

1 Samuel 8:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the LORD said to Samuel, Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king. And Samuel said unto the men of Israel, Go ye every man unto his city.

Analysis

And the LORD said to Samuel, Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king. And Samuel said unto the men of Israel, Go ye every man unto his city.

God's final response reveals the mystery of divine sovereignty operating through human freedom. The repeated command "hearken unto their voice" (now the third time—verses 7, 9, 22) grants the people's request while neither approving nor endorsing it. God permits what He does not prefer, allowing Israel to experience the consequences of their choice. This represents what theologians call God's "permissive will"—distinct from His "perfect will" but still within His sovereign plan. Remarkably, the phrase "make them a king" uses the same Hebrew verb ("malak") that could mean "cause to reign"—God remains the one who ultimately establishes kings (Daniel 2:21). Samuel's dismissal, "Go every man unto his city," postpones the selection process, giving space before irreversible action. The narrative thus shows God working redemptively even through Israel's rebellion—the monarchy they wrongly demanded will eventually produce the Davidic covenant and the messianic hope that culminates in Christ, the true King.

Historical Context

The dismissal to their cities suggests a waiting period before king-making, perhaps allowing for reflection or practical preparations. The actual selection of Saul

occurs in chapter 9-10 through a combination of providential encounter and public lot-casting. God's accommodation of the request while maintaining ultimate sovereignty reflects His consistent pattern throughout Israel's history.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does understanding God's permissive versus perfect will help you process difficult circumstances in your own life?
2. What does God's willingness to work through Israel's flawed choice teach about His redemptive purposes?

Interlinear Text

בְּקֹל מְשֻׁמְּרָאָת יְהִי הָאָמֵן
said And the LORD H413 And Samuel H8050 Hearken H8085 unto their voice H6963

אִישׁ אָל שְׁמֹעָל יְהִי מְלָכָת
and make H0 them a king said H559 And Samuel H413 ye every man H376

לְעִירָה יְשַׁבָּא לְכָה אִישׁ
of Israel H1980 ye every man unto his city H5892

Additional Cross-References

1 Samuel 8:7 (Kingdom): And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.

Hosea 13:11 (Kingdom): I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took him away in my wrath.

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