

# Be Careful What You Ask For

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[ 0 : 00 ] 1 Samuel 9, chapter 8.

So we'll make it all the way through chapter 8. Trying to take a chapter each Sunday night and try to move our way through this marvelous book in the Old Testament. So 1 Samuel chapter 8.

Let me go ahead and first read the entire chapter. Then we'll see what God has to say to us from it. Now it came to pass when Samuel was old that he made his sons judges over Israel.

The name of his firstborn was Joel or Joel. The name of his second, Abijah. They were judges in Beersheba.

But his sons did not walk in his ways. They turned aside after dishonest gain. Took bribes for burdened justice. Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah and said to him, Look, you're old.

[ 1 : 12 ] Wasn't very nice, was it? And your sons do not walk in your ways, but make us now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.

But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, Give us a king to judge us. So Samuel prayed to the Lord. 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.

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.

Now therefore heed their voice, however. You shall solemnly forewarn them and show them the behavior of the king who will reign over them. So Samuel told all the words of the Lord to the people who asked him for a king.

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.

[ 2 : 26 ] That is, they'll be foot soldiers. 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.

He will take your daughters to be perfumers, cooks and bakers. He will take the best of your fields, your vineyards, your olive groves and give them to his servants.

He will take a tenth of your grain and your vintage and give it to his officers and servants. And he will take your male servants, your female servants, your finest young men and your donkeys and put them to his work.

He will take a tenth of your sheep and you will be his servants. 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. Nevertheless, the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel. And they said, no, but we will have a king over us 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.

[ 3 : 40 ] And Samuel heard all the words of the people and he repeated them in the hearing of the Lord. So the Lord said to Samuel, heed their voice, make them a king.

Samuel said to the men of Israel, every man go to his city. Okay, here's the subject for tonight. Be careful what you ask for.

Be careful what you ask for. And so that's kind of my title, but here's really the full lesson. Be careful what you ask God for. Because you might just get it.

And live to regret it. That was the lesson, I think, the lesson that we can learn from this chapter. And really it comes from this oft-repeated idea all throughout the chapter.

In fact, a number of times. I didn't count them up, but let me read them to you. Verse 5, now make us a king to judge us like all the nations. Verse 6, give us a king to judge us.

[ 4 : 45 ] Verse 10, the people who ask for a king. That's what Israel, they were asking for a king. Verse 11, this will be the behavior of the king who will reign over you. Verse 18, your king whom you have chosen for yourselves.

Verse 19, we will have a king over us. Verse 22, the Lord said to Samuel, heed their voice and make them a king. So it's just over and over throughout the chapter. So it's pretty easy to see what the theme is here.

And therefore to identify the problem, the issue here. About this desire to have a king to judge us, to rule over us.

A king just like all the other nations. Now, before we look at the chapter, just kind of walk our way through it. And consider what it has to teach us.

I'm struck by the way this narration begins. Part of this, I think you probably saw and maybe even reacted somewhat to.

[ 5 : 49 ] And that is really a couple of things. In the first place, how the scripture is so up to date. It's so up to date. Judges guilty of taking bribes.

That's pretty up to date, isn't it? Judges guilty of perverting justice. Nothing new about that.

Because there's nothing new under the sun. Whether it's city government or county government or state government or federal government. There's corruption among judges. Corruption among government leaders.

Corruption among congressmen. It's just all over the place. So this is not new, is it? And so it's up to date.

The Bible is so up to date. Don't ever let anybody convince you that the Bible is outdated. It just needs to be updated. We've got to somehow contextualize all scripture so that it fits with the things that are going on in our day.

[ 6 : 52 ] The Bible is very up to date. The other thing that strikes me here is the unvarnished truth of the Bible. The unvarnished truth of it.

Now, we don't know who wrote the book of Samuel. Tom's not here. I know it wasn't Paul. So, we don't know who wrote the book of Samuel.

Personally, I think Samuel was a big contributor. Possibly wrote some of it. The first part of it anyway. The part that we're reading perhaps here even tonight. And if not the author, certainly one of the main resources.

But whether he's the author of this or just telling the story, it strikes me that he makes no attempt to sugarcoat it. I mean, think about it. He's not romanticizing the story.

As perhaps we might if we were writing the story here. Especially this first part of it. Because he tells it just like it is.

[ 7 : 55 ] There's no attempt to avoid the shame of it and the disrepute of it. Disrepute to himself and to his family and especially to his two sons, Joel and Abijah.

See, the unvarnished truth of this. And this is so typical of the Bible through and through. And I present this as a compliment. As a point of admiration concerning God's scripture.

Because there are few better proofs of its divine inspiration. Because if it were written by a man. And especially in this case, if Samuel's writing here.

