

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

The Books Of Samuel: God's Shift Of Israel From Apostasy Under The Judges To David's Reign

I. 1 Samuel: From Samuel To The Death Of Saul

I. God's Gracious Versus Man's Oppressive Governing Patterns

(1 Samuel 7:7-8:22)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

A great need exists today to understand how to handle oppressive governing patterns in human institutions:

(1) The need exists relative to the secular government: the editorial, "Corruption of Justice" in the Republican-American, June 20, 2016, p. 6A reported how "Mrs. Clinton set up an unauthorized private email account and server," and that this "system endangered national security." Former Department of Justice official "Ronald J. Sievert . . . who served under four presidents, noted the department can prosecute anyone who placed at risk information relevant to national security, regardless of whether it was classified. However . . . Mr. Obama . . . has said Mrs. Clinton didn't jeopardize national security. Such comments signaled to DOJ that it should lay off . . . This is contrary to the president's assurance that 'there is no political influence' in the email investigation or any other federal case."

The editor added, "The president disregarded the rule of law and signaled to all public servants that they can do as they want, free of consequences. That is no way to run a government." It is also very oppressive to the people!

(2) The need exists in the Church, too: a classmate of mine in seminary told our class on "Problems in Ecclesiology" that he heard a pastor once tell his congregation, "The board has made a decision to follow this course of action. By the way, I am the Church Board!" He was correct, for he ruled the Board and the Church as a dictator!

(3) Then, oppressive governing often exists in marital life: (a) last week, the New York Mets were considering signing Jose Reyes, third baseman with the Colorado Rockies, to play for the Mets, but there was uncertainty about the signing due to a charge of domestic violence against Mr. Reyes. (rotoworld.com/player/mlb/3605/jose-reyes)

(b) This matter affects us locally: last week, I was told of an alleged spousal abuse case in our part of the state!

Need: *So we ask, "How does God want us to handle oppressive governing patterns in human institutions?!"*

I. God displayed under Samuel's oversight an edifying pattern of governing His people, 1 Samuel 7:7-17:

- A. Samuel had relied heavily on God's role and little on his own role, being considerate of others in his role:
 - 1. When the people of Israel faced the crisis of a Philistine attack, Samuel prayed to God for His help, and the Lord put the Philistines to flight before Israel's men by sending a great thunderstorm, 1 Samuel 7:7-11.
 - 2. God's use of the storm's loud thunder to terrorize the Philistines in battle displayed His supremacy over their storm god Baal and his consort, Asherah, the Philistine goddess of love and war, and God kept the Philistines subdued to Israel all during Samuel's judgeship, 1 Sam. 7:12-14; B. K. C., O. T., p. 438.
 - 3. Samuel then rode a circuit judging Israel at Bethel, Gilgal and Mizpeh, before returning to his home in Ramah, all in great consideration for the people of the area around him (1 Samuel 7:15-17):
 - a. The circuit of these towns involved places that were in or close to the small tribe of Benjamin in central Israel where Samuel lived. (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, map 4: "The Twelve Tribes of Israel")
 - b. Accordingly, Samuel was clearly not using this circuit to cut down significantly on the distance people had to travel to have him judge their cases if they were traveling from distant parts in Israel.
 - c. Rather, having the crowds who came to him move from town to town in the area (1) kept each town from losing its social stability by being overpopulated for too long (2) while nevertheless spreading around in Samuel's tribal area the economic advantages of having crowds with livelihood needs come their way.
 - d. Thus, Samuel was giving thoughtful consideration for others around him in how he judged the nation.
- B. This pattern of governing had minimized problems and protected personal liberties for Israel's people:
 - 1. There was no need to draft young men into a standing army, for God acted as Israel's national defense.
 - 2. There was thus no need to draft young women to work as servants for the army or for a king's palace.
 - 3. This also meant there was no need for a king to seize private property to feed such a bureaucracy.
 - 4. Consequently, there was no increasing taxation or loss of personal liberty due to a growing bureaucracy.

II. However, Israel chose to reject this edifying godly pattern of governing in favor of the worldly pattern of rule by a human monarch regardless of God's warning that this pattern would be oppressive:

- A. When Samuel grew old and he appointed his sons as his deputy judges at Beer-sheba, since they distorted judgment by taking bribes, the nation's elders used this situation as the reason to ask Samuel to appoint a king over them that they might be governed like all of the Gentile nations around them, 1 Samuel 8:1-5.

