

God's Judge Or Your King?

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Father, we thank You once again for this opportunity that You have given to us to come together as Your children, to meditate upon Your Word. Father, even as we study Your Word right now, as we have prayed already that You will grant us the spirit of wisdom and revelation so that we will know You; we will understand Your ways. Father, Lord even as we understand Your ways and accept it by faith, You will fill us with Your Holy Spirit, that You will wrought righteousness in our lives and our hearts and You will cause us walk in Your ways. That's what You promised to us! I pray, Father, that every study that we undertake, let it have the focus of knowing You more intimately, understanding Your ways and not only knowing and understanding but believing and obeying what we have heard. Thank You, Father. We praise You. We worship You for this time that You have given to us. Anoint all of us. Speak to all of our hearts. For in Jesus' Name we pray, Amen.

Spurgeon made this very powerful statement. He said, "It is not the quantity of the Word that we hear, it is the quantity of the Word that we believe and obey, which will change our lives." We heard on Sunday about hearing. It's very important. We saw that every time hearing takes place, there is an action. If you can look into your Bibles at *Revelation 1:9-10* (it's not related to the message, but just a few words to bring to your attention before I jump into today's word).

Revelation 1:9-10

⁹I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. ¹⁰I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet,

I like this word- *I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day and I heard God's voice, a loud voice as of a trumpet*. The words 'loud voice' are two words: 'mega phone'. That's exactly what it is in Greek. He heard the voice of God like a megaphone. The interesting and most important thing is that he was in the Spirit on the Lord's day. One of the things that I have realized over a period of time in my own life is that whenever I come to Church, I could come to Church like a ritual, not ever expecting to hear from God and I can go; I might have heard a good sermon but possibly I haven't heard from God. That is like the irony of all ironies and paradoxes of all paradoxes that we come to Church, we are God's people and we understand that God is the one who is speaking and still we haven't heard Him.

It's remarkable that God is reminding us through this man. He was absolutely all by himself. He didn't have a bunch of believers on the island of Patmos. There was no worship team to exhort him to worship, to encourage him to worship, there was no fellowship, there was nothing but he was all by himself on the Lord's day. I just wonder how he knew it was the Lord's day. That's the remarkable thing for me. In Island of Patmos, all by himself, John the great apostle is on the Lord's day hearing the Word of God like a trumpet! So one of the things that we constantly keep asking- why do we give ourselves opportunities to come and meditate upon the Word more and more is because we want to hear from Him. Exactly! There could be one word that will change your life. That is the power of the Word of God. Why do we hear the Word of God? It's because it has got the power to change us even though we may not see it tangibly in our lives but it has got the power and the ability to change us. That is the reason why we give ourselves more and more opportunities and gather ourselves more and more even as 'that day' is approaching to listen to the Word of God.

That's what I wanted to start this evening. First verse, which I want to look at today is found in *John 19:14-16*. This is the lent season. I didn't prepare this message with lent season in mind but it just happened to be. We always start on Ash Wednesday and we have Wednesday service so it is just God's divine appointment that we have Wednesday service. So it's not typical Ash Wednesday sermon; I don't even know why they call it 'Ash Wednesday' but the quintessential thing or climax of the lent is the fact that Jesus is rejected as King. This is what it says in *John 19*, verses 14 onwards.

John 19:14

¹⁴Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, and about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, "Behold your King!"

Keep those words in your mind. "Behold your King!" We will come back to again during the course of today's study.

John 19:15-16

¹⁵ But they cried out, "Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar!" ¹⁶ Then he delivered Him to them to be crucified. Then they took Jesus and led Him away.

And you know the story- they crucified Him.

John 18:39-40

³⁹ "But you have a custom that I should release someone to you at the Passover. Do you therefore want me to release to you the King of the Jews?" ⁴⁰ Then they all cried again, saying, "Not this Man, but Barabbas!" Now Barabbas was a robber.

"Away with Him!" Understand this- we don't want Him to be King. Barabbas is a robber; a thief, one who consumes everything with violence. Keep this in mind. This is like rejecting Jesus as King. What is happening here in these particular 2 verses that I showed you is essentially prophecy just fulfilling itself. It has all been prophesied in the Old Covenant that Jesus would be rejected. If you look at this particular phrase 'we don't want Him to be our king; we want somebody else to be our king'- is laid out; the same attitude is shown to us in the Old Testament. Old Testament is essentially a part and we learn lessons from there. I want to look at one passage where almost the parallel of this is played right in front of our eyes in the annals of Scriptures. It is found in *1 Samuel 8* and let's read from verses 1 onwards today. I am going to look at a few lessons as to what happens when we reject God as king; what it essentially means to reject God as king.

1 Samuel 8:1-3

¹ Now it came to pass when Samuel was old that he made his sons judges over Israel. ² The name of his firstborn was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; they were judges in Beersheba. ³ But his sons did not walk in his ways; they turned aside after dishonest gain, took bribes, and perverted justice.

