

UNSHAKABLE KINGDOM #26

“Our Defining Moment”

I. Introduction

A. What is a Defining Moment?

1. Usually we think of ‘defining moments’ as turning points in our lives; and we usually think of them on a personal level:

- When I met my wife
- When I got saved
- When we moved to this city

a. But here is my favorite definition:

Defining Moment

A defining moment is the point at which the essential nature and character of a person or a group is revealed or identified.

2. Every *individual* life is filled with ‘defining moments’. But I like this definition because it tells us that *nations* have defining moments too.’

a. Not just turning points or events; but points at which our national character is revealed.

America’s Defining Moment

3. Whether we know it or not, this upcoming election will be a ‘defining moment’ for our nation; it will be the point at which ‘the essential nature and character’ of the American people will be ‘revealed and identified’.

Many Questions Will Soon Be Answered

- Are we still ‘one nation, under God’?
- Are we still committed to our constitution as the basis for our laws?
- Are we still a government ‘of the people, by the people, and for the people’?
- Are we still the land of the free and the home of the brave?

4. This next defining moment will define us afresh; are we still America as founded, or have we changed?

5. Tonight I want to paint a prophetic picture using the story of another election, in another nation under God; a defining moment in the history of Israel.

6. What happened here in Israel has some close comparisons with what is happening in America today.

II. Our Defining Moment

A. We Begin With a History Lesson

1. In all human history, Israel is unique among the nations; of all the literally thousands of nations and tribes that have inhabited the earth, not one is like them.

a. King David spoke of this:

2 Samuel 7:23-24

23 And who is like Your people, like Israel, the one nation on the earth whom God went to redeem for Himself as a people, to make for Himself a name — and to do for Yourself great and awesome deeds for Your land — before Your people whom You redeemed for Yourself from Egypt, the nations, and their gods? 24 For You have made Your people Israel Your very own people forever; and You, Lord, have become their God.

b. David speaks of the uniqueness of Israel as God's chosen people.

c. But Moses gives another example: that all nations have laws, but only Israel had God's law, delivered to them from the mouth of God Himself:

Deuteronomy 4:7-8

"For what great nation is there that has God so near to it, as the Lord our God is to us, for whatever reason we may call upon Him? And what great nation is there that has such statutes and righteous judgments as are in all this law which I set before you this day?

2. God established the nation with His laws; it was not a Democracy (people ruled); it was a Theocracy, (ruled by God) through His priests and prophets.

a. This governmental system operated from Exodus-Ruth.

3. But then we come to the Book of 1st Samuel and a ‘defining moment’; *the day when it was revealed that the hearts of the people were no longer willing to continue to be governed as founded.*

4. This is a heartbreaking story that holds a message for America in this hour; a sermon seldom preached. I once called it...

B. The Day They Broke God’s Heart

1 Samuel 8:4 NKJV

Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah, and said to him, "Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways.

1 Samuel 8:5 NLT

Give us a king to judge us like all the other nations have."

1. Here we have the 1st clue of a coming collapse; the story begins when a nation founded by God, favored by God, and blessed of God wants to have a political system like the less-blessed nations around it!

- a. “Give us a king to judge us like the other nations have.”
- b. Is this what’s happening today in America?
- c. There are those who want to totally transform America as founded into a socialistic system ‘like the other nations have’.
- d. They want to take a nation founded on biblical principles a belief in God and turn into a godless socialist system. An old Puritan comments on it:

“Their demand showed ingratitude, distrust, and disloyalty toward God. They wanted to better their government instead of reforming their character.”

“Monday Club Sermons”, 1890

2. This call for a new government troubled the prophet...

1 Samuel 8:6-7

But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." So Samuel prayed to the Lord. And the Lord said to Samuel, "Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them."

- a. Notice; if you reject God’s man you are really rejecting God.

3. But don't miss the main message here! The people were no longer willing to be one nation, under God, as founded. They wanted a new kind of government; a 'king' to judge them 'like the other nations had'.

a. I see a similarity with our current situation and the coming election; the polls tell us that many Americans are no longer willing to be 'one nation, und God' as founded; in spite of how blessed we have been, many Americans want us to swing into the same socialistic systems that have destroyed other nations!

