

## 1Samuel 8 – Rejected Leadership

### 1. The Rejection of Leadership

So, here's the question – what do the four leaders have in common on the powerpoint?

All four of these leaders have been rejected by the people of Australia.

Well, actually, there's one there that wasn't popularly elected,

And ironically, she was the one who wasn't popularly rejected either.

The power of democracy is the ability to reject your leader without civil war, without violence.

So too, as we jump into the story of Samuel,

And this crucial chapter, Israel reject their leadership.

Israel reject their leadership,

With repercussions will be felt all the way through the book of Samuel and beyond.

But before jump into 1Samuel 8, we need to lay some groundwork first.

We need to set the foundation of how we understand the Old Testament.

Often, the Old Testament is treated either like a Nigella Lawson Cook book, or a Tom Clancy Novel.

That is, like a cook book, we just flip to the recipe, story, that we want, jump in, get out and viola!

For example, jump to the 10 commandments, all good – jump out.

Alternatively, the way I read a Tom Clancy Novel is that I skip all the details and read the dialogue.

I just want to follow the action,

and get to the big battle, nuclear bomb, president assassination part at the end.

And so we just jump through the Old Testament, so that we can get to the Jesus bit at the end.

However, there is a better way, there is a deeper means by which to understand the O.T.

This better way requires two things – first, understanding the journey. << Everything a journey >>

The Old Testament describes a journey.

The O.T is God's unfolding journey of salvation that he will achieve for his people Israel.

That is, the Bible is a movement, not a cycle.

The Bible is not simply – we're all trying to get back to paradise lost.

No, the story of the Bible starts in a garden, and the journeys to a city.

The second item that is required is the compass for the journey.

The compass that can translate the information from any point on the journey,

and explain what it means, how point A connects to point Z..

And that compass is Jesus himself.

That is, every part of the Old Testament can only be understood in its relationship to Jesus.

e.g. the book of Psalms – is not first and foremost a self-help for suffering today.

- first and foremost – it is about understanding the sufferings of the Christ.

So in the coming weeks, as we'll explore 1Samuel,  
we'll see how the compass of Christ re-orientates the whole book...

And so, coming back to 1Samuel 8 – the question is - where is Israel up to in their journey?  
Where have they come from? Where are they going? What are they doing?

We pick up the story, where Israel are about to reject their leadership.

Israel have just come out of the period of the Judges – where men and women were raised up.  
Samson, Deborah, Gideon, Ehud, who saved Israel, then governed or judged Israel, but then died.  
And the downward spiral of Israel is recorded in the book of Judges.

So, at the start of Samuel, Israel are at rock bottom

– there is no judge, and only a loose collection of tribes in existence.

Then God raises up Samuel – a prophet, in the footsteps of Moses

- Samuel who judges Israel (1Samuel 7:16) – and as we start Chapter 8, is about to die.
- But things are different to the time of Judges.
- Samuel tries to appoint his own sons as judges over Israel...

## 2. The Threat to Israel's Security (vv. 1-3)

So what happens when Samuel is about to leave this mortal coil? << vv. 1-3>>

- ***"They took bribes and perverted justice" (v. 3)***

The warning signs are screaming out to us.

Previously in 1Samuel, Eli the priest, with his two corrupt sons, Hophni and Phineas,

So too Samuel the prophet, has two corrupt sons, Joel and Abijah.

Just like Hophni and Phineas, who "took by force" food offered by the people,

So too here, Joel and Abijah, "take bribes" which goes hand in hand with

"Perverting justice"

But here, Joel and Abijah are guilty of two crimes – taking bribes and perverting justice.

And these two concepts of – "taking" and "justice" will shape the rest of this chapter

### 3. The Rejection of God as King (vv. 4-9)

And so, like the corrupt practices of FIFA, swirling around Sepp Blatter – there is an intervention. This time, the intervention is by the leaders of Israel. << vv. 4-6 >>

The bald-faced request of Israel in v. 4 is so terribly right and so terribly wrong.

