiah of Benjamin. He had a son named Saul, an impressive young man without equal among the Israelites - a head taller than any of the others."*

15. Facts about Saul.
 - a. He was from a wealthy family.
 - b. He was from the tribe of Benjamin.
 - c. He was an *“impressive young man,”* i.e. handsome.
 - i. The KJV uses the word, *“goodly.”*
 - d. He was without equal among the Israelites.
 - i. The KJV says there was *“not a goodlier person than he [Saul].”*
 - e. He was a head taller than any other man.
 - i. Archaeologists have examined human remains from biblical times and they estimate that the average height of a man was about 5’6”, so Saul may have been as tall as 6’3” or 6’4”.
16. God gave the people someone who they could look at and naturally think, “Yep, he looks like he’s be a great king!”
 - a. In a similar way, when Samuel the prophet went, at the instruction of God, to anoint the next king of Israel from among Jesse’s sons, Eliab, the tallest and best-looking son, was Samuel’s obvious choice to be the king.
 - i. **1 Samuel 16:7** – *“But the Lord said to Samuel, ‘Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.’ ”*
17. **1 Samuel 9:3-5** – *“Now the donkeys belonging to Saul’s father Kish were lost, and Kish said to his son Saul, ‘Take one of the servants with you and go and look for the donkeys.’ So he passed through the hill country of Ephraim and through the area around Salisha, but they did not find them. They went on into the district of Shaalim, but the donkeys were not there. Then he passed through the territory of Benjamin, but they did not find them. When they reached the district of Zuph, Saul said to the servant who was with him, ‘Come, let’s go back or my father will stop thinking about the donkeys and start worrying about us.’ ”*
 - a. We later find out that they traveled for three days, and since the average man could walk 20 to 25 miles a day, that means they walked approximately 60 to 75 miles looking for donkeys!
18. As they made their way through the countryside, they met the prophet Samuel.
 - a. **1 Samuel 9:15-17** – *“Now the day before Samuel came, the Lord had revealed this to Samuel: ‘About this time tomorrow I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin. Anoint him leader over my people Israel; he will deliver my people from the hand of the Philistines. I have looked upon my people, for their cry has reached me.’ When Samuel caught sight of Saul, the Lord said to him, ‘This is the man I spoke to you about; he will govern my people.’ ”*

19. **1 Samuel 10:1** tells us, *“Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on Saul’s head and kissed him, saying, ‘Has not the Lord anointed you leader over his inheritance?’ ”*
- This is the first time in Scripture that someone other than a priest was anointed with oil.
 - The anointing oil was/is symbolic of the Holy Spirit.
 - To anoint someone with oil was to confirm the special calling of God upon that person as being marked and separated unto God.
20. **1 Samuel 10:9-11** - *“As Saul turned to leave Samuel, God changed Saul’s heart, and all these signs were fulfilled that day. When they arrived at Gibeah, a procession of prophets met him; the Spirit of God came upon him in power, and he joined in their prophesying. When all those who had formerly known him saw him prophesying, they asked each other, ‘What is this that has happened to the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?’ ”*
- God changed Saul’s heart - vs. 9
 - The Holy Spirit came upon him - vs. 10
 - Some who knew him a long time wondered, “What in the world happened to Saul?” - vs. 11
21. When we read about the public coronation of Saul in **1 Samuel 10:17-24**, we see that Saul is a humble, reluctant leader, who doesn’t push himself forward.
22. Not everyone was enthralled with the king God selected!
- 1 Samuel 10:27** - *“But some troublemakers said, ‘How can this fellow save us?’ They despised him and brought him no gifts. But Saul kept silent.”*
23. **1 Samuel 11** tells the the account of Israelites who lived in the town of Jabesh Gilead who were attacked by Ammonites, and how Saul rushed to their defense, and when he had mustered an army, he led them into battle, slaughtering the Ammonites.
24. **1 Samuel 11:12-15** - *“The people then said to Samuel, ‘Who was it that asked, ‘Shall Saul reign over us?’ Bring these men to us and we will put them to death.’ But Saul said, ‘No one shall be put to death today, for this day the Lord has rescued Israel.’ Then Samuel said to the people, ‘Come, let us go to Gilgal and there reaffirm the kingship.’ So all the people went to Gilgal and confirmed Saul as king in the presence of the Lord. There they sacrificed fellowship offerings before the Lord, and Saul and all the Israelites held a great celebration.”*

25. When he was found to be a courageous man of convictions, a man who was willing to do what others weren't, that's when the people respected him.
26. When we first meet Saul, he was out wandering around the countryside chasing donkeys, and granted, they were valuable as work animals and transportation, but they have long been associated with stubbornness and stupidity.
 - a. Even in ancient times, the Greek writers Homer and Aesop, labeled donkeys as "stupid and servile."
 - b. In many cultures, including our own, to call someone a donkey is the furthest thing from a compliment, because it's a derogatory term for someone who is dumb.

