

The Kingship of God: How Every Government Works For Our Good

A King To Fight For Us

1 Samuel 17–21

October 30, 2016

Sunday Evening Bible Study

1 Samuel 1–8: In the period of the Judges, when “every man did what was right in his own eyes” (Judges 21:25), Israel is fraught with internal corruption and threatened by external enemies. “Perhaps,” they reasoned, “we need a political solution. A new government and its political leader will save us.” And so they asked the prophet Samuel for a king “like all the nations.” Their sin is not *that* they asked for a king, for that was allowed in the law God had given Moses (Gen. 17:6; Dt. 17:14–17). Rather, their sin is in *why* they asked for a king. They sought to put their trust in this political solution rather than God. For that reason, God tells Samuel “they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me” (8:7). In making an idol of government, they have become like the idolatrous nations around them. They want a king like all the nations so they can live like all the nations. They wanted the benefits of God, but they did not want God.

1 Samuel 9–16: God gives them what they ask for along with a warning about monarchies (8:10–18). Because of our fallen natures, no one can be trusted with much power. Everyone is prone to abuse power and use it for personal gain. It is not wrong to seek or hold power in order to serve others (see Jesus!), but to use a position of authority to serve self is the constant temptation of every leader. The more power a leader has, the more ability he has to exploit people and make them his “slaves” (8:17). In fulfillment of that warning, Israel’s first king, Saul, views himself as above the law and uses his power to promote himself (13:3,4), his glory (15:12), and his wealth (15:19). In doing so, he rejects the authority of the Word of God. Because he rejected God’s Word, God rejects him as king (15:23). In his place, he directs Samuel to anoint David. David now becomes the “anointed one,” the “messiah,” the “Christ.” The longing of the human heart is for a king who will “go out before us and fight our battles” (8:20). Will David be this king?

1 Samuel 17–18: David, the messiah, is chosen by God to be the “champion” (Heb., “man between two”) for Israel and fight a battle for them that they could not win by themselves. He stands in their place and conquers their greatest enemy. The messiah is born in Bethlehem, of the tribe of Judah. He is a good shepherd and obedient son, but his brothers initially reject him as their king. Unintimidated by the enemies of God, he is the least likely candidate to be the savior of his people, appearing to be weak and ill-equipped. But he operates in the strength of the Lord, achieves victory in a most unexpected way, and empowers his followers to fight the good fight.

1. The King’s Sworn Enemy (17)
2. The King’s Faithful Friend (18)
3. The King’s Great Escapes (19)
 - 3.1 The king escapes assassination by legal persuasion (1–7).
 - 3.2 The king escapes assassination by strategic withdrawal (8–10)
 - 3.3 The king escapes assassination by strategic withdrawal (11–17).
 - 3.4 The king escapes assassination by miraculous intervention (18–24).
 - 3.5 Principle: *If God wants you alive, no one can make you dead* (Lk. 4:30).
4. The King’s Loyal Followers (20)
 - 4.1 The king is guiltless (1–11).
 - 4.2 The king loves his covenant people (12–17).
 - 4.3 The king’s loyal followers place him above family (18–34).
 - 4.4 The king’s love for his faithful friends leads to weeping (35–42).
 - 4.5 Principle: *Our loyalty to the King of kings must exceed all other loyalties* (Lk. 14:26).
5. The King’s Humiliation (21)
 - 5.1 The king breaks with legalistic interpretation of ceremonial law (1–9; cf. Lev. 24:5f; Mk. 2:23f)
 - 5.2 The king is mistaken for a madman (10–15; cf. Ps. 34:56; Jn. 10:20).
 - 5.3 Principle: *The law was given for people, not people for the law* (Mk. 2:23).
6. The King’s Army of Outcasts (22).

- 6.1 The king's brothers believe in him (1).
- 6.2 The king gathers and organizes a minority of misfits (2).
- 6.3 The king provides for his family (3–5).
- 6.4 The king escapes slaughter of innocents by a jealous king according to prophecy (6–23; 2:30f).
- 6.5 Principle: *God calls and uses the weak and foolish to shame the strong and wise* (1 Cor. 1:18f).

7. The King's Great Escapes (23)

- 7.1 The king escapes by the revelation of God (1–15).
- 7.2 The king escapes by the providence of God (16–29).
- 7.3 Principle: *God raises up and sets down every nation for his purposes* (Acts 17:26).

8. The King's Trust in the Lord (24–26)

- 8.1 The king could have killed Saul, but did not (24).
- 8.2 The king could have killed Nabal, but did not (25).
- 8.3 The king could have killed Saul, but did not (26).
- 8.4 Principle: *Never mistake God's patience for apathy* (Mt. 26:53; 16:27; 2 Peter 3:4f).

Three Questions Raised In This Section

Q1: Does the Bible advocate polygamy?

A1: No. The Bible defines marriage as monogamous (Gen. 2:24; Mt. 19:5). The Bible neither commends nor commands polygamy. The Bible temporarily permits it as a cultural reality (1 Sam. 25:32ff). The Bible regulates it to protect women and children (Ex. 21:10). The Bible offers no positive example of polygamy where men or women thrive (Gen. 29:17ff). The Bible clearly reports the dysfunction, abuse, injustice, exploitation, and dehumanization of women and children linked to polygamy (2 Chron. 11:21; 13:21; Gen. 16:29–31; 1 Sam. 1; 1 Kings 11; Dt. 17:17). Jesus and the apostles reaffirm the definition of marriage that excludes polygamy (Mt. 19; Col. 3:19; 1 Peter 3:7). Jesus is monogamous, having only one bride (Eph. 5:25; Rev. 21:9). The New Testament clearly condemns polygamy (1 Tim. 3:2).

Q2: Is it ever morally good to lie?

A2: While the ninth commandment forbids bearing false witness, Biblical ethicists have posited that lying and deception might be acceptable in circumstances where everyone understands the whole truth is not expected. But these circumstances are specifically permitted or advocated by Scripture. We are not left to decide other circumstances for ourselves (i.e., this is not situational ethics). See R. McQuilkin, *An Introduction to Biblical Ethics*.

- 1. In opposition to criminal activity. If lying and deception can save an innocent human life, lying may be acceptable. Examples: leaving a light on, sting operations, misdirection (Ex. 1:15–21;
- 2. In times of war, if lying and deception can further a just cause and limit casualties, lying may be acceptable. Examples: cardboard tanks, disinformation, interrogation of prisoners, etc.). (Josh. 8:2; Heb. 11:31).
- 3. In “inconsequential social arrangements” where everyone understands the truth is not expected: For example, jokes, greetings (How are you doing?), sports (fake punts); makeup and hair dyeing? (Lk. 24:28f; Mt. 6:17,18).

Q3: Is Jesus exactly like David?

A3: No, thank God. As good as David was, he wasn't good enough. David, like all of us, broke all ten commandments, including the ninth, by bearing false witness. His lie to Ahimelech the priest was wrong and unloving, and it led to the murder of Ahimelech and eighty-four other priests. Only Jesus is the sinless prophet, priest, and king. Only Jesus is the sinless man. Which is why the Holy Spirit moved David to call his son his Lord (Mt. 22:45; Acts 2:29; 13:22–36; Rev. 5:5; 22:16).