

**The need for new leadership**

• How is God's blessing perpetuated?

• Grace is not inherited via the family line

**How can good leadership be found?**

• In response, Samuel prays

• The people sought worldly direction

• The true answer was to seek God

• The people trusted military might

• They forgot God's past interventions

• The modern church often has similar questions

As Samuel got older the need of a new leadership began to be obvious. Here is a major question: **how is blessing perpetuated once God has given it?** The ministry of Samuel had been a great time of peace and pastoral supervision. But what will happen now? Once again, the sons of a national leader regarded themselves as candidates for leadership. **It is the easy way to think that leadership can simply be inherited.** Eli's sons had done damage to the worship of Israel. Now the pattern seems as if it might repeat itself; Samuel's sons seek to step into the father's position. They start assisting him in the southern part of the kingdom where Beersheba was to be found<sup>1</sup>. They do not seem to have been quite so wicked as Hophni and Phineas but still they were corrupt and more concerned about personal gain than about spirituality. This is typical of people who come into office without being called by God. They were grandchildren of the godly Hannah and children of the godly Samuel but grace is not inherited via the family line and Samuel's two sons like Eli's two sons were corrupt<sup>2</sup>.

**How then can good leadership be found?** The people of Israel were conscious of the ways of the surrounding nations. They were wanting the kind of powerful protection a king could provide. Samuel's age and his corrupt sons gave the people an argument for what they really wanted which was to have a king and so be like the surrounding nations<sup>1</sup>. This too is also trying to perpetuate blessing by physical descent, for it somehow hopes that one good king will be succeeded by an equally good son.

Samuel takes this as a rejection of his leadership<sup>1</sup>, but handles his feelings of rejection by taking the matter to God in prayer. God tells him to accept their request but at the same time says that they are really rejecting the kingship of God<sup>2</sup>.

The people's desire is a piece of worldliness. The wish for a king comes from seeing what happens in the surrounding world and wanting to be like it. They are concerned about how to handle enemies, and this is the best they can think of. **The true answer was to look to God.** In days gone by they had cried to God and God had sent them deliverers in a remarkable way. There had been the remarkable deliverance at Ebenezer, and the memorial stone was still there to remind them of it<sup>1</sup>.

**The people's desire is trust in military might.** A king would be a soldier protecting the nation by his wars and his armies. It was the rise of enemies of Israel that made them want a protector (see Samuel's words in 12:12).

The rejection of God shows itself in rejection of God's servant<sup>1</sup>. They forgot the many times God had intervened. They forgot that their being overrun by enemies was the result of turning to other gods. They forgot what Samuel had done for them some years before. All they could see was the rise of powerful enemies such as Nahash of the Ammonites<sup>2</sup>.

**The modern church often has similar questions,** and often follows worldly ways in seeking leadership. Pride and empire-building often creep in and do great damage to the people of God. What it comes to is this; do we want 'official' leadership, 'committee' leadership, and 'management principles', or do we want God-given men and women raised up for the hour? It is important to have some recognizable order but the danger is that sheer worldliness will creep in, so that we think we can 'arrange' a good system.

1 8:1-2

2 8:3

1 8:4-5

1 8:6

2 8:7

1 7:10-12

1 8:8

2 12:12

God punished – by giving what they wanted

**Samuel warned of the implications of kingship**

• Seven negatives

• But the people insisted on a king

• Whereas they should have called upon God

• We must learn to recognize God's call

• God's calling on leadership is essential

**God punished Israel by giving them what they wanted.** Sometimes if we are insistent on going our own way God administers a powerful rebuke by giving us our desires.

Samuel is told to warn them of the implications of kingship. It will involve (i) compulsory service of the king - a conscription into national service <sup>□1</sup>, (ii) appropriation of property for royal use <sup>□2</sup>, (iii) an additional royal tithe <sup>□3</sup>, (iv) loss of employees because of the king's demands <sup>□4</sup> (v) taxation or appropriation of wealth in the form of animals <sup>□4□5</sup>, and (vi) reduced personal liberty ('you shall be his servants,' <sup>□6</sup>. Also Samuel predicts that kingship would lead to eventual distress but the situation would be one which could not be reversed and cries of distress would not be heard <sup>□7</sup>.

All this was a serious warning, but the people are not convinced and insist on having a king <sup>□1</sup>. Samuel hears it all, shares it with God in prayer, is instructed to accede to their request and tells them to go back to their cities as he prepares to set up kingship for them as they have requested <sup>□2</sup>.

**What was needed was further calling upon God** as had happened in the past, so that God would raise up for them new leaders. This was God's appointed way. Even if they got a good king, could they guarantee his son's suitability for the next generation? When Jesus came he was a directly-given leader and Saviour. No committee chose him. Apostolic leadership is similar. It comes '*not from people. . . not through people, but through Jesus Christ*' <sup>□1</sup>.

We must learn to recognize men and women that God raises up. Our systems of our own devising for finding leaders, do not work in the church of Jesus Christ.

We must seek God as the situation requires, and be careful about systems that give leaders to the church in a worldly way. No worker should be in God's work unless he is manifestly suited to what he is doing. As Paul said of deacons, '*Let them also be tested... if they prove themselves blameless let them serve*' <sup>□1</sup>. By getting an inherited kingship the need to seek God generation by generation was being side-stepped! God rebukes them by giving them what they want! Better is Jesus' way: '*Request. . . from the Lord... that he may thrust out workers...*' <sup>□2</sup>.

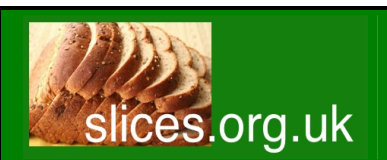
□1 8:11-13  
 □2 8:14  
 □3 8:15  
 □4 8:16  
 □5 8:17a  
 □6 8:17b  
 □7 8:18

□1 8:19-20  
 □2 8:21-22

□1 Gal 1:1

□1 1 Tim 3:10

□2 Matt 9:38



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