4. The lesson of the next verse should put us all in the fear of God! He will give us the government we ask for! With a warning...

1 Samuel 8:9

Now therefore, heed their voice. However, you shall solemnly forewarn them, and show them the behavior of the king who will reign over them."

5. This is what God is saying to His people today: if you choose to reject my godly government I'll give you the government you're asking for; but I warn you: "I will give you what you want but you won't want what you get."

1 Samuel 8:10-11

So Samuel told all the words of the Lord to the people who asked him for a king. And he said, "This will be the behavior of the king who will reign over you: He will take your sons and appoint them for his own chariots and to be his horsemen, and some will run before his chariots.

1 Samuel 8:12-13

He will appoint captains over his thousands and captains over his fifties, will set some to plow his ground and reap his harvest, and some to make his weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. He will take your daughters to be perfumers, cooks, and bakers.

1 Samuel 8:14-17

And he will take the best of your fields, your vineyards, and your olive groves, and give them to his servants. He will take a tenth of your grain and your vintage, and give it to his officers and servants. And he will take your male servants, your female servants, your finest young men, and your donkeys, and put them to his work. He will take a tenth of your sheep. And you will be his servants.

6. May I modernize what Samuel is saying by summing up this way?

7 Consequences of Big Government

He will take your sons for his soldiers (v.11-12)

He will take your daughters for his cooks (v.13)

He will take the best of your fields (v.14)

He will take a 10th of your grain (v. 15)

He will take your servants and make them his servants (v.16)

He will take a 10th of your sheep (v.17)

You will be his servants (v.17)

a. God warned them, “If you reject Me and the godly government I have given you, there will be 7 consequences”:

- “HE WILL TAKE”, repeated 6 times
- And the end result is ‘YOU WILL BE HIS SERVANTS’!

7. This is the nature of ungodly governments; they use their power to take your stuff and make you their servants.

a. History has taught us that the more power a government has the more corrupt it becomes.

“Power tends to corrupt. And absolute power corrupts absolutely.”

Lord Acton

b. This explains how Washington has become so corrupt as the Government has grown bigger. And this has always been true.

Per Byland, Quote from Blog

Oklahoma State Professor of Entrepreneurship

“What characterizes the history of man is the corrupted leaders blinded by their power and might. Throughout history, monarchs, religious and ideological leaders, as well as elected presidents go crazy. The French king Louis’ XIV claim ‘Etat, c’est moi’ (I am the State) is typical of leaders then and now.”

8. God warned His people all this would happen if they insisted on a King.

1 Samuel 8:18

And you will cry out in that day because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, and the Lord will not hear you in that day."

9. Yet even after all these warnings, how does the story end?

1 Sam 8:19-20

Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, "No, but we will have a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles."

- a. "Nevertheless: 'even after' or 'in spite of' all these warnings, the people demanded a fundamental change of their government as founded by God.
- b. They refused to obey the voice of God's prophet.
- c. In spite of the warnings, they rejected God in favor of an earthly king.

10. Why? Notice that they had...

3 Sinful Motivations for Demanding a King

- 1. So we can be like the other nations
- 2. So we can have someone to judge us
- 3. So we can have someone to fight our battles

C. 3 Sinful Motivations for Demanding a King

1. First: "So we can be like all the other nations"

a. Israel was so great! Why would they want to be 'like the other nations'?

Psalm 147:19-20

God declares His word to Jacob, His statutes and His judgments to Israel. He has not dealt thus with any nation; and as for His judgments, they have not known them. Praise the Lord!

b. America's Constitution and its Bill of Rights is the envy of the world! Why would anyone want to throw it all over so we can be 'like other nations'?

J.A. Miller, quoted in "The Biblical Illustrator", Vol. 4

**“There is no operation more widely mischievous, more intensely active to harm than this—a desire to be like others.
(He applies this to individuals)**

The Biblical Illustrator

Many a time has a young man left the house of God full of conviction, and ready to resolve that whatever others did, he would serve the Lord. But he turned to take another look at the world, and the thought came along with the look, that much of his worldly interest depended upon the friendship of those around him, and that if he expected them to be his friends, his opinions and his habits must not be opposed to theirs. He gave in to the principle of being like them. ..Alas, the wreck of souls which this principle involves!

c. Why would a Christian young person want to be like other young people who don't know the Lord?

d. Why would a nation like ours, founded on biblical principles, want to swap it for the same socialism that has been the ruin of every nation where it's ever been tried?

