

## **Making Wise Decisions at Crossroads Times**

### **1 Samuel 8**

#### **Introduction:**

1. God designed the nation of Israel to be a theocracy. By definition, a theocracy is “a government of a state by immediate divine guidance.”
2. God's desire was to be Israel's king and reign over them directly.
3. But Israel got it into their minds that they needed an earthly king. Why did they believe they needed a king? vs. 20
4. In this chapter, Israel is at a crossroads. They have to make a decision which will directly affect their future. We all have these crossroads times in our lives. Unfortunately, Israel blew it. They made a decision that was in direct contradiction of God's will.
5. God **allowed** them to make this decision (vs. 21-22). God has given to every person the free will to make decisions and choices. God will give us direction, but then it is our choice. We obey God, or we follow our own path.
  - God did not “sovereignly” overrule their bad decision.
6. The good news is that we can learn from Israel's mistakes, and every believer today can make wise decisions at crossroads times in our lives. How can we do this?

#### **Forget trying to read the circumstances of life.**

1. I am amazed at how many believers live their lives and make decisions based on outward circumstances. They think that the circumstances of life are “signs from God” telling what to do in a given situation.
2. I have seen believers end up in messes time and time again by trying to live this way.
3. This is what Israel did here in our text (read verses 1-5). Israel reasoned:
  - Samuel (their spiritual leader) is getting old.
  - His sons don't walk in their dad's ways.
  - All the other nations have kings.
4. So they decided that circumstances dictated that it was time they had a king.
5. But here was the bottom line. It was not God's will for them to have a king. Instead of relying on God's Word, they tried to read their circumstances. Let's apply this to us.
6. When God speaks to you, how does He do this? Is it through circumstances in which you have to subjectively decipher the hidden meaning? This is dangerous. Proverbs 14:12
  - No, you don't have to decipher some hidden code in your circumstances. God has a much more objective way of communicating to you, and that is through His Word. 2 Timothy 3:16-17
7. As we get into God's Word, our minds are filled with the mind and wisdom of God Almighty. We begin making decisions with our thinking being framed by God's Word.

8. This is what Israel should have done, but instead they tried to read their circumstances.

**Always remember, the crowd can be wrong.**

1. When Israel made this wrong decision, it wasn't the decision of one powerful man. Notice verse 4, "*Then **all the elders** of Israel gathered themselves together...*"
2. In verse 5 they desired a king "*like **all the nations.***" In verse 20 they said they wanted a king, "*That we also may be like **all the nations.***"
  - Here is the point. They weren't like all the other nations. They were **God's** people.
3. When it came to decision making, it was totally irrelevant what everybody else was doing. Their only concern needed to be, "What does **God** desire us to do?"
4. Samuel stood all alone in opposition to Israel's desire for a king (vs. 6). But who was right? Was the one man, Samuel, right? Or was the crowd right?
5. The Bible declares, "*Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil...*" Exodus 23:2; cf. 2 Corinthians 6:17
6. When you are at crossroads times in your life, you must remember that it is totally irrelevant what everybody else is doing or what the world says. You are **God's** child. You are a member of God's family. Your only concern needs to be, "What does God say about this?" This brings us to our next point.

**Always remember, God's plan is always right.**

1. Israel rejected God's plan in favor of their own plan (vs. 7). They had everything figured out. They knew exactly what they needed, or so they thought.
2. Instead of accepting God as their king to reign over them, they rejected Him in favor of a mere man. Here we have the seeds of humanism being planted in the nation.
  - Humanism is the philosophy that upholds the primacy of human beings rather than God. It holds that man is the measure of all things.
3. Here is the sad part. There are many believers who live their lives like humanists.
4. Instead of reading God's Word and accepting what God has said, we think we know better. We think we are the exception to the rule. We think we will prove God's Word wrong.
5. But remember, God's plan is **always** right, and God will never be shown to be a liar. Jesus said to the Father, "*Thy word is truth.*"
6. Israel's decision seemed right, but what would their decision ultimately bring? God had Samuel tell them in verses 9-18 (slavery, bondage, exorbitant taxes, and sorrow). vs. 18
7. Israel looked at their circumstances, looked at what everybody else was doing and said, "This is what is right for us." But as they lived with the consequences of their decisions, they would soon find out that God was right.

### **Listen and heed godly counsel.**

1. Samuel was a godly leader and a prophet of God, and everybody in Israel knew it (3:20). Samuel had prayed for them in chapter 7, and Israel won a great victory over the Philistines.
2. If Samuel sent up red flags to Israel about this king business, that should have been a huge warning sign for Israel. Samuel protested (vs. 9), but look at verse 19. Israel refused to listen to godly, spiritual counsel. Proverbs 12:15
3. The first place we should go for godly counsel is to God! We should seek His Word and allow His Word to shape and mold our thinking processes. Proverbs 19:21
4. There are times when we may need a little help because we either have a very rudimentary understanding of His Word, or maybe the decision we have to make is a gray area.
5. This is when you need a few people in your life who are godly, spiritual people that will give you sound advice. You need people that will tell you not what you want to hear, but what you **need** to hear. Proverbs 8:33, 9:9, 19:20
6. One of the biggest problems for believers is that they go to all the wrong places for counsel when there are crossroads decisions to make in life. Instead of listening to Samuel, Israel wanted to pattern their decisions after the heathen nations around them.
7. They turned to the world for wisdom rather than to God, God's Word, and God's people.

### **In Conclusion:**

1. Life is a series of choices and decisions. We then must live with the consequences of those choices.
2. The good news is that every believer can make wise decisions. We have learned some positive principles from the negative example of Israel here in this text.
3. Are you facing some big decisions right now in your life? You have the opportunity to take this lesson from God's Word and apply it right now to your decision making.