And this is not under divine inspiration. Then he might have written it differently. Because if it's written by a man. There would always be this attempt to present things in a better light.

Right? But even the greats in the Bible. The greats. Like, let's say, Abraham. I mean, we have the truth about Abraham.

[ 9 : 05 ] Right? He was a sinner as well. Even though the Bible presents him as a great man of faith. And, you know, other greats in the Bible.

Even David. The Bible tells the truth about men and women and life in general. It doesn't hold that back. It doesn't romanticize the story.

And I think it is one of those proofs of divine inspiration. So, the Bible is up to date. The Bible is the unvarnished truth.

And doesn't hold any punches. Doesn't try to present things in some better light. As, by the way, other histories of civilizations have certainly done.

All right, so as we look at the text, we should know at this point that Israel is in a transition period. This is a transition from a certain kind of state to another.

[ 10 : 08 ] That is a transition from basically what we would call a nation that's consisting primarily of tribal communities. Not a nation per se.

We speak of it as a nation sometimes at this point. It's Israel and they're in the land of promise. And they are possessing their land. We kind of think of them in terms of a nation.

But they're not a nation yet. They're really a bunch of tribal communities. Twelve of them. At this point, under the judgeship of Samuel. The last of the judges. And not just Samuel, but his two sons. But there's going to be a transition now from that state or that kind of arrangement. To, for the first time in their history, a united or unified nation of Israel under the kingship of their first king.

One they're wanting. And they get. And that's Saul. All right. So this is a kind of a transition period. So let's move then through the text. And I want to point out four things as we work our way through this chapter.

[ 11 : 21 ] Four things. Focusing again on this theme. This subject. Be careful what you ask for. Because you're going to likely get it.

And you'll regret it. So here's number one. Israel's faithless request. That's number one. Israel's faithless request. Samuel is now an old man.

All right. So some time has elapsed here. Even since chapter seven. We don't know how much time. We don't really have a record of the condition of Israel through that period of time.

But I would imagine it was one of relative peace. Not necessarily one of extreme devotion to Yahweh God. But still one of peace.

And so Samuel is judging. Ruling. In a sense. Not as king. But he's judge. And he appoints his sons. Joel and Abijah.

[ 12 : 19 ] To be judges. In Beersheba. Which is by the way. The extreme southern. Of the promised land. Or the land of Israel. And so we know the story about them.

I mean it tells us right at the very beginning. And it's almost like a *deja vu*. You know we read the very same thing about Hophni and Phinehas. Didn't we? The sons of Elijah. It's almost like Samuel has pushed the repeat button.

His sons also were unfaithful. They were corrupt. Like sometimes we hear of judges in our day. All right. So they're guilty of corruption. Taking bribes. They're perverting justice.

And possibly this identifies. By the way. One mistake that Samuel may have made. And that was to appoint his sons as judges. Because the judgeship in Israel was never meant to be hereditary.

All right. Now the priesthood was. But not judges. And so if Samuel was guilty of anything. It was nepotism. And nepotism almost always ends in disaster.

[ 13 : 24 ] And so here's the condition we have. And so that's how the story begins. It begins with the failure of the judges. But don't think for one minute that the request made by Israel was solely based upon the corruption of Samuel's sons.

Now it came out of something much deeper as we shall see. So the people approach Samuel. He's old. No telling how long he's going to live. They're thinking. And so we better do something.

His sons are rascals. And they've had about enough of them. And so they ask for a king. Quote. Just like the other nations around them.

Verse 5. Look. You're old. And your sons do not walk in your ways. Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.

Now here's the problem with this. The problem by the way is not strictly because Israel requested a king. I think God anticipated the need for a king in Israel.

[ 14 : 31 ] God had that as a part of his plan. And you can look by the way. And I'm not going to take the time tonight to read it. But Deuteronomy. Well I will read it.

I've got some of it right here in my notes. Deuteronomy chapter 17. I think starting with verse 14. When you come to the land. God said. These are instructions from the Lord.

When you come to the land. The promised land. That the Lord your God is giving you. And you possess it. And dwell in it. And then say. I will set a king over me.

Like all the nations that are around me. You may indeed set a king over you. Whom the Lord your God will choose. Now you already see a little difference here. Between what God had planned for. And what Israel is wanting. They're not looking for a king. That God would set over them. They want to choose the king. They want a king just like all the other nations. Alright so he says.

[ 15 : 26 ] You will choose a king. Your Lord God will choose him. One from among your brothers. You shall set as king over you. You may not put a foreigner over you. Who is not your brother.

Only he must not acquire many horses for himself. Or cause the people to return to Egypt. In order to acquire many horses. Since the Lord has said to you.