- B. Samuel was unhappy at this request, and he sought God's guidance on the matter, 1 Samuel 8:6.
- C. The Lord replied that Samuel should heed the elders' request, for in asking for a king, they were not only rejecting Samuel, but the Lord, 1 Samuel 8:7. God explained that ever since Israel's Exodus from Egypt to that day, Israel had habitually forsaken Him for other gods, so in rejecting Samuel's judgeship that highlighted God's role and minimized Samuel's role, they were actually rejecting God's rule as their King, 1 Samuel 8:8.
- D. In calling Samuel to heed the people's request for a human monarch, God directed him to warn the nation of the unedifying results of switching from God's rule to rule by a human monarchy (as follows), 1 Sam. 8:9-18:
 1. First, Samuel revealed that a human monarch would draft of Israel's young men for his army and draft their young women as servants in his bureaucracy composed of the king and his army, 1 Samuel 8:9-13.
 2. Second, Samuel stated that a human monarch would seize private agricultural lands, servants, beasts of burden and livestock to meet the needs of his army and palace, 1 Samuel 8:14-17a.
 3. Third, Samuel revealed that a human monarch would also subject the people to servitude, removing some of their personal liberties versus what they had enjoyed under direct divine rule, 1 Samuel 8:17b.
 4. Fourth, Samuel stated that a human monarch would oppress the people, that God would ignore the cry of the people for deliverance from this oppression because they had rejected the Lord's rule, 1 Samuel 8:18.
- E. Though Samuel warned the people about this series of burdens they would face under a human monarch, the people refused to heed him, opting instead to have a human king so they might be like all the nations around them where the king judged them and led them in war, 1 Samuel 8:19-20.

III. Following this decision by the people, Samuel returned to the Lord for additional direction, and God told him to dismiss the elders, giving consent to their wish for a king, and planning to follow the Lord's further lead in whom he should anoint to be Israel's human monarch, 1 Samuel 8:21-22.

Lesson: *Though God gave Israel national defense, personal liberty and ease in life by maximizing His rule and minimizing human rule with a considerate, godly judge in Samuel, Israel rejected that governing pattern for rule by a king to be like the nations around her despite God's warnings of the unedifying consequences in doing so.*

Application: *If troubled by oppressive rule, (1) may we trust in Christ for salvation to come under His reign in our own lives and qualify to participate in His future Messianic Kingdom, John 3:16; Revelation 20:1-22:5. (2) May we then use what opportunity we have to influence all human institutions around us, be it government, church, business, family or marriage, to MAXIMIZE faith in God and to MINIMIZE reliance on human oversight, with the human overseers being godly and serving with a focus on being considerate for the needs of their subordinates.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

An illustration of this message was played out in our daytime Vacation Bible School ministry this past week: Our crafts director was seriously injured in a car accident on her way to our daytime V. B. S. ministry last Wednesday morning, and she was taken by ambulance to St. Francis Hospital in Hartford. Her husband called me as he was following the ambulance on its way to the hospital, briefly filling me in on the major details of the event, and saying that his wife would not be at the V. B. S. ministry that day and at least for the near future.

When I received this news, I immediately went to our V. B. S. director who was in the crafts room trying to organize everyone there since the crafts director was clearly late, and when I told her of the accident, she immediately announced to all of the V. B. S. staff members in the crafts room news of the accident, then she asked me to lead the group in prayer for our crafts director's welfare.

However, the group was not at a loss as to what to do, for the V. B. S. director had wisely called a staff meeting well before our V. B. S. ministry began to inform everyone on the craft projects to be done so they already knew what needed to be done in instructing and guiding the children in the craft sessions. The staff was then able to close ranks in the absence of the crafts director and help take the lead in the crafts segment of the ministry.

Furthermore, in thoughtfulness for the injured crafts director, on the last day of V. B. S., the children were led by the staff to make "Get Well" cards for the missing crafts director, an edifying directive for everyone involved.

Maximizing trust in God, with the human overseers seeking to be as considerate as possible for those under their care, made what could have been a traumatic ministry event not only manageable, but even a blessing!

May we trust in Christ for salvation from sin. As believers, may we then seek to practice and/or promote that pattern of governing in all institutions that favors heavy reliance on the Lord and a minimal reliance on human governors, with such human governors being godly and aiming to meet the needs of their subordinates!