Let me tell you something. Every generation has to have a personal encounter with Jesus. We in Christendom don't believe in 'nepotism'. 'Nepotism' means 'my father was director or my father was hero, so I become director or hero. My father was politician so I will also become politician'. That is 'nepotism'. It's remarkable- Samuel is a fantastic guy. You can't find any shortcomings in his character. He is absolutely a straight guy. Then even he forgets this fundamental rule. Just because you named your son 'Joel' (Joel means 'Yahweh is my God) and 'Abijah' (Abijah means 'Yahweh is my father)! They never had Yahweh as their God; money was their God and money was their father. It's remarkable! So one of the things we need to understand. Every generation, all of us parents with small children, just because we send our children to our church, our Sunday school and even our school, it doesn't guarantee that they are going to follow God. It's very, very important for us to understand this quintessential principle.

Romans 9:6-7

⁶ But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they are not all Israel who are of Israel, ⁷ nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, "In Isaac your seed shall be called."

Who is this Isaac? Isaac is a type of Jesus over here. He says, it is not all children of Israel who are the children of Israel but 'in Isaac your seed shall be called'. 2 Old Testament examples he is taking over here. One is Abraham. Abraham had 2 sons- the firstborn was Ishmael and Isaac was technically the second born. God rejected Ismael and said, "Isaac is your descendant". Now look at this. Isaac is called and Ishmael is rejected. One might argue that Ishmael was rejected because Hagar was his mother and Isaac was accepted because Sarah was his mother. To counter this argument, the very next argument what Paul puts forth is- not only so but Rebecca having conceived twins! They had the same womb and they had the same father! You might argue that Ishmael and Isaac had 2 mothers and a single father but Esau and Jacob had same father and same mother; God rejected Esau and He accepted Jacob. God has to touch every one of them. It has got nothing to do with our birth. Every generation God has to touch.

That is something, which causes fear in my heart all the time even as I look at my own children. We don't know. After all that we do, will they turn out to be God's children? We don't know. We only do it by faith. God has to touch. Sometimes what God does is- we do all that (send them to church, make them read memory verses, by heart ten commandments and

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by heart Psalms 119 and everything, they are full of knowledge) and they are not being used by God and suddenly one person on the street, whose father was an unbeliever and whose mother was an unbeliever and God touches him and suddenly he is used mightily by God. You say, "Lord, what has happened here?"

Please don't misunderstand. We are supposed to do what we are supposed to do as godly parents because 'to much is given, much is required'. But having said that, our objective is always to ensure that we create an environment for our children to know God even through our own lives. Sometimes it is quite possible that God may not choose our own children; God may choose somebody else. It's God's choice! God is sovereign. We shut our mouth and we surrender to God's plan. Flesh and blood do not inherit the Kingdom of God. Kingdom of God is a Kingdom of the Spirit. You need to understand that. That is exactly the lesson that even Jesus' own mother had to learn. She thought- "because I gave birth to Jesus!" "*O blessed are the breasts that nursed You!*" No! "*Blessed are those who hear and do the will of God.*"

"Your mother and your brothers are outside."

"These are my mother and brothers who hear My words and do it." See, complete, total difference! The Kingdom of God is an 'upside down' Kingdom. Samuel had to learn that.

1 Samuel 8:4-5

⁴ Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah,

Ramah is Samuel's hometown.

⁵ and said to him, "Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations."

It's amazing! '*To judge us like all the nations!*' You should look in Hebrew. "*Make us a king like 'goyim'*"! Do you know what 'goyim' means? Gentiles! This is remarkable! What happened to you, Israel? You are supposed to be an example to the 'goyim'; now you want to be like the 'goyim'.

Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations."

Think about this. What was God's appointed rule over Israel was a judge. They wanted a king. Immediately the next verse says-

1 Samuel 8:6

⁶ But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us."

Now look at this. What was Samuel getting displeased about? He was not displeased about the fact that they have rejected his sons. That is understandable. What displeases you is very important. What displeases you in your own life? Do you get displeased when you reject God and accept something else? You see, always this flesh is there. One of the things that you see in Samuel's life is a man who is completely dead to the flesh in that sense. Here you see that. About asking for a king displeased him, not that they rejected his sons. So what does he do?

...So Samuel prayed to the Lord.

This is beautiful! Samuel had a fantastic discipline of praying. That's what we heard last time- the discipline of studying the Scriptures and discipline of praying! 'Samuel prayed and the Lord spoke.' That is his life. What a life! It is tension for everybody. It should be a tension for all of us. "Lord, let me not stop hearing from You." Because unlike any other religion, our set of beliefs is based upon a living relationship with God and if you are not hearing from Him, there is no point. We have to come to the end of ourselves and we have to stop what we are doing and just back off and say, "Lord, what is going on?"

Remember about Saul? It's incredible! In *1 Samuel 14*, when Saul is pursuing the Philistines and Jonathan goes and pursues Philistines and kills a few and Saul says, now let us go and kill all the Philistines. Then he does something. He says something very interesting. "Let me inquire of the Lord." So he inquires of the Lord whether to pursue the Philistines or not. But what

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happens? The Lord does not speak to him. Do you know immediately what he says? "The Lord did not speak to me. Who did this?" The Lord did not speak to me; you are responsible. Who is that fellow, who is responsible in our midst? It's incredible! He should have stopped there and said, "Lord, what is going on in my life? What is hindering my communication with You? Why am I not able to hear from You?" See, we hear life from God. It's a conversation that we need to have. We need to hear from God. God has to speak to us. So what happens? Samuel prays and God speaks. This is what God has to say. A poignant statement!

