

Kingmaker: The Qualities of a Godly Influencer Consequences 1 Samuel 8

Introduction: Consequences are the outcomes of our actions. Intended or unintended, innocent or not, positive or negative, every action has a reaction, also known as a consequence. It's literally a law.

In 1686, Sir Isaac Newton published his three laws of motion. The third law, known as the Law of Action and Reaction, states,

“Whenever one object exerts a force on another object, the second object exerts an equal and opposite force on the first.”¹

A common way of restating Newton's 3rd law is to say, “For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction.”

Interestingly, it appears that the idea of Newton's 3rd Law of Motion holds true even outside of the world of physics. It is accurate that some of our actions can create a much larger reaction than our action, and others can create a much smaller reaction, but what is universally true is that they all make a “reaction” known as a consequence. Every action in our life has consequences. Positive or negative, or both positive and negative, consequences are guaranteed for every action. Therefore, the wiser a person becomes, the more able they are to foresee the consequences of their actions and thus base their decisions on a proper understanding of the actions that will produce the most desired consequences.

With that in mind, as we continue our study through 1st Samuel, chapter eight will unfortunately not show us positive examples of wise actions but foolish ones that created terribly consequential results for Israel.

Proposition: In 1st Samuel 8, two examples of foolish actions resulted in terribly consequential results for Israel.

The first example is surprisingly a foolish decision by Samuel.

(1) Samuel, an otherwise Godly leader, foolishly delegated the power to judge Israel to his two sinful sons, and it opened the door for the people to rationalize turning from God! (8:1-5)

¹ <https://www1.grc.nasa.gov/beginners-guide-to-aeronautics/newtons-laws-of-motion/#:~:text=Newton%27s%20Third%20Law%3A%20Action%20%26%20Reaction&text=His%20third%20law%20states%20that,words%2C%20forces%20result%20from%20interactions.>

- A. It is often said that a sign of a good leader is that they delegate; however, it's not that simple. You see, your delegation is only as effective as the people you delegated to are at accomplishing what you delegated to them. Suppose you delegate things to people who don't have the resources, ability, or integrity to do what you delegate to them rightly. In that case, it will almost certainly fail and, as such, create negative, not positive, consequences.
- B. Unlike Eli, Samuel has been and continues to do his job as a judge of Israel with integrity and Godliness. If you remember, earlier in the book of Samuel, Eli, the former judge of Israel, was also a priest who led Israel like a mafia Godfather. He and the other priests held people's offerings to God hostage to get what they wanted. Samuel, however, was nothing like Eli at all. He was a man after God's heart who was truly living his life surrendered to the Lord. However, in all that Samuel did right, he nonetheless allowed his sons to fail in an incredibly detrimental way for Israel. He delegated, but not well.
- C. **1 When Samuel became old, he made his sons judges over Israel. 2 The name of his firstborn son was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; they were judges in Beersheba. 3 Yet his sons did not walk in his ways but turned aside after gain. They took bribes and perverted justice. 4 Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah 5 and said to him, "Behold, you are old and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint for us a king to judge us like all the nations."**
- D. Samuel's sons didn't pursue God or do their jobs like Samuel did. Samuel's son didn't even pursue justice, and they were judges. Samuel's sons pursued money! They saw their responsibility as judges not as a responsibility to God and His people but rather as a privilege and an opportunity for their power, prestige, and, most prominently, their prosperity!
- E. We cannot say whether or not Samuel could rightly predict how his sons would judge Israel, but indeed, he would have quickly gotten word that his sons lacked any ethical integrity whatsoever. Surely, you would think that when a man like Samuel found out what his sons were doing, he would immediately do something about it. But he didