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Long Live the King!

950-A

Series: God's Living Legends II



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Long Live the King!

Our loving God, we come to You feeling so inadequate. We sense Your adequacy begin to overwhelm us. We acknowledge, our Father, that truly Yours is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory, forever. We worship You, Father, not simply for what You are doing or have done for us, though You have done so many wonderful things. But rather, Father, we worship You for who You are; Creator God, Sustainer of life, the One who loves us so much that You gave Yourself for us, and now You give Yourself to us.

We ask, Father, as we begin this journey on the life of David, that You would somehow enable us to draw spiritual parallels and conclusions to our own lives, that would change us, not just for a day, but for eternity.

We've not come together, Father, to be entertained, but rather, to be transformed. We ask You, Father, that You would take the seed of the Word of God and stir up the soil of our sometimes-hardened hearts, that the Word might fall into deep soil and bear much fruit. Father, we want to be different. We want to be Yours. Teach us, we pray, to become men and women after God's own heart.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

Try to picture with me if you will, the incredible majesty of this moment! From all over the nation of Israel, leaders of each of the tribes are gathered together at Mizpah for this incredible celebration and revelation. This is what was about to happen. They were about to get a king at last; a king like all the other nations had. At last, a man they could look up to, someone of real flesh and blood. You can almost hear them whispering among themselves, "At last God has heard it and done it our way.

Hushed silence is the order of the day. Tribe by tribe the leaders are called out. Then finally, the tribe of Benjamin is singled out and the suspense begins to build. It is narrowed down to the family of the Matrites. Then down to one man. And as we will see a little bit later, apparently in a bit of confusion because he could not be found, this man is brought to the midst of the people.

His name is Saul. "What a man!" they cry. "He is head and shoulders above all the rest!" Literally head and shoulders. In

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unison, the jubilant Jews begin to shout at the top of their lungs, “Long live the king! Long live the king!” Looking in from the outside, wouldn’t you say this was a moment in Hebrew history that should be carved in the granite of some memorial as one of the highlights of all time? Of course, you would, unless you heard the rest of the story.

God *has* carved this moment in the granite of the Word of God. It is a day to remember, to be sure, but not because it represented one of life’s great appointments. It represented one of life’s great disappointments! To God, it represented another era of rebellion. It represented the shadow of another weakness of the nature of fallen man that had come between himself and God.

“Lord, give us a king!” they cried. “Long live the king!” they cried. I believe as God gave them the king, *He* cried! What a lesson He has engraved in this story for us to learn as we take a look at one of the Living Legends of Scripture—a man named David. It will take us two or three lessons before we get to David, though, because we want to build a backdrop. We want to see the scenery that surrounds his life, and the history that prepares the people of Israel for David to rule and to reign.

We take up reading in I Samuel, chapters 8, 9, and 10, by looking at Saul, Israel’s first king. It is quite a story; a story of action, drama, and suspense. But more than that, it is the story of what a man looks like when God surfaces his weaknesses and he refuses to do anything about it. You see, Saul didn’t make it into the Hall of Fame. It wasn’t because he didn’t have the chance. It was because he didn’t have the courage when confronted with his weaknesses, to stand before God and man and be changed.

That’s the basic issue in your life and in mine. Are we willing to be correctable? Are we willing, when the Word of God or the people of God, call to our attention areas in our lives that are lacking, to stand before God and be changed? That’s the issue.

I- GOD, GIVE US A KING!

It all begins in chapter eight of I Samuel. It’s the sad story of a man whose sons had not walked in his footsteps. Samuel, the prophet, was growing old. A couple of us can relate to that; we have friends who are growing old. And he had appointed his two oldest sons, Joel and Abijah, to serve as judges. But they were not like their dad. They were guilty of greed and accepting bribes.

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So, the elders called a meeting to discuss it. I can tell you from experience, elders love to call meetings. And they called in Reverend Samuel and said to him, “Sam, we have a solution to the problem.” Sam didn’t need their solution, but they gave it to him. Here was their solution. “Give us a king like all the other people have.” Their solution to solving the problems in the body of God’s people, was to do whatever the world would do to solve their problems. Sound familiar?