1 Samuel 8:7

⁷And 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."

What have they not rejected? They have not rejected the person over here; they have rejected God. That is the reason why Jesus says, *Luke's Gospel chapter 10, he who does not hear you does not hear Me; he who does not receive you does not receive Me and therefore the one who sent Me.* So, this is very important for us to understand. We are not looking at the person; we are looking at the message. What do the elders of Israel say? "*Make us a king like other Gentiles.*" What was God's ordained leadership in Israel until now? Judge! They should have asked, "Samuel, you are nice man. You are getting old. Can you pray that we will have judges like you?"

Turn to *Judges 5: 1-2*. It's a very powerful verse!

Judges 5:1-2 (ESV)

¹Then sang Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam on that day: ²"That the leaders took the lead in Israel, that the people offered themselves willingly, bless the Lord!

Who are the leaders over here? The judges! What did the people do? They willingly offered themselves. So, what was God's appointed pattern of leadership? A judge and not a king like the other nations! Actually, He was preparing a king but king in His time and not in their time. We will talk about that.

1 Samuel 12:2-3

(This is after Saul is appointed as king.)

²And now here is the king (Who's the king?), walking before you (So you have Saul here. Who's Saul? He's handsome, tall and a very good-looking man. Extremely well-built man. In our terms, well educated, MIT graduate, tall handsome, excellent and all credentials of the world. And then on the other side, look my sons and I are with you.); and I am old and grayheaded, and look, my sons are with you. I have walked before you from my childhood to this day. ³Here I am. Witness against me before the Lord and before His anointed: Whose ox have I taken, or whose donkey have I taken, or whom have I cheated? Whom have I oppressed, or from whose hand have I received any bribe with which to blind my eyes? I will restore it to you."

And then, He'll say so many things. I'll come to that. I'm here. I'm what? I'm a judge who became a prophet. He is your king. You rejected me, the God appointed leadership and accepted this guy, tall dark and handsome, whatever. God's ordained order was judges. Now when we say God's ordained order, what does God's ordained order look like. Turn with me to *Judges 2* and verse 18 onwards. Let me give you some context. These guys would just forsake Israel and forsake God and go after other gods and they would get messed up. And this is from *verse 18* onwards.

Judges 2:18-19

¹⁸And when the LORD raised up judges for them, the LORD was with the judge and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; for the LORD was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who oppressed them and harassed them. ¹⁹And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they reverted and behaved more corruptly than their fathers, by following other gods, to serve them and bow down to them. They did not cease from their own doings nor from their stubborn way.

Now, God's ordained order and leadership was the judge. What was the judge supposed to do? First thing the judge was supposed to do was bring deliverance or salvation out of their mess. First thing: to bring deliverance and salvation of the

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mess they were in because of their disobedience. That was the first objective of the judge. So whenever we say judge, we have this stereotype of a judge who's sitting on the throne and who's saying, you condemned. You condemned, no, no, no. God's ordained judge was you know what? Come down. It's like this. Sundar Krishnan gave this beautiful example. I'll never forget this. He was preparing for his morning sermon on Sunday and he was getting ready for church. And he has a small daughter. She was two or three years old at that time. He prepared. He got her dressed up. And the family were all getting dressed up. Nice pretty dress. And just before they had to leave, they had to feed her. So they fed her nice milk and everything. The daughter was sick that day. And after a few minutes, just before they were ready to go to church immediately the daughter started puking and she vomited everything that she had ate and she spoiled herself completely with all her vomit on her pretty new dress and she started crying, "Daddy, Daddy!" she was weeping. Immediately, Sundar Krishnan did? He said, "I went down. I was all dressed up. But I folded by sleeves and I cleaned her up. I took her to the washroom and gave her a nice hot shower and dressed her up and put on a new nappied and everything cleaned her up nicely and I put her in the car. I did not say, "how many times I told you!" See that's exactly a judge who's ordained by God does. You make a mess of your life and he comes to you and says, you know why you are in this mess, he doesn't say that. He cleanses you. He delivers you. That's exactly what He told the Pharisees. He says, "You Pharisees, on the Sabbath day if your ox or donkey falls into a pit will you not go and help it. If your ox or donkey is thirsty on a Sabbath, will you not take it to the water and feed it? This is a daughter of Abraham." Eighteen years she was tied by Satan, the spirit of infirmity. Should she not be loosed from her infirmity? See, that is God. Whenever you look at God as judge, you know what he does? First of all, He cleanses us from our mess. That is God's ordained authority. Whenever I see this, it really challenges me like anything. I ask myself whenever I do, do I judge or condemn people or do I cleanse them first? One of the things I learnt to do is like to clean dishes. You know why? That's exactly what God does to all of us. He cleanses us by the washing of the water. Every time engilaipotadi, (it gets dirty), and He cleanses us. He doesn't say you are a vistaraku (paperplate) and throw you away. He doesn't do that. He doesn't do that. He can do it. You understand that? So, the first thing is the God ordained leadership, you know what it does, it comes and cleanses you and removes you and puts you out, takes out of the mess and leads you to Christ the deliverer. Second thing: the judge was supposed to all the days of the judge, they all did not follow other gods. One of the things the judge was supposed to do is to be a restraining influence on the people. You see, God is the one who cleanses us. But after He cleanses you, He says, "Now you should be clean." Walk in your deliverance. You see, the judge is one guy who does not only get you delivered, He also is the guy who tells you how to walk in your deliverance. You know why? Because if you are delivered and you are completely empty, seven other demons will come and your state will be worse than the first. And what is the judge supposed to do? He's supposed to be a restraining influence in your life. In other words, he'll tell you, these are the other gods, don't worship them. What are the other gods? Don't put any other thing as priority in your life other than God. That was the objective of the judge. He'll tell you – this is not God, Yahweh is God. Your career is not god, Yahweh is God. Your family is not God, Yahweh is God. If you put your family first, gone. If you put your children first, gone. If you put your education first, gone. So what was the judge supposed to do? He's supposed to be that restraining influence to stop them from getting themselves corrupt, you see why we call the prodigal son, prodigal son? Because he didn't like restraining influence. See, I want to be on my own. He made a mess of his life. To keep them from getting corrupt by following other gods. That is the second thing. Third thing: the purpose of the judge, I'll show you is in *Judges 8:22-23*. Sometimes he didn't mean what he said, but he spoke it anyway. Who is it? Gideon.

