

Intro:

Last week we considered *The King Anticipated*. We saw the plan of God for man's dominion over the earth, but then we saw the plan was shattered by man's sin.

Nevertheless two things are true in human history:

Because of the image of God that is marred but not removed, there is a longing in the hearts of men for a king who will lead them and exercise dominion over all men. This longing is behind the success of men who pursue world domination, or even behind the drive that leads some men to seek prominent leadership.

On the other hand, there is a thread in revealed history where God demonstrates his intention to provide the perfect king. We see little hints of it in the promises God makes to the patriarchs, though we don't see any king as yet.

In fact, by the end of Genesis, we don't even have a chosen nation as yet.

All we have is a world full of people in rebellion to the revelation of God that they do have — and one family, full of faults and sins, through whom God chooses to bless the earth.

Now you know the history of this family. God sent them to Egypt for about 400 years. At first they were in prosperity and favour, but eventually they fell out of favour and were oppressed.

Moses led them out of Egypt and through the wilderness for 40 years...

Joshua led them in the initial conquests of the promised land

Various judges led them locally as they dealt with raiding armies from their neighbours

The last judge was Samuel

There came a time when the Ammonites under king Nahash began to threaten. At this point, the people are beginning to doubt Samuel and demand a king instead. We are going to look at the choice of Saul as king and compare and contrast it with the later choice of David.

From this, we are going to make application to the idea of making decisions in the will of God.

1 Sam 8.1-9, 10.17-27, 16.1-13

Proposition: There is a spiritual dimension to every choice that is made; pray for discernment.

I. The ever-present spiritual dimension to human choice

A. They have not rejected you, they have rejected me (8.7)

1. The invisible spiritual dimension
2. On a par with idolatry (8.8)
3. A place of spiritual danger (8.9)

B. God sees not as man sees (16.7)

1. The invisible spiritual dimension
2. The Lord's choice based on heart – an invisible, spiritual state

The people asking for a king and the old judge looking for his replacement are taught that there is a spiritual dimension to their choices. This is true of all the choices you make in life.

- The spiritual dimension is invisible
- The spiritual dimension is easily missed
- The spiritual dimension can be deliberately ignored

II. The human tendency to choose based on outward appearance

A. The thread of external vs. internal

1. Explicitly stated in 16.7, and continued for each son (16.8-10)
2. Evident issue in the whole record of the choices
3. The rejection of Samuel (8.1-9)
 - a. The age of Samuel (1)
 - b. The perversity of Samuel's sons (3)
 - c. The viewpoint (vision) of the elders of Israel (5)
 - 1) Behold: we see you and your sons
 - 2) Now, appoint us a king *like all the nations* – those that we see

4. The coronation of Saul (10.20-24)
 - a. The visuals: Saul is head and shoulders above the rest
 - b. The introduction by Samuel: do you see him whom the Lord has chosen?
 - c. The response: Long live the king
 - d. Samuel's final address (12.12-13)
 - 1) They saw the Ammonites and demanded a king
 - 2) Now behold your king
5. The anointing of David (16.6, 12)
 - a. Even Samuel is not immune to the human tendency
 - b. Samuel looked at Eliab (16.6)
 - c. David's appearance (16.12)
 - 1) David looked as kingly as Eliab
 - 2) Our visions of David at this period highly affected by Sunday school literature – pictures of a young boy
 - 3) David will be offered Saul's armor in the next chapter
 - a) Saul, a head and shoulders taller than everyone
 - b) David is no stripling and Saul is not a total fool
 - c) David was likely as tall as Saul – perhaps not as filled out, but a fine looking man

When you think about the choice between David and Saul from the external viewpoint, there is little to choose between them. Both look the part.

Often choices that we make seem to present virtually equal choices – no problem going either way.

- But... there is always a spiritual dimension
- Do you see it?
- Are your own fears/desires/emotions in the way?
- How do you discern the spiritual dimension in making choices?

III. The critical necessity of seeking and submitting to God's direction in making choices

A. The people of Israel sought out Samuel (8.4)

1. Their instincts were good but their mind was already made up
2. There is benefit in seeking godly counsel – if you will listen to it

How often is it that someone comes to a pastor or other spiritually minded Christian and asks advice ... and then go ahead and do what he wants anyway?

- Pastors can repeat story after story (if they would) of that very thing happening
- Pastors themselves can be guilty of the very same thing

B. Samuel sought out God (8.6)

1. In Samuel's sight, the thing was evil (still looking at externals)
2. But Samuel turned to God in prayer – seeking God's mind on the matter
 - a. It is possible to pray about a matter with your mind made up (your 'wanter' convinces you of God's will)
 - b. It is another thing to be completely submissive to God in making your choices

The choice of a king is obviously a momentous choice for a nation. Jesus was faced with a similar monumental choice: Lk 12.12-16

- He spent the whole night in prayer to God
- Jesus characterized his own ministry as 'always doing what the Father commands him to do'

When you receive spiritual help from spiritual sources, give weight to the spiritual direction you have received.

- You have some thing you want to do – but you at least seek out God's mind in some way

- ✓ You ask a spiritual counselor for an objective opinion

✓ You spend significant time in prayer

- The thing God may call you to do is operate by faith and do things in a way that seems harder than what you want to do

Nevertheless, there is great blessing in seeking and submitting to God.

IV. The unswerving purposes of God are never frustrated by human misjudgement

A. A word of assurance about our choices (Rm 8.26-28)

1. We do not always make the right choices
2. We often suffer for our own errors and the errors of others
3. But God's eternal purposes in our life are worked out by Him regardless of the spiritual errors we make along the way

B. The nation of Israel ultimately got the king God intended

1. They were not wrong to desire a king
2. They were just 40 years early – Saul reigned forty years (Ac 13.21)
3. The Lord's choice, David, came to the throne as the Lord planned

God's purposes are never frustrated by human misjudgements.

Conclusion:

Proposition: There is a spiritual dimension to every choice that is made; pray for discernment.

The theme 'son of David' is about God's ultimate choice for the salvation of mankind.

The choice of David was no insignificant matter from the eternal perspective – God discerned David's heart and that was the decisive factor in making David king and making the Davidic Covenant with him.

Our choices are not as momentous or eternally significant as this choice (at least not as significant for so many people as this one was).

But our choices are momentous for us: there is a spiritual dimension to every choice.

Learn to seek God's face and humbly submit to God's will in your decision making.