Now you don’t have to study God’s Word very long to understand that God doesn’t work that way. His ways are higher than our ways. His thoughts are higher than our thoughts, and they are different. He doesn’t design solutions that elevate man to take the place of God. So, Samuel was grieved when he heard what was happening, and he did what we should do when we are grieved over what is happening. The Scripture says, he went to inquire of the Lord.

In verse seven we read the Lord’s response to Samuel’s grief.

And the LORD told him: “Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king.

As they have done from the day I brought them up out of Egypt until this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are doing to you.

Now listen to them; but warn them solemnly and let them know what the king who will reign over them will claim as his rights [warn them of the consequences].

(I Samuel 8:7-9 NIV)

He might well have said, “This is the beginning of socialism. This is what the government will do for them.

1- He’ll rob you of your sons, enlist them in the military, and send them off to battle. He’ll use some of them as slaves, and some of them will work free in the royal munitions factory. That’s just the way it goes.

2- He’ll take your daughters and turn them into cooks, bakers, and cosmetic workers. Okay? How does that sound?

3- He’ll take your fields from you, your vineyards, and your olive groves, and give them to his good friends. Wow! What benefits!

4- He’ll take the best of your slaves and the best of your animals and keep them for himself. Tough luck.

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5- He will so take advantage of you, that you will end up shedding bitter tears over what he has done to you and what he has taken from you.

Now does sound clear enough to any of you who feel like you haven't gotten the drift of it? God wanted to be sure the people of Israel understood what the benefits would be from having a king. In fact, in verse 18, he says this: "In that day, you will cry out for relief from this king you have chosen, and the Lord won't answer you" (paraphrase). It doesn't sound much like an ad that Madison Avenue would put on television to try and get you to see it their way. But, you see, the difference between Madison Avenue and God is, God tells it like it is. God said, "Okay. You want a king? This is what a king will do for you. Do you still want a king?" Their answer was much the same as ours when God says to us, "You don't really want to do that, do you? It's not good for you." And we say, "Oh, Lord, don't confuse us with the facts. We know what we want."

Well, here is their reasoning. They gave Samuel three reasons for wanting a king despite what God had just given them of a very clear picture of what a king would do.

1- We want to be like everyone else. They have a king; we want a king. Sound familiar?

2- We want a visible, tangible leader. None of this faith stuff. We want someone we can see and touch. Hmmm.

3- We want someone to win our battles for us. Hmmm.

You read between the lines and you see very quickly, that every one of those three reasons was a slap in the face of God.

1- He had called them to be decidedly different, not like everyone else.

2- He called them to walk by faith, not by sight.

3- He had called them to yield themselves to Him and let Him be responsible for fighting their battles. They didn't need a tangible hero.

So, in verse 21, God answered their prayer. How many of you know how God answered their prayer? How many of you know, but you wouldn't tell me you knew no matter what happened? I got a couple of hands. Okay. He answered it. He gave them exactly what they asked for. Isn't that neat? What a God we have. He gave

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them just what they asked for. But listen, that's what God often does when we pray insistently for something we shouldn't have, and we know better. He will give us what we want, and let us pay the consequences. Usually, it's just to teach us a lesson, help us to grow, or teach us to pray.

You see, the children of Israel knew the will of God. There's no doubt about it. They just didn't like it. It was too old-fashioned. Everybody was doing it this way now. Everybody had a king. "Lord, gimme a king, huh? Please." You've prayed that way, haven't you? "Lord, I'm one of Your children and all Your children have...this."

And the problem is, so often when we pray that way, and then God gives us what we ask for, we are so spiritually insensitive, we go to prayer meetings and praise God that He answered our prayer. We don't know the difference between childlike faith and childish faith. There's a lot of difference.