Judges 8:22-23

²² Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, "Rule over us, both you and your son, and your grandson also; for you have delivered us from the hand of Midian." ²³ But Gideon said to them, "I will not rule over you, nor shall my son rule over you; the Lord shall rule over you."

So, the third objective of the judge: come under the discipleship of Christ – to lead you to Christ and to come under His reign. To find your rightful position in the body of Christ.

Proverbs 30:27 we looked at this sometime back. Once again let's look at it.

Proverbs 30:27

²⁷ The locusts have no king, Yet they all advance in ranks;

You know why? They don't need a king. And every other locust will know who their God ordained authority is and the authorities themselves know that the authority is not theirs but is God's. what is the third objective of the judge? My son

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will not rule over you. My grandson will not rule over you, but the son and the grandson didn't think like that. You know the son's name? Abimelech. You know what Abimelech means? My father is king. That is what it means. He may not have meant it, but my father is king. So, there were three things the judges were supposed to do. Never take the place of God in their life. That is essentially every God ordained authority will do. They will teach you the ways of God, but they will never play God in your life. So, what are the three things? What did they reject? They rejected the guy who brought deliverance into their life. They rejected the restraining influences in their life. Think about it. How many of you children over here like the rules that God has put over you? Forget the children, all the elder people think about it. If I don't come to church on time, Pastor will... ah that is the reason why you come to church on time. Think about that. You don't like rules and regulations. Ah! It's too tough. That's what the prodigal son said, "This is too tough, this home." But you do not realize that place is the place of protection. And wherever there is protection, there is provision. You know why? In the protection, there is provision of the Lord. Why do we have protection and provision? Because there is His presence. Leave the presence of God, it doesn't matter how talented you are, you're heading for a disaster. So, think about the restraining influence in your life. That is what a judge is. Don't have these stereotypes of judges. So, what did they reject? God ordained authority and they wanted somebody whom they wanted to be king like the other nations. But look at the other nations. Look at people in your own company for example. How do you look at them? He's enjoying his life mama! For me, Wednesday service and Sunday service, fasting and prayer, too much! Too many restrictions! You should not be so radical! Pastor is too much sometimes. I remember what pastor said at the first fasting and prayer, those who can't fast and pray, God will not use you. Finished. That day tension started in my heart. You know what people say? It's okay! God uses or not uses us. Who cares? See! Understand. Let's move on. **1 Samuel 8:8** onwards.

1 Samuel 8:8

⁸According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt, even to this day—with which they have forsaken Me and served other gods—so they are doing to you also.

So, they're doing to you exactly what they are doing to Me. That's the reason why Jesus said that the servant is not greater than his master. If they've accepted My word, they'll accept your word also. If they've rejected My word, they'll reject your word also. If they've called my Beelzebub, the prince of the devils, don't be surprised if they are calling you worse and if they are calling you, then you need to be surprised. Very important. If they are not calling you what they called Jesus, then you should be really surprised. That's why I really love John Wesley. John Wesley was saying, "Lord, for several days I've not been persecuted. What is going on Lord? Has my heart become cold toward you. And suddenly he was saying, Lord, I want to know whether I'm in Your will or not. Nobody is calling me names and then suddenly, one brick came and hit him on his head. And then one guy shouted from the back and said, "I hate your preaching." John Wesley said, "Thank you Jesus. You answered my prayer." This is important. What they have done to me, they're doing to you, Samuel. See, one of the things that you have to understand, one man of God gave this fantastic statement about leadership. How do you know they you're ready for leadership? First: nobody understands your vision. Second: you cannot justify yourself. First of all, nobody understands your vision. Second, you cannot justify or vindicate yourself. Third thing: people will make promises to you and break them. Then you're ready for leadership. It's fantastic no? Welcome to leadership. What will they do? They will not understand your vision. Second thing: you cannot vindicate yourself. You come to a leadership position, you will be called every name in the book. Almost. The worse your name, the better you are in the eyes of God. That's is how it is. It's like inversely proportional! Not directly proportional, but inversely proportional and the third thing, what they will do is make a lot of promises. Yes, pastor. We will do it pastor. It's a done deal pastor. Finished. That's exactly what happened to Joseph. None of his brothers understood his vision. Second, he wasn't trying to vindicate himself. I didn't do it. He never tried to vindicate himself. Third, please remember me when you come to your king and remember. Yeah, yeah, I'll remember. Immediately, the butler forgot nicely. And then God said, "These three things I'll do in your life consistently and you're ready to be a leader." That's exactly what happened to Samuel.