Israel's leaders rightly condemn the actions of Joel and Abijah.

They do not walk in their father's ways.

And yet, Israel's request is so terribly wrong –

“Set over us a king to “judge” us like all the other nations...

There's something inherently wrong when Israel wants to be like all the other nations.

And yet, here is Israel, whom God commanded to be different from the other nations,

Wanting to be like all the other nations.

In fact the very next sentence reads, v. 6 – “This matter was evil in the eyes of Samuel”

Samuel knows that this is deplorable, despicable, and wicked!

But even worse, than Samuel's opinion of the matter, is God's objective view. << vv. 7-9 >>

v. 7 – God sees straight through the elders of Israel – “they have rejected not Samuel, but God”

- ***“Not you, but me they have rejected” (v. 7)***

The language is even stronger – “not you they have rejected, but me, they have rejected”

The object of the sentence is put first (Yoda-like) – “not you ... but me ... “

The leaders of Israel have rejected God.

By the very act of asking for a leader, Israel have rejected their true leader, Yahweh, their God.

So Israel, even though they have entered into a covenant relationship, a marriage with God,

Israel want to check out the other options. Israel want to try other forms of leadership.

#### 4. The “Justice” of the King (vv. 10-18)

And the scary mercy of God is that he doesn't just wipe out Israel on the spot.

God doesn't just obliterate the leaders of Israel for rejecting him.

No, God does the opposite – if Israel want a leader like the nations, then God will give it to them.

God will give them the leader they want.... But it's not going to be pretty....

In fact, as we read through, one word is repeated again and again...<< vv. 10-18 – 2 slides>>

##### - **“He will take ...” (v. 11)**

This king will do one thing – “he will take” from you.

And if you thought Hophni and Phineas were bad in taking from you.

And if you thought Joel and Abijah were taking bribes from you,

They're but a drop in the ocean of what this 'king' will take from you.

And so, the power dynamic will be so completely shifted because this king will take all.

## 5. The Voice of the people (vv. 19-22)

And even though this will be awful and terrible and oppressive, and destructive,  
You know what, v. 19 – Israel still want it. << vv. 19-20 >>

So Israel willingly gulp down the stupidity of kingship.

### - **“Obey their voice and make them a king” (v.22)**

And so you have the terrible reversal of authority. << vv. 21-22 >>

The people should obey the voice of Samuel, Israel should obey the voice of God,  
But here it is all upside down. Samuel listens to the people.

The voice of the people are obeyed by Samuel.

God tells Samuel – obey the voice of the people and make them a king.

Popular opinion is terrible thing when it rules over the voice of God.

## 6. The Prevailing Voices, The Rejection & the Justice of the King (Luke 23:13-23)

Now, as horrifying as this rejection of God has been.  
As terrible as God's own people wanting to be like the nations around them.  
As ludicrous as the prospect of having a king that will only 'take' from them.  
And as topsy-turvy as God telling Samuel to listen to the voice of the people,

Come with me to Luke 23, and there is an even greater rejection of God,  
There is an even greater voice of the people that speaks out of absolute absurdity

<< Luke 23:13-23 >>

The voice of the people prevail – so that an innocent man is crucified.  
But it's worse than that – for this man is God's chosen king, this man came to rescue his people.  
That is, in Samuel's time, God's people reject God asking for the king they want.  
But here, in Jesus' time, God's people reject the king they need.  
Worse, they hand Jesus over to the Roman's so that they don't have to do the dirty work.

But the king that we need did something very different to the king Israel wanted.

Whereas, the king Israel wanted would only 'take' justice from Israel,  
***But the king we need 'gave' up his own life to justify us before God.***

So the question for us is – do we want God to listen to our voice about the king we want?  
Or are we willing to listen to the voice of God about the king that we need?

Let's pray.