Chapter nine begins now, and God lays His hand on our All-American boy. He's going to become the first king. It reads like this:

There was a Benjamite, a man of standing, whose name was Kish son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Becorath, [I hope you remember that; we'll have a quiz on it] the son of Aphiah of Benjamin.

Kish had a son named Saul, as handsome a young man as could be found anywhere in Israel, and he was a head taller than anyone else. [He was one big boy.]

(I Samuel 9:1,2 NIV)

Now bear in mind that God was answering their prayers, their way. That's important to understand! In chapter 16, God chooses a man after His own heart, but in this chapter, He's giving them just what they asked for. Now, if you're here this morning, and you are a young person or a single, I would remind you to be careful that you do not get drawn into the world's perspective when looking for a relationship or a mate. The wrappings may be attractive, but it's what's inside the package that determines the long haul. Harry Handsome or Paula Pretty just may not make it spiritually, as the best mates. Don't let the world squeeze you into its mold! Don't be looking just on the outside.

II- GOD'S ALL-AMERICAN BOY

God decided to please the rank and file. They wanted someone to look up to; He gave them someone to look up to. They had decided

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to supplant Jehovah God with a flesh-and-blood imitation. So, he gave them their dream boy, and they fell for it. The Scripture says, he was the son of Kish, and Kish, according to verse one, was “a man of standing.” One translator puts it, “a man of mighty power and substance.” He was a Benjamite, the smallest of all the tribes now because of the war with Gibeah. The interesting thing is, because so many people were killed in that tribe, during that war, it was now the smallest tribe. Yet, it was the richest tribe because all of that wealth was now divided among only 600 families. So, Mr. Saul came from the right side of the tracks.

He had an alligator on his shirt before God invented alligators. He was the first one with a chariot with racing stripes and mag wheels. He came from a socially-acceptable family. In fact, another Saul, a man named Paul, a few years later, saying that he had much he could boast about said, “I’m of the tribe of Benjamin.” Our friend came from the right family tree.

Secondly, God made sure this first king could pass for King Kong. They wanted a man big enough to do God’s job, so God gave them a guy who was so tall he could make the NBA without a tryout. Verse two says he was a man without equal physically, among the Israelites—a head taller than all the others. That would be two or three heads taller than some of us.

This kid’s momma never lost him in a crowd at Disneyland. He would have made first string forward for the Palestine Pacers even if he couldn’t hold the ball. He was that tall. Someone they could look up to; that’s what they asked for; that’s what He gave them. The best the world had to offer.

III- INCIDENTS AND COINCIDENCES

In the next 13 verses, we’re going to read a story—I don’t have time to read it so I’m going to give you a quick summary of it—of how God brought this king to be into contact with the man who was going to anoint him as king. It’s an interesting story. We’re going to call it, the “Saga of the Lost Donkeys.” Okay? Basically, reading it on the surface, you would think, *what a waste of time*. Why would God go to so much trouble in Scripture to tell us about some lost donkeys? Well, the problem is most of us forget that it’s the little details of life we tend to overlook that God uses to bring His will to pass.

Remember the time you lost the keys to the car and you had

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to go next door and use someone's phone, only to find out they were looking for something much more important than you were, and you led them to Christ? Or maybe it was the time your dog got lost and went into the neighborhood, rang a doorbell and said, "Have you seen my dog?" They hadn't seen your dog, but they were having problems far more important than that, and you were able to minister to them and change their lives. So, God let Fido get lost so you, in turn, could find them. God's miracles are so often tiny, little masterpieces that in essence, are the result of perfect timing. The world would call them coincidence. To God's people they are incidents of magnitude because they are planned by the hand of a sovereign God.

Kish's fleet of four-legged Toyotas has flown the coop, and for some reason, Saul and his servant are appointed to go find them. Just a coincidence, that's all. Right? Now as you know, God will always take the long route to accomplish His purposes, so He lets our hero, Saul, and his sidekick, wear out a set of Adidas sandals looking for their dedicated donkeys. Somehow, they assume the donkeys would all be together. They had read somewhere that the family that "brays together, stays together." I was asked to leave after the first class, when I gave that one, and I trust you'll be just as understanding. They went through the hill country of Ephraim, through Shalisha, on into the district of Shaalim, and finally into the territory of Benjamin, but still no donkeys. Another of those wasted trips. Right? No, there are no wasted trips when God sends you somewhere. Remember that.