1 Samuel 8:9

⁹Now therefore, heed their voice. (They've prayed and asked for a king. Heed their voice. Listen, but warn them.) However, you shall solemnly forewarn them, and show them the behavior of the king who will reign over them.

The word behavior is judgement. How the king you have ordained over your life will judge. Shaphat, misphat – judgement. Same thing. This will be the behavior, the pattern of the guy. Think about this. Who was Saul replacing? God. Think about the shoes he was asked to fill. Think about it. If you reject God as king, what are you asking to fill? God's shoes. Somebody

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has to come into God's position in your life. Can anybody? Can anybody? What foolishness to think that there is somebody who can replace God. I keep coming back to the example of Solomon. One guy Solomon said, "God has placed eternity in our heart and nothing can fill that eternity except that eternal God." And he tried to find meaning in madness, in pleasure, in treasure, in building, in wisdom and what did he say? ultimately, everything is empty. Empty. Empty. Empty. It's making me feel even more empty. Nothing can satisfy. You know why? Because I'm asking something else to take the place of God in my life and nobody has the capacity to be God in your life. A lot of people try to rule other people's life, they can become God in their life? You think they can fill God's shoes in somebody else's life? No way. No way. Get out of the way. There is only one person who can be God, that's Jesus.

1 Samuel 8:10-18

¹⁰So Samuel told all the words of the Lord to the people who asked him for a king. ¹¹And he said, "This will be the behavior of the king who will reign over you: (first thing) He will take your sons and appoint them for his own chariots and to be his horsemen, and some will run before his chariots. ¹²He 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. ¹³He will take your daughters to be perfumers, cooks, and bakers.

No offence to bakers and cooks and perfumers. He's going to make them. Look at that. The idea is if you remember what he daughters of Israel did in secret in Ezekiel. What were they doing? They were making cakes for who? Tammuz. We'll come to that.

¹⁴And he will take the best of your fields, your vineyards, and your olive groves, and give them to his servants. ¹⁵He will take a tenth of your grain and your vintage, and give it to his officers and servants. ¹⁶And he will take your male servants, your female servants, your finest young men, and your donkeys, and put them to his work. ¹⁷He will take a tenth of your sheep. And you will be his servants. ¹⁸And 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.

This is exactly what happens when you replace God as king. Somebody else will become the king. Either you will become the king or you'll make somebody else to be king in your life. And if you or somebody else is king, he will take your who? First, he will take your sons? What do sons represent?

Genesis 49:1-3

¹And Jacob called his sons and said, "Gather together, that I may tell you what shall befall you in the last days: ²"Gather together and hear, you sons of Jacob, And listen to Israel your father. ³"Reuben, you are my firstborn, My might and the beginning of my strength, The excellency of dignity and the excellency of power.

"My power, my excellency, my strength, you know what you are going to do? You know what? You will take your strength and serve your king." You know what will happen if you take away God as king in your life? Your strength will get wasted. *Love the Lord your God with all of your heart, with all of your might, might means what, strength, with all of your mind.* This is you. See what he is saying, "Your strength will represent whatever your strengths are." Some people have strengths in their mind, thinking is their huge strength, will you surrender that to the God or will you use it for the world? He will appoint and the second thing if you look at the entire thing, it says, he will take take take take take, five times take is there. In other words, it's like you know, the leech has two daughters, give me and give me more. I mean Solomon, in all his wisdom, pen in single word, it's not easy to convey a deep thought into one single sentence. You need tremendous amount of wisdom, God gave him that kind of wisdom and you know what he did with that wisdom that strength that he had, he messed it up on himself, your strength, strongest people here are the young ones, do you know that, you know, at this age you have the capacity to do a lot of stuff without getting tired, this capacity will not be there after you grow old, but you know what happens, because you did not give your strength to the Lord, most of you are drowsy and sleepy, eighteen hours a day you can study, you can work hard, you can do a lot of things, see I will tell you, what you can do when you are a kid, you can play basketball, you can do lot of other parallel stuff and still come first in the class, sometime, not all the time, but God has given you that strength, you have that ability, some of you, I know some of you whom I have tutored very closely several years back, the kind of strength and the intelligence and the brains that God has given you but you know something, its gone for a toss, strength is gone because you know why because you have replaced something else other than God to be king in your life, a lot of things you can do when you are kid, when you are young, especially in your