You shall never return that way again. And he shall not acquire many wives for himself. Lest his heart turn away. Nor shall he acquire for himself excessive silver and gold.

If you remember. I was reading the text earlier. You already see some divergence here. The kind of king that God really wanted for them.

But the kind of king God is ultimately going to give them. Because they were requested with the wrong heart. And when he sits on the throne of his kingdom. He shall write for himself in a book a copy of this law.

[ 16 : 23 ] The law of God. Approved by the Levitical priests. And it shall be with him. And he shall read it all the days of his life. This is meditation. This is devotion to the word of God.

That he may learn to fear the Lord his God. By keeping all the words of this law. And these statutes. And doing them that his heart may not be lifted up above his brothers. And that he may not turn aside from the commandment.

Either to the right hand or to the left. So that he may continue long in his kingdom. He and his children in Israel. And it kind of goes on from there. Now this is quite a different description here.

Isn't it? From what Israel is going to get as a king. Because they asked with the wrong heart. Alright. So the desire for a king is not the problem.

Just simply that. It's not the problem. That in and of itself. What then is the problem with this? Well they desired a king. Like all the other nations.

[ 17 : 25 ] That's the problem. Not a king like their God Yahweh. A king that would be devoted to God. Who would be godly. A king.

But rather a king. That would govern them. Just like the other nations. And so what is this? This is worldliness. This is a desire to be attached to the world.

This is a faithless request. They're looking for. They're looking at the other nations. All around them. Especially those that are prosperous. And they want to be successful.

Like all the other nations. And if they're going to be successful. Like all the other nations. Then they must have a king. Just like all the other nations. And so you see. Israel is usurping.

The authority of God. In this request. See Israel was always meant. To be a theocracy. That God is king.

[ 18 : 21 ] A nation governed by God. Even though. Eventually they would have a king. And sanctioned by God. Even though that was part of God's plan. Even then. God would be. The king of Israel.

And so Israel was to be a theocracy. And so Israel. This is Israel's faithless request. To usurp the authority of God. And it placed their allegiance.

And their devotion. And all of their hopes. And all of their dreams. And all of their aspiration. Placed all of that in a man. Rather than God. This was the problem.

Something else. I think was true. Of this faithless request. They did not want to be different. From the world. They didn't want to be. Separated.

To be set apart. From the world. We want a king to rule us. Like all the other nations. And you know. Here's the application. Really for us. And that is.

[ 19 : 16 ] Quite honestly. And we might as well just. Admit it. This is. A desire. A wicked desire. That is. Polluted. That has polluted. Our own hearts. And we have to battle with that.

Constantly. Don't we? But. See. Like Israel. Our lives are to be. A theocracy. Not ruled. By. The desires. That we may have. Of this world.

So Israel's faithless request. Second. Israel's. Familiar rejection. Their request. Was faithless. Because.

It was. Rejection. Of God. Of their God. Which. By the way. Was. Nothing new for them. Was. I mean. This is not new at all.

Verse 6 says. But. The thing displeased Samuel. When he. When they said. Give us a king. To judge us. So Samuel prayed to the Lord. Now what's all that about? Well. Samuel's the judge.

[ 20 : 13 ] And so he thought the people. Were rejecting his leadership. And so. He was offended by that. You know. They're rejecting me. And so he. Went to God about it.

But in verse 7. The Lord said to Samuel. Heed the voice of the people. In all that they say. To you. That is. Give them what they want. For they have not rejected you. But they have rejected me. That I should not reign over them. See. This. Here's the problem. Their faithless request.

But it's. A very familiar. Rejection of the Lord. Something that was. Almost. A constant part. Of their history. See. What. What is at the heart of the request?

It's idolatry. That's at the heart of the request here. Plain and simple. And this was nothing new for Israel. In fact. God said there to. To Samuel.

[ 21 : 08 ] In verse 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. It's been their problem. Every step of the way. All throughout their history.

With which they have forsaken me. And served other gods. So a familiar. Rejection. God had showered. His mercy upon. Grace.

And showered them with blessings. And delivered them from bondage. And. And God had. Had protected them from their enemies. Given them victory over their enemies.

And yet they kept. Going back. To worship other gods. We. Studied. All the way through. The book of Judges. Just that. Constant. Cycle. Repetitious cycle.

Of turning. Away from God. Rejecting God. Rejecting God. And God would. Would judge them. And then they would cry out. In repentance. So so.

[ 22 : 03 ] And God would deliver them. And pretty soon. They go right back. To their idolatry. All throughout their history. And so. From God. Mercy. After mercy. After mercy. After mercy.

But they kept putting their faith. And their trust. In someone. Or something. Other than God. And again. We need. To be alert to this. The same pattern.

