

- **\*Read I Samuel 8\*** The story of Israel as God's people is littered with many pivotal moments. Here in **I Samuel 8**, we find one of these great pivotal moments when the people as a whole reject God as the leader of their nation. This wasn't something that came out of the blue, but it was something that had been building up over time. All throughout the book of Judges the pattern of the people doing what was evil in the sight of the Lord is very evident. I counted at least 8 times where they turned from the Lord and did evil and then just a short while later they would cry out to Him for deliverance.
- The people seemed to only use God for His good blessings. When things were good then they would go about their own way and do what they wanted, but as soon as things got bad they would return to God to stop the bleeding. The people were not interested in submitting to God out of love, but they only went to Him to make things better. While they had not officially rejected God as their Leader until **I Samuel 8**, the truth is that their rejection had been taking place for quite some time. I'd like for us to consider Israel's rejection of God and some lessons that we can learn from it.

### **I. The mistakes of those in leadership positions will sometimes push others towards rejection of God. (vv.1-5)**

- A. It seems as if the ungodly behavior of the sons of Samuel Joel and Abijah was the final straw that broke the camel's back for the people. They were scoundrels who selfishly looked out for just themselves, took bribes, and perverted justice as they were ruling.
- B. The people took their actions and the age of Samuel and determined that they were not going to be fit to rule in the place of Samuel once he was gone, so they wanted to have a king set up to rule them. They didn't ask for God to give them a new prophet or godly person to rule them but they wanted a king to make them like the nations. The truth is that the bad actions of those in leadership was a contributing factor to their rejection as God, and we must keep in mind that our mistakes as leaders can have the same disastrous affect.
- C. While it is true that some people will use any excuse they can find to reject God, we must make sure as people who are leadership positions to not provide them with the necessary ammunition. As parents, we must be consistent and set good examples for our children. **(Eph. 6:4)** Shepherds/deacons/preachers/teachers must be sure to lead lives that are examples of godly behavior. Shepherds especially must be sure to not do those ungodly things that would push people away. **(I Pet. 5:4)**
- D. We must all use wisdom to make sure that everything we do is to the highest standard so that no one can ever use us as an excuse to reject the Lord. It would be sad for them to use the excuse that "these people who claim God are just as bad as the rest of the people in this world." and it be because we haven't lived up to God's standard. Let that not be said about us, let us not be used as an excuse for rejection of God.

### **II. We should not take the rejection of God personally. (vv.6-8)**

- A. It is not expressly said but I believe we can infer that Samuel was personally hurt by these words of rejection from the people. We are told that these words displeased Samuel and it might be that he took a lot of personal responsibility for the rejection of Israel, even though it seems as if he had been faithful to God in his service to Him and Israel.
- B. God seeks to comfort Samuel by letting him know that the rejection of the people wasn't towards Samuel but it was ultimately towards God. He even makes mention of their constant pattern of choosing other gods and forsaking Him. God basically says that Samuel is simply getting a little taste of what God had been experiencing for generations with this people.
- C. We can easily become discouraged by people's rejection of God and His standard for us in this life. This can especially be true when we try to take share the Gospel with those who are in need of it. We can get down about ourselves and think that we are not good enough or that something is wrong with us, but we simply need to remind ourselves what God reminded Samuel of. These people are rejecting God and His standards and not what we have given them. The Gospel is God's message and we are simply the messengers.
- D. As long as we are the good workers out in the fields that we need to be then God will be pleased and we can have a good mindset knowing that we are doing as we ought to do and the rejection of God is truly rejection of God and not ourselves.

### **III. The rejection of God leads to more, not less, problems. (vv.9-18)**

- A. The Israelites were bound and determined to reject God and embrace a king like the nations around them. Because God loved them He warned them that their lives would be completely different under king. In **vv.9-18**, God let's them know that they would be under constant oppression from their earthly king. Basically, without saying it simply, God is letting them know that an earthly king will lead them into more problems and not less.
- B. So many people reject God, His Will, and His standards because they either contradict their desires or they think that they have a better way of doing things. Sadly, these individuals fail to realize that God holds wisdom that is far superior to our own. There is a reason why James said that if anyone is lacking or seeking wisdom then they need to ask of God. (**James 1:5**) God possesses all wisdom and He knows what is good and best for us.
- C. When we fail to consider the wisdom of God and we do things our own way, we will run into issues that were not present when we utilized the wisdom of God. Our wisdom in the realms of marriage, morality, the church, etc will only lead us to have issues that could be avoided if we seek God's wisdom instead of our own. (**James 3:13-18**)

### **IV. God will allow us to reject Him and embrace the world. (vv.19-22)**

- A. At the end of the Lord telling the people about all of the issues that they are going to deal with by rejecting God, you would hope that the people would come to their senses and recognize that rejection of God would be bad for them. Sadly, this just wasn't the case. The people refused to listen to Samuel and the Lord and they were determined to be like the nations around them. They were going to reject God and strive to be like the nations.
- B. You might think that at this point God might send a plague and punish them outright for their rejection of Him, but that isn't how He approached this situation. Instead, God allowed for them to make this decision for themselves and the rest of the story of Israel continues on and we know the different ways in which they suffered because of this decision.
- C. Israel was not the last group of people to reject God, His Will, and His standards. People, today, continue to do the same things, and people all in-between today and then have done the same thing. God has allowed men to exercise their free will in their rejection of God, but that doesn't mean that they haven't suffered the consequences for such things.
- D. Paul writes about the Gentiles rejection of God in **Romans 1:18-32**. In this text we see the decision of the Romans to ignore God even though His presence was clearly seen all around them. Yet, they rejected Him as God and went after their own desires, and God allowed for them to do this. He allowed to have depraved minds and do that which is sinful and unnatural. However, just because God allowed them to do this doesn't mean that He approved. No, no this isn't the case at all. Paul makes strong mentioned that these individuals, just as all who sin, are worthy of death along with those who approve of such things.
- E. God will allow us to make our own decisions, but that doesn't mean that we are immune to the consequences of our decisions.

The foolishness of Israel led them to make the ignorant decision of rejecting the all knowing and powerful God of heaven as the King of their nation. They allowed the mistakes of men to push them in that direction. Their rejection hurt a good man of God. They were warned about the consequences of their actions, yet they still rejected God and He allowed them to do so. All of these lessons we learn from Israel can take place even still today. May God help us to recognize the foolishness of rejecting Him and His wisdom and power. May we accept His rulership and enjoy the blessings that come when we live a life with Jesus as our King.