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teenagers and 20s, you should see all the professors, they run after the people who are within 20 and 30, 20 and 30 they will stand outside your hostel also to employ you to their research lab, I am telling you, this is my personal testimony, not my own, my colleague, there was one guy who came to my lab, very young guy who was just graduated from NIT Durgapur came to our lab, brilliant guy and then he got an offer and then he was thinking should I continue in your research team and he was getting a lot of offers in different places, my professor wanted to have him, you know what he did the next day, he went and stood outside his hostel door, this fellow was sleeping, we never felt professors coming to hostels, professor was waiting for this fellow, "Arun, Arun," and the guy startled inside and he opens the door and he finds professor, "Sir, what are you doing", Please work in my lab, this is crazy, James Tour how many of you know James Tour, one guy who was in his lab, young guy 25 years old, he finished his masters, he was contemplating to do something else in some other company, he wanted to get into the industry, you know what James Tour said, this boy has got tremendous potential to be a researcher, he went and persuaded husband and wife, he was married, he went and said for your sake, I will give a position for your wife also, a tremendous amount of potential when you are young, you know what happens, this is what exactly happens, I will take your potential, some chariot, some horsemen, some here, some there, some there and I will tell, so many of you have scattered all the potential God has given you, scattered it, you are not focused in one particular area, you are not focused, you are scattered all over the place, running from pillar to post, accomplishing nothing, your strength, you know why, fundamentally because you have chosen not to have God as your king and you yourself as your king, you wasted all your years, I like that song, wept for my wasted years, wept for my wasted years and we find that solace in that statement, all the years that the locusts have eaten, God will give me back, *arey baba*, do you want to wait till that time? Your strength is gone, he will take your sons and he will give them to others, look at what it says in John's gospel

1 John 2:14

I have written to you, fathers, because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the wicked one.

The strength that God has given you when you were young, he doesn't say that about the fathers, he says about the young people, well of course he is talking about the spiritual young men but here understand the principle, there are certain thing that you can do only when you are young, you can play and recover only when you are young, now I am 40+, now if I do football, *amma*, for one week, that is the reason why sports people the older they get, the difficult for them to recover, that is the reason why you don't find Federer playing every grand slam now a days, French he will nicely conveniently escape, because that is the most cruelly of all the grand slams, it is difficult, only Rafa can do, that's Rafa, I spoke more about Rafa than Rafa knows, in eternity he says. Anyway, think about that, don't lose the strength that God gave. Second, he will take your daughters, what does daughter signify, turn to Genesis 24, this is Eliezer he is looking for a bride for his Isaac

Genesis 24:13 (KJV)

¹³ Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water:

What are the daughters supposed to do? Not become the confectioners, they are meant to what? What does water stand for? Your service. Son stands for strength, daughter stands for service and you need water, this is water which word of God and this water not only for me for everybody, you need to have what we call as the servant heart, your service, you see, turn with me to,

Romans 6:15-17

¹⁵ What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not! ¹⁶ Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? (Look at this) ¹⁷ But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.

What does doctrine stand for? Word of God, what does water stand for? Word of God what had happened to you? You became people who drank from the water and you also became people who were fed other people from drinking from the water of the well of God, you became wise by understanding the Scriptures, you know, every time you look at the Bible, the word for wisdom is always feminine in the Bible, if you look at the Greek, Sophia, Sophia means what, wisdom, you know Sophia, Sophia is a very common girl name and in Hebrew it is Hakuma which essentially means wisdom, which is again a feminine gender, wisdom is something feminine in the Bible and he says, daughters do you draw water for yourselves every

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day of your lives? Are you busy cooking for your family? Just think about that, draw, wise women what does she do, she builds her home, talks about service, look at what it says,

Genesis 24:14 (KJV)

¹⁴ And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master.

The heart to pour out for God's people,

1 Samuel 25:39b-41

^{39b} And David sent and proposed to Abigail, to take her as his wife. ⁴⁰ When the servants of David had come to Abigail at Carmel, they spoke to her saying, "David sent us to you, to ask you to become his wife." ⁴¹ Then she arose, bowed her face to the earth, and said, "Here is your maidservant, a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord."

That is a daughter, a daughter who will draw water to wash other's feet, what does feet represents, your walk and everybody in the body of Christ is supposed to be a daughter who is serving a heart of service to God. First, he effects your strength, seconds he effects your service, third it effects your wealth, let's go back to,

1 Samuel 8:14-16

¹⁴ And he will take the best of your fields, your vineyards, and your olive groves, and give them to his servants. ¹⁵ He will take a tenth of your grain and your vintage, and give it to his officers and servants. ¹⁶ And he will take your male servants, your female servants, your finest young men, and your donkeys, and put them to his work.