When they reached the district of Zuph, Saul said to the servant who was with him, "Come, let's go back, or my father will stop thinking about the donkeys and start worrying about us."
(I Samuel 9:5 NIV)

That's interesting. We don't know if Saul was really concerned about dear old dad, or he was tired of the trip, but in either case, we do know that God had prepared some incredible incidents that the world would call coincidence. And the end result would be the major event in Israel's history in this era.

So, Saul's servant turns around and says, "Saul, I've got an idea." Saul says, "Well, whatever you say. What is it." He said, "There's a man of God in this town, a prophet. His name is Samuel. Let's go ask him what to do." Saul said, "Okay. What do we have to lose?" So, they just happened to end up in a town where Samuel was, and Samuel just happened to be in town. And

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there happened to be some girls out drawing water who happened to know where Samuel was. And Samuel happened to be home. As they went, Samuel happened to be coming toward them. And it just so happens that God happened to have told Samuel, that they were coming. All coincidences. In fact, as he approached them, God said:

When Samuel caught sight of Saul, the LORD said to him,
“This is the man I spoke to you about; [coincidence] he will
govern my people.”
(1 Samuel 9:17 NIV)

So, Samuel welcomes Saul and says, “Oh, yes, by the way, don’t worry about the donkeys. They’ve been found.” Isn’t it amazing how simple are the solutions to the problems we don’t think have solutions? Once God gets our attention, the problem isn’t the problem. Lost donkeys are not a problem to God. To God, the donkeys were never lost. God had a plan for Saul and a plan for Israel in answer to their prayer, incidentally, and the donkeys were a means to an end. And some of us need to ask ourselves on occasion, is that great crisis in my life that I’m so worried about, really what the issue is? What is God after? Isn’t that more important? That wreck we had. The child that’s sick. The checkbook that’s empty. The relationship gone sour. The difficulty on the job. None of these things are ends within themselves. They are tools. God may be teaching you or chastening you. He may be leading you in a different direction, but God has not forsaken you. Learn to turn life’s lost donkeys into a learning experience.

IV- THE RELUCTANT CANDIDATE

Now we have the great announcement, and “the reluctant candidate” begins to emerge. How many of you know what a reluctant candidate is? I think you do. You read the papers, don’t you? Every four years in this country we have reluctant candidates, don’t we? Some of them are really humble men who don’t feel qualified to serve, but often times some of them just happen to be men with ulterior motives. They know that the less available they become, the more desirable they become. So, while they’re printing up posters in the back room, they are telling the press, “Oh, shucks. I’m not the man for the job.”

We don’t know which Saul was, but we know that he gave Samuel the Harry Humble routine when he was approached. He said, “Oh, golly sir, I’m from the tribe of Benjamin; we’re the smallest of all the tribes. And golly gee, my family is the least

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important of all the families. You must have the wrong man.” Now I can agree with that statement. He had the wrong man. But the wrong man was the right man because God was using him for His purpose. It’s hard for me to imagine that his family was the least of all the tribes when the Scripture just said he was one of the most important men in all the tribe. Anyway, Saul said, “Gee, gosh and golly, you don’t mean me?” And Samuel said, “Yeah. I mean you.” And he didn’t even bother to answer.

So, he gets this gathering together and has a smorgasbord, and he invites 30 people to come in. He pulls Saul up and makes him the honored guest. Now think about it; 24 hours before this, the biggest thing this guy had to worry about was some lost donkeys. Now he’s the honored guest at the head table at a feast being held by God’s prophet. Isn’t it incredible, when God moves in a man or woman’s life, how quickly things can change.