B. The 2nd Sinful Motivation: So That Our King May Judge Us

1. Israel already had the Law of God to judge them; to tell them right from wrong and good from evil. And they were free to obey or disobey.

2. But now they demand a King so they can be like the other nations; a King to 'judge' them.

3. This means that Israel was now willing to let the Government judge them; to tell them what to do; to tell them what was right and wrong, what was good or evil.

4. This same snare may befall the United States; if we are willing to exchange our God-given freedoms under our constitution and Bill of Rights to give the Government powers the founding fathers never imagined.

5. Israel was opening the door for government overreach; and we are doing the same thing.

C. The 3rd Sinful Motivation: Give Us a King to Fight Our Battles

1. Here we have the heart of the matter; an evil desire to escape personal responsibility and let the Government fight our battles and save us from our enemies.

2. Doesn't this sound like what the socialist Democrats are offering us in this election? "Put us in power and your problems are over".

- Why struggle and save to send your kids to college? We'll take care of it
- Why worry about working? If you're laid off we'll pay you anyway

3. I could multiply examples but they all amount to the same temptation: the evil idea of salvation by politics; 'give us a king to fight our battles'.

D. So What Happened?

1. Israel's demand for a king became their 'defining moment'. Remember...

Defining Moment

A defining moment is the point at which the essential nature and character of a person or a group is revealed or identified.

2. The people's demand for a king really meant they had rejected God's government in their hearts.

3. The scary thing is that God gave Israel what they wanted even though He knew they wouldn't like what they got.

4. And He will do the same to America if we fail our defining moment; and we'll have no one to blame but ourselves.

Thomas Jefferson

"The government you elect is the government you deserve."

5. America is in a mess today; much of it traceable to bad leaders; leaders we elected.

(Examples)

6. No one knows how the coming election will go. But we can know this. The government we elect will be the government we deserve.

III. Conclusion

A. Israel and America: 2 Elections; 2 Defining Moments

1. Israel had it all; but rejected God for a secular government that brought them a lot of pain.

2. Many years later, the Prophet Jeremiah would speak of these things:

Jeremiah 2:11-12 NLT

“Has any nation ever traded its gods for new ones, even though they are not gods at all? Yet my people have exchanged their glorious God for worthless idols! The heavens are shocked at such a thing and shrink back in horror and dismay,” says the Lord.

a. God gave America a glorious nation under God; will we ‘exchange’ it for worthless idols?

Jeremiah 2:13

‘For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn themselves cisterns — broken cisterns that can hold no water.’

b. Will we forsake God, the fountain of life for the broken cistern of socialism? And if we do, who can we blame but ourselves?

Jeremiah 2:17-18

Have you not brought this on yourself, in that you have forsaken the Lord your God when He led you in the way? And now why take the road to Egypt, To drink the waters of Sihor? Or why take the road to Assyria, to drink the waters of the River?

Jeremiah 2:19

Your own wickedness will correct you, and your backslidings will rebuke you. Know therefore and see that it is an evil and bitter thing that you have forsaken the Lord your God, and the fear of Me is not in you,” says the Lord God of hosts.

3. America was once known as a ‘God-fearing’ nation; are we still? We’ll soon know.

B. Summary

Bottom Line

National elections are defining moments that reveal where the hearts of the nation's people truly lie.

1. America is coming to a crossroads; a defining moment; a point where our essential nature and character will be revealed and identified.
2. This election will not only reveal who the next President will be; but it will reveal where the character and nature of the American people has already arrived.
3. The leaders we elect will reflect the condition of our hearts.

CLOSING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, you have given America a godly heritage. Our founding fathers looked to You and You gave them Divine guidance to form a government based on biblical principles of freedom and certain inalienable rights. Indeed, no nation since Israel has been so blessed. But now we, like them, have come to a new defining moment; a point that will reveal if our nature and national character is still true to our founding. We ask you to help us remember who we were founded to be and deliver us from those who would reject You in favor of a new thing. We pray, Father find us faithful.

In Jesus name, Amen.