This is exactly what the world says, take your best when you are young, work in the world, later you can give your life to God, see, my dear brothers and sisters, all small children here, youngsters, have this attitude, I did not have this when I was young but I would encourage all of you to have, I would do the best I can do for God, whatever I am studying, I am studying for let's say medicine, I will study for medicine so that I will get medicine, I am not just go and attempt the exam, I will study for anything so that I will become excellent in that, you know why, those are attitudes and disciplines one day God will use, these are disciplines that God has and he says take the best that you have and do the best that you can, all that you can, not as unto man, but as unto God, take the best of your life and give it to God, not to the world, why do we encourage excellence in everybody's life, we say what, we want to inculcate the spirit of excellence, be excellent at what is good, be innocent of what is evil and this is something which all of us have to strive for, you know what because that is attitude which we need to take even wherever God is going to use us, those are disciplines that we inculcate when we are young the discipline of reading, the discipline of praying, reading the word, praying, the discipline of giving our time to God and our best to God, not our worst, the best time in my life goes to God, the best of my money, that is reason why it says in *Proverbs*,

Proverbs 3:9-10

⁹ Honor the LORD with your wealth and with the first fruits of all your produce; ¹⁰ then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine.

The reason why we don't have because we have not given the best to our God, it's like our, I told you have that example right, have you seen *ganna ke ras*, I will give you an example, there were two young men who didn't have a job, one guy had an idea, he said, we will have, summer time now, we will open one *ganna ka ras* table and we will get a lot of profit, we will choose a place and get a lot of profit, so they invested whatever little money they had into that little machine and they purchased lot of *ganna* (sugarcane) this is sugarcane juice shop and they started, day 1, morning 8 o'clock they started due to summer, passers are coming, looking over and going, 9 over 10 over 11 over and one fellow started feeling thirsty, he said, "bro, I am feeling thirsty, can we do something, lets take one *ganna* and crush the juice and I will drink it" the other guys said "baba, business is business, you have to pay for that" he said how much, you know the cost, 10 rupees for the glass, he said ok fine I have 10 rupees, take this 10 rupees, that fellow nicely crushed the juice gave him a glass, he drank, he was feeling satisfied now, waiting for customers, one fellow went, another fellow went, another fellow went, the other guy started to feel thirsty and he said, "Bro, I am feeling thirsty can I take one *ganna* and drink?" He said, "Business is

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business, pay the money and take the cane." He said, "Okay. I have 10 rupees. Take." He waited, they felt thirsty, by the end of the day, *ganna* over, they left with how much? 10 rupees. What are they left with? Loss. That's what exactly God says, "If you don't give your life, you will be left with that *pippi* in your life." The best, What an amazing example. It was one man of God Prakash Gantela garu gave this example, what an example, I could never forget that, I said, that is most believers life, one principle in business, don't feed yourself, feed others, think about that, best of your fields, the tenth of your things which belong to God and God says you give to me and you do not know how much I will give it to you back, if you don't give and you use it on yourself, ultimately you will left with that money 10 rupees in your pocket, so what does this king do, he takes takes takes takes takes, he takes your sons, he takes your daughters, he takes your male servants, he takes your female servants, he takes the choicest of your young men, he takes your wealth and he takes your everything and what does he give you back, nothing, look at what God does, look at *1 Samuel 12:1-5*, contrast here, what is God's ordained leadership? Judge, from next onwards, I am going to have my device, I think I will have another thing also, other technology very soon, then I will be all wired up all wirelessly

1 Samuel 12:1-5

¹ **Now Samuel said to all Israel: "Indeed I have heeded your voice in all that you said to me, and have made a king over you.** (I will tell you something, God is never old fashioned, the ancient parts are ancient parts, because he is the ancient of the days, ancient parts are the ancient parts, don't try to make *kotha devudu andi, oddu ledu* no no there is no *kotha devudu* and now)² **And now here is the king, walking before you; and I am old and gray headed, and look, my sons are with you. I have walked before you from my childhood to this day.** (this is I am God's choice and this is your choice, look at my choice, what do I do)³ **Here I am. Witness against me before the LORD and before His anointed: Whose ox have I taken, or whose donkey have I taken, or whom have I cheated? Whom have I oppressed, or from whose hand have I received any bribe with which to blind my eyes? I will restore it to you."** (show me and you know what they said)⁴ **And they said, "You have not cheated us or oppressed us, nor have you taken anything from any man's hand."**⁵ **Then he said to them, "The LORD is witness against you, and His anointed is witness this day, that you have not found anything in my hand." And they answered, "He is witness."**

"Did I take? I only gave and gave." What did that king take? He took your sons and he made them captains over hundreds and thousands and captains over fifty to do, what? To take more. What does God do? *Ephesians 4:7-13*. I love this passage. One of my favorite passages in the Bible. Grace is free.

Ephesians 4:7-13

⁷ **But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.**

How many of you paid for your gift? Nobody, right? Everybody received it free.

⁸ **Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive..."**

That is how the judge does. He releases you from captivity and what does he do?

...And gave gifts to men."⁹ (Now this, "He ascended"—what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth?¹⁰ **He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)**¹¹ **And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,**

What am I? What is Pastor James? A gift that God gives so that we can give so that you can give others.

¹² **for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry...**

Not to feed himself.

...for the edifying of the body of Christ,¹³ **till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God...**

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What does it mean? "I want to make you complete and perfect in Christ." That is the whole purpose of the ministry. And you know what? Pastors and teachers and evangelists are gifts from God to the Church so that when they give themselves; that is the reason why, you know what Paul says? "I have not desired anybody's silver or gold. I have given you the complete Gospel – the good, the bad and the ugly. Nobody's blood is on my hands. Everything. From house to house, from every place, with tears, I have preached to you. Why? My whole purpose was to make you complete to bring you to full obedience." See, I'll tell you something – completion is very important. What is slothfulness? I'll show you. Turn to *Proverbs 12:27*. My children will say, "Dad, not again." But it's okay. What a verse! Look at what it says,

Proverbs 12:27

²⁷The lazy man (or the slothful man) does not roast what he took in hunting, But diligence is man's precious possession.