Of idolatry. Exists in our own hearts. Okay. It's. It's there. We battle. With it. Every single day. And we must. Learn to recognize it.

In our own hearts. All right. So Israel's. Faithless request. Israel's. Familiar rejection. Third. Israel's. Future. Regret. Their regret.

And. And again. Be careful. What you ask for. Because. You. Just might get it. And. Live to regret it. And so. I love what God says here.

[ 22 : 57 ] In verse 9. Now therefore. Heed their voice. Give them what they want. However. Here it comes. However. You shall solemnly.

Forewarn them. And show them. The behavior. Of the king. Who will reign over them. Just the kind of king. They're going to get. That I'm going to give them. And so that's what Samuel did.

He told them. And that's what we have. Starting. With verse 11. What a description. Of the kind of king. And again. Compare this. With what I read. A moment ago. Out of Deuteronomy.

17. About the kind of king. That God wanted. For them. And the two. Don't even. Don't even compare. He said. This will be the behavior. Of the king. Who will reign over you.

What's he going to do? He's going to take your sons. Point them. For his own chariots. That is. He's going to take your sons. And put them into. To service. Into military service.

[ 23 : 53 ] So he's going to bring war. Okay. He's going to take your property. He's going to take all of these things. Just know. This is the kind of king. You're going to get. You want a king. Like all the other nations. I'm going to give you one.

And this is the kind of king. You're going to get. And so Samuel describes all of that to them. So when they asked for a king. They were not asking for. The kind of king that God wanted for them.

That I read in Deuteronomy 17. A king that loves and honors Yahweh. A king who loves God's word. And obeys God's laws. A king who does not focus on gold and treasures.

No. They want something else. A king like all the other nations. And so God's going to give that to them. They asked for it. God's going to give it to them. And they're going to regret it.

In fact that's how it kind of ends. And you will cry out in that day. Because of your king. Whom you. You have chosen for yourselves.

[ 24 : 52 ] And the Lord will not hear you in that day. So they're going to live to regret it. They're going to get a king. That will take them to war. They're going to get a king.

That's going to take their sons. And their sons are going to be killed in battle. They're going to get a king. That's going to tax them to death. A king that is going to take their property.

A king that is going to be for big government. Okay. Death and taxes. That's what they are asking for really. They don't know it. But that's what they're asking for. And that's what they're going to get. When God gives them Saul. See they asked for a king like all the other nations. And that's exactly what they gave. Well God gave. Saul.

Now again. They were not. Asking for a wrong thing. We need to understand that. Just simply asking for a king. Was not. Not a wrong thing to ask for.

[ 25 : 47 ] God's plan was to give them a king. But God's plan was to give them David. To give them David. A type of their eternal king.

A man after God's own heart. That was God's plan. But because of their faithlessness. Because of their idolatry. God first gave them a king.

That matched the wickedness of their own heart. Faithlessness of their own lives. God gave them. What they deserved. So Israel's faithless requests.

Israel's familiar rejection. Israel's future regret. And then one more. Israel's firm. Refusal. You see. Even after Samuel.

Read this list. Gave them this list. Of the kind of king. That they're going to get. Even after that. Made it as. As bad as he could word it. I really think he went over the top. To really say.

[ 26 : 46 ] This is what you're going to get. Are you sure this is what you want? Even after that. I think they had an opportunity. That time. To say. No. We don't want that. We'll stick with God. But they still want it.

Even after. Samuel read that list. To them. They still wanted that kind of king. The people were hardened. In their faithless rejection.

Verse 19. This is incredible. I just read this earlier. But. Let me read it a little slower. And let's let all this sink in. Verse 19. Nevertheless. The people refused to obey.

The voice of Samuel. And they said. No. We will have a king over us. So they're very. Very. Very. Affirm in this. Aren't they? But listen to this. Verse 20.

That we also may. Now get this. We may be like all the nations. See now. Their hearts are truly.

[ 27 : 41 ] Unmasked. Here. They don't just want a king. Like all the other nations. They want to be like the other nations. And that our king may judge us. And go out before us.

And fight our battles. And be victorious in battle. You know. Sometimes. We want to be just like. Other people around us.

Let's just be honest. Some people we admire. Some people we think. You know. It's having more fun than we are. More successful than we are. Sometimes we want to be just like the people around.

And sometimes. We then really want to enjoy. Some of the. Things. That they have. And we want to enjoy.

The fun. And the. Satisfaction. Of worldliness. As we perceive it. Sometimes. And we want all those things.

[ 28 : 40 ] Even to the point of asking God for them. You think about it. Sometimes we ask for things. That are very worldly. Be careful what you ask for.

Because you might just get it. And live. To. Regret. Thank you.