After dinner, according to verse 24, Samuel took Saul up to the rooftop and had a heart-to-heart talk with him. I don’t know for sure what he said, but I think he probably said, “You’re going to be king, but you’re not going to be *the* King; God is. Got it?” Or something like that. The Scripture says, the next morning they got up and Saul was ready to go home, back to dad, and Samuel called him aside and said, “Let’s go through this one more time.” So, he sent his servants on ahead of him, and he tried again to give him a specific message. Then as he left, he said, “Here is what’s going to happen. When you leave here, you’ll get as far as Rachel’s tomb. Two men will come up to greet you and they’ll inform you that the donkeys are found; no sweat, go home,” loose translation. “You’ll keep going, and as you get to the oak at Tabor you will be approached by three men who are on their way to Bethel to worship God. They will offer you two loaves of butter crust bread. Take them. When you get to Gibeath-elohim, you’ll meet a bunch of singing prophets, the Spirit of God will come upon you, and you will be changed into a different person.”

Now people will tell you that the will of God isn’t specific, and that God doesn’t have specific incidents planned for you. Don’t believe them. God was trying to tell this man every incident that would take place so he would be humbled and seek God as the real king.

Once these signs are fulfilled, do whatever your hand finds to do, for God is with you.

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As Saul turned to leave Samuel, God changed Saul's heart, and all these signs were fulfilled that day.

(1 Samuel 10:7,9 NIV)

Then, in verse 17, we see our reluctant king go public. I love this passage.

Samuel summoned the people of Israel to the LORD at Mizpah and said to them, [Okay, gang. Come together. They came. He stood up and turned up the PA system, and he said,] "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'I brought Israel up out of Egypt, and I delivered you from the power of Egypt and all the kingdoms that oppressed you. [Don't you ever forget that.]

But you have now rejected your God, who saves you out of all your calamities and distresses. [That's a good verse to memorize.] And you have said, 'No, appoint a king over us.' So now present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes and clans."

(1 Samuel 10:17-19 NIV)

Now were these guys dense, or what? Just like us. God says, "Okay. You want your king; you're rejecting me. Do you get the picture? I don't want you to have a king. I don't think you need a king. It's wrong for you to have a king. What do you want?" "We want a king." "Okay. I get the picture."

When Samuel had all Israel come forward by tribes, the tribe of Benjamin was taken by lot.

Then he brought forward the tribe of Benjamin, clan by clan, and Matri's clan was taken. Finally Saul son of Kish was taken. But when they looked for him, he was not to be found. [Uh-oh.]

Verse 22; I love it.

So they inquired further of the LORD, "Has the man come here yet?" [Our hero? I inserted that.] And the LORD said, "Yes, he has hidden himself among the supplies."

(1 Samuel 10:20-22 NIV)

Now I don't know about you, but to me this is a riot. I think God must have chuckled. Here was mighty Israel ready to go out on their own, and they want this king. So, he gives them the best the world has to offer; it's inauguration time, and he's hiding among the sleeping bags. They have to ask—guess who—God, where to find him. They still didn't get it, did they?

We won't develop it now, but I want you to ask yourself,

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are there any character qualities in this man's life beginning to emerge, that may make him unfit to be a leader? Just think about it. The children of Israel weren't thinking about it. All they wanted was a king. So here was their response.

They ran and brought him out, and as he stood among the people, [and what's important?] he was a head taller than any of the others.

Samuel said to all the people. [There's a little bit of sarcasm here. He had the right.] "Do you see the man the LORD has chosen? There is no one like him among all the people." Then the people shouted, "Long live the king!"

Samuel explained to the people the rights and duties of kingship. He wrote them down on a scroll and deposited it before the LORD. Then Samuel dismissed the people to go to their own homes.

Saul also went to his home in Gibeah, accompanied by valiant men whose hearts God had touched. [God surrounded him with Godly men.] (I Samuel 10:23-26 NIV)

Can you picture this with me? Think about it. Saul hiding behind two suitcases on the merry-go-round at International Airport, hoping no one would see him. Can you imagine the President of the United States, on the day of his inauguration, with all the pomp and circumstance, all the parades and bands and everything going on? Everybody gathers together at the platform, but the President is a no show! Finally, someone goes and finds him hiding in the basement of the White House between two cases of Campbell's soup. Wouldn't you begin to wonder just a little bit, about the courage of this man you have chosen to be a leader? "Long live the king!" That's all they could say. Long live the king, indeed.

Look at verse 19 again. Samuel, addressing the people said,

But you have now rejected your God, who saves you out of all your calamities and distresses. And you have said, 'No, set a king over us.' [Okay, guys. Here he is.] (NIV)

Remember, they had a clear word from God.

1- "You do not need a king."

2- They had a clear picture from Saul that he was not the man for the job.

I don't know if he was scared or he just didn't want the responsibility. Maybe he just wasn't available. We know he was

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a believer because the Scripture says, the spirit of God came upon him. We know that he knew he had been called to be king because we are clearly told that Samuel told him, but he hid in the baggage. Are some of you hiding in the baggage when God is trying to call you? It's really interesting to watch this process unfold. And in our next lesson we will begin to look at how these character qualities began to affect the whole nation.

I want to close by asking you to look with me at a series of seven principles; principles that I think God wanted us to learn, and I think are the reasons for this story.

Principle 1- The will of God usually runs contrary to the ways of the world. One of the best ways to determine if you're doing the will of God, is find out what the world would do, and go the other way. "All the other nations had kings, Lord!" "Good. That's all the more reason you don't need one." If the church could learn that lesson in our generation. We want so much to be like the world, to draw the world. The world has enough of itself, beloved. What they need is something so demonstrably different, so pure, so humble, so servant-like, that they will be drawn to Christ.

Principle 2- The solution to finding the will of God is simple. You listen to the Word of God. God told them what to do. He said, "Don't ask for a king." "Okay, Lord. We've got it. Can we have a king, huh?" "No. Let's go through this again. You don't need a king." "Okay, Lord. When do we get a king, huh?" So many of our problems would be solved if we would just take the Scripture for what it is and do it.

Principle 3- God is used to hard-of-hearing saints. He repeats Himself, repeats Himself, repeats Himself. You know the story. Over and over again, He said, "No, guys. Don't, don't, don't want a king." So, there's no chance they didn't hear.

Principle 4- If you badger God long enough, He will give you your request, and send leanness to your soul. You will get what you want, but you'll lose what you need. You beg God for success at any price, and He will give you success at a price you never thought you would have to pay.

Principle 5- Try not to overlook God's tender leading in the day-to-day intrusions of life. Lost donkeys, lost keys, dead batteries, and wrong numbers, are often the ways God channels us to people and to circumstances that will change our lives.

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Principle 6- Don't slip into the world's habit of judging people by how they look or by what they can do. The Plain Janes, the Wallflower Wallies, and the Down and Out Donnas may well be the Apostle Pauls of tomorrow, beloved. And those Supermen, by the world's standards, may turn out to be like Clark Kent who can never get out of the phone booth when the heat is on. Judge by character. And if you're involved in a ministry, or leadership in a church, look for people with the qualities of God in their lives. Don't look necessarily for the best looking, most successful, most wealthy people who have made it in the community. They may or may not be God's choice. Look for those with the heart of God. Saul had it all, but no heart.

Principle 7- God does not need your help in running the Kingdom. He just needs you to obey. He does not need any more kings! He has chosen us because He loves us, but He can run the church without us, beloved. And He can run the Kingdom just fine. What I think is missing in our generation, among other things, is a failure just to wait on God. It was only a generation or two ago, when churches faced great decisions such as a building program, calling a pastor, or doing something. The whole church would fall on its face before God and fast and pray day, after day, until they knew the will of God. No one could claim credit for it but Him.

Those long night vigils over lost souls have been replaced with methods, money, and manpower. The agonizing prayer that used to cry out to God for the next step of faith has given way to committees, computers, and efficiency experts. We have become the king, and God's heart is broken.