I'll tell you. Think about it. You've hunted for a deer. Does it take a lot of hard work? Does it take a lot of skill? Who was a mighty hunter before God? Nimrod. And who was the famous hunter other than Nimrod? Esau. Very talented. A lot of hard work. They do a lot of hard work. They bring the chicken home and they leave it like that. They do not want to cook it. You know something? That is what we call as – half-done job. No completion in their life. No completion. No perfection. They will not finish what they have started. Whenever you see people hopping from one place to another, no consistency in their life, you know – this fellow has one attitude. He will never complete what he started because most of the time, what he started is not what God wanted. What does he do? The lazy man hunts the game but never completes the game. He never roasts it. But what are we doing over here? We are all encouraging, "Come on! Work hard in the Word. Come to perfection." Whatever level you are in, strive for perfection in that level. You don't have to strive for PhD when you are in the 10th grade. No, you don't have to. And God will not even ask you that. For all the young children, there is only one thing – study. What is it? To show yourself approved unto God so that you will not be ashamed when you get your marks. Understand that. Simple. That's a simple equation. "Oh, I will go for full-time ministry for God." God says, "Wait. Hold on. Start with a little." That's what one man of God said – in corporate, your ascent is an incline. You keep on inclining from one step to another step and finally, you reach the pinnacle. In God's Kingdom, faithful in little. Then, rule over many. Faithful in little, rule over many. Let me give you an example. Turn to *Luke 19:11*,

Luke 19:11-27

¹¹Now as they heard these things, He spoke another parable, because He was near Jerusalem and because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately. ¹²Therefore He said: "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return.

Look at this carefully – how is this connected to today's Sermon?

¹³So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, 'Do business till I come.'

Like Pastor was telling, "Occupy till I come."

¹⁴But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We will not have this man to reign over us.'

But the message is not for them; the message is for us, the servants. Look at what it says. Ultimately, every knee will bow, every tongue will confess that Jesus is God. But what will God say? "Were you really faithful in what I started in my life?"

¹⁵"And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.

Ten people got each one mina. Then,

¹⁶Then came the first, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned ten minas.'

Look at what he says,

¹⁷And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.'

Next,

¹⁸ And the second came, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned five minas.' ¹⁹ Likewise he said to him, 'You also be over five cities.'

He didn't say, "Good and faithful." No, everyone has been given an equal opportunity and what it equal for all of us? Time. So, who is the ruler of your time? Are you multiplying time or are you...? There is a very interesting talk on YouTube called 'Time Multiplication'. You listen to it. It's given by a Christian businessman. Anyway,

²⁰ "Then another came, saying, 'Master, here is your mina, which I have kept put away in a handkerchief. ²¹ For I feared you, because you are an austere man. (it means tight and built) You collect what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.' ²² And he said to him, 'Out of your own mouth I will judge you, you wicked servant. You knew that I was an austere man, collecting what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow. ²³ Why then did you not put my money in the bank, that at my coming I might have collected it with interest?' ²⁴ "And he said to those who stood by, 'Take the mina from him, and give it to him who has ten minas.' ²⁵ (But they said to him, 'Master, he has ten minas.') ²⁶ 'For I say to you, that to everyone who has will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. ²⁷ But bring here those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, and slay them before me.' "

Those fellows will be slain but what about us servants? We said, "Lord, You are our King. We are not like those who did not want them to be king." How are we using our time? That's the question. God is the One who gives. Are you using the gifts that God has given you so that you can give back to Him when He comes back?

Let's come back to 1 Samuel 8:17,

1 Samuel 8:17-22

¹⁷ He will take a tenth of your sheep. And you will be his servants. 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." ¹⁹ Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, "No, but we will have a king over us, ²⁰ 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." ²¹ And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he repeated them in the hearing of the Lord. ²² So the Lord said to Samuel, "Heed their voice, and make them a king." And Samuel said to the men of Israel, "Every man go to his city."

So, tonight, every one of you will go back to your homes, to your city. Will you have Him King over your lives or will you serve yourselves? Whom will you serve today? Choose this day whom will you serve. Whom will we serve – God's judge or your king? Who is your choice? God's judge or your king? Let's pray. That's the title of today's message – 'God's Judge or Your King?'

Closing Prayer:

Father, we just pray, Father, so many lessons that You teach us even as we enter into this period of what the Church calls 'Lent' but we do not want to forget what You gave, for God so loved the world that He gave the greatest gift. And, Lord, we give You because You first gave us. We love You because You first loved us and You gave and You gave. You never took. You only claim what is rightfully Yours, O Lord, and we owe You. We are Your debtors because of how much You loved us. Father, this evening, O Lord, we want You to be our King. We want God's Judge and not our king. Open our eyes to understand and see our own hearts this evening. Continue to work Your Word through in our lives. Thank You. We praise You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.