Before Christ, We Busy Ourselves Chasing "Dumb Donkeys"

27. We waste our time running after stupid things that will never satisfy us.
28. Today, some are chasing, with reckless abandon in many cases, the club scene, alcohol, drugs, sexual encounters, power, possessions, money, or fame.
29. People mistakenly think that if they only find this or that, they'll be happy.
30. The truth is that a relationship with Jesus is the only thing that will satisfy the deepest longing of our souls, and bring the kind of peace, contentment, and fulfillment to our lives.
31. Simon Cowell,¹ who at one time had a net worth that was estimated to be \$364 million dollars, owned a 14,000sf house, was a successful record executive and TV producer, and famous for his role on *American Idol* and *X Factor*, made these comments in an interview a few years ago:
 - a. " 'If I went to a psychiatrist, it would be a long session,' he says. 'I've always thought that I do have a number of issues that probably need dealing with, because I am quite odd in some ways. I get very dark moods for no reason. Nothing in particular brings it on. You can be having the best time of your life and yet you're utterly and totally miserable. I get very anti-social, depressed and irritable with people.' "²

¹ <http://www.therichest.org/entertainment/simon-cowell-net-worth/>

² <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-1185451/Im-quite-odd-I-dark-moods-Simon-Cowells-revealing--surprising--interview-ever.html>

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- b. “ ‘I’m just a wandering asteroid without a home,’ he says, partly teasing. ‘I get to points in my life where I sometimes think I’m never going to be happy.’ ”³

When We Come To Christ God Changes Our Heart And Fills Us With His Spirit

32. We become a new person, which affects:
- The way we talk.
 - The way we interact with people.
 - The way we love our spouse.
 - The way we handle money.
 - The things we look at or don’t look at.
 - Our work ethic.
33. Everything changes for the better, and people will notice!

When We Come To Christ Some People Will Wonder What’s Happened To Us

34. **1 Samuel 10:11** - *“When all those who had formerly known him saw him prophesying with the prophets, they asked each other, ‘What is this that has happened to the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?’ ”*
35. Some will wonder with amazement, saying, “Wow, what’s that all about and when did that happen?”
36. Some will wonder with encouragement, saying, “That’s great and I’m excited for you!”
37. Some will wonder with skepticism, saying, “You, a Christian?”
38. Some will wonder with patronizing comments, saying, “Oh, you’ve become a Christian; isn’t that special... good for you.”

When We Come To Christ Some People Will Despise Us

39. **1 Samuel 10:27** - *“But some troublemakers said, ‘How can this fellow save us?’ They despised him and brought him no gifts. But Saul kept silent.”*

³ <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-1185451/Im-quite-odd-I-dark-moods-Simon-Cowells-revealing--surprising--interview-ever.html#ixzz35m8b0uHD>

40. Some people will be mad at you because you don't join with them like you used to.
41. Some people will think you are being too holy and too righteous.
42. Some people will feel like you are judging them just because of the changes in your new life in Christ.
43. **Matthew 5:11-12** - *"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."*
44. Those who were skeptical and critical of Saul came to respect him when they saw the courage of his convictions as he went from being a timid guy who hid behind baggage to a courageous man who rallied the troops to defend his brothers at Jabesh Gilead.

When We Come To Christ Some People Will Respect Us
As We Live Our Lives For Christ With Courage And Conviction

45. **Romans 1:16** - *"I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile."*
46. **Mark 8:38** - *"If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels."*
47. **Deuteronomy 31:6** - *"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you."*

Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read **1 Samuel 8:1-22** to provide an overview for this study.
3. Before you came to faith in Christ, what were some of the "dumb donkeys" you

chased after?

- a. Spend time talking about the Simon Cowell quotes Pastor Gary shared in this message. (See #31 above)
4. What were some of the immediate changes you made in your life when your heart was changed and the Holy Spirit filled you?
5. Read and discuss [1 Samuel 10:11](#) and [1 Samuel 10:27](#).
 - a. How receptive were your family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers to the “new you”?
 - b. Were you on the receiving end of jokes and mockery?
 - c. Did people despise you for being “holier than thou”?
6. Read and discuss [Matthew 5:11-12](#).
 - a. In what ways have you experienced the joy and blessing of the Lord in the face of ridicule, etc.?
7. Spend time talking about the ways the Holy Spirit empowers us for living a life of courage and conviction.
 - a. Read and discuss [Romans 1:16](#), [Mark 8:38](#), and [Deuteronomy 31:6](#).
8. Close your time in prayer by asking the Holy Spirit to help each person: rely on the Spirit to help them avoid the waste of time, energy, and resources when it comes to chasing “dumb donkeys”; allow the Lord to use their witness and testimony of Christ and the changes he’s made and is making, to live a life of courage and conviction to the glory of God!

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).