Are you searching for the will of God in some area of your life? Then begin by falling down before God in humility and agree in advance that whatever He chooses to do is right. It's good, it's acceptable, and it's perfect. Then go to the Word and search it continuously. The Word will confirm the Word. It will never contradict itself, until you know. And when you know what God wants you to do, do it. Finally, the minute you know what it is, don't let the world squeeze you into its mold. Its ways are different, and they will always tell you, "No. It doesn't make sense." It's not supposed to make sense, beloved.

The children of Israel missed the will of God at the most crucial point in their history. They wouldn't hear the truth, so they had

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to pay the consequences. The consequences included a man who did not have what it took to lead the people. In our next lesson we will begin to see those weaknesses surface and the results of them. And we'll begin to see some of those same weaknesses in our own lives.

If you would like to prepare for next week, read I Samuel, chapters 11, 12, and 13, and you'll see what the best the world has to offer looks like when the heat is on.

The Israelites shouted, "Long live the king!" The King James version says, "God save the king!" In essence, they were saying, "God bless what *we* want! We have ignored your Word; we've demanded our way. So, you gave us what we asked for because we insisted. Now, Lord, bless us for asking. Okay?" You say, "That's blasphemy!" Careful. That's the way most of us pray, isn't it? We see God as some kind of genie, and because we have in our hands this mystic remote-control called faith, we can call the shots. "God, I want this. God, I need that. God, take me here."

Some of us don't even understand what faith is. Faith isn't believing in what you want so badly that God is obligated to give it to you. That's not faith. Faith is believing in who God is so completely that whatever He wants for you is best.

Beloved, if faith is anything other than that, then Jesus didn't have faith. He prayed, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, Thy will be done." It wasn't possible, if God's will could be done, so Jesus had the faith to curl up in His Father's arms and face the Cross. If the children of Israel had prayed that way, then Saul's greatest problem would have been finding some lost donkeys. If only they had the faith to believe that God knew what was best for them, and it did not necessarily mean they would have what all the other nations roundabout had.

God's best for you may not include everything the world calls necessary. I'll tell you what it will include. More and more and more of Himself. What are you praying for right now? A better job like Harry has? Is that your king? Better health like Suzie has? Better investments like Ed makes? Are you praying, "Lord, give me a king like all the other people roundabout?" Or are you praying, "Lord, if it be possible, I'd like that job, but not if it's not where I belong. Lord, if it be possible, I'd like to be healed, but, Lord, if through sickness I would better magnify Your name, that's what I want. Nevertheless, Thy will be done. Lord, I would

Long Live the King!

like to avoid that ugly Cross that seems to be looming before me in my life, but not at the expense of bringing life to others. Lord, if it be possible. Nevertheless, Thy will be done.”

Ask yourself, *is that the way I pray?* Are you praying for the will of God, regardless of the cost, and searching for that will as you pray? Or are you asking God for kings when God has said no? Are you praying for things or for character. Are you looking for the easy way, or God’s way? They are usually not the same!

The children of Israel shouted, “Long live the king!” and even as they shouted, they were turning their backs on the King of kings. They got their king and lost their power. Dear God, deliver us from that same mistake.

Let’s pray.

Our Father and our God, we don’t need any more kings. We want them; we want to be like all the nations roundabout. We want to have all the things that everyone else has. We want the successes that our unbelieving friends have. We want everything the world has to offer, even at the expense of everything You have to offer.

Then we come to church on Sunday, Father, and often times we sing and pray and praise and we don’t understand where the power has gone. You’ve told us we don’t need any more kings, but we are shouting, “Give us a king.”

By Your grace, Father, may we learn afresh and anew how to pray right. May we leave this place not looking for kings, not looking for things, but looking for more power at the hand of the One who knows what’s best for us, and who knows that we must walk by faith and lean upon You. We often times do so because we have no assurance apart from You that we can even make it. But as we lean on You, the power comes, the freedom comes, the peace comes, the joy comes, and the victory comes. By Your grace, may we choose this day whom we will serve, and do so.

In Jesus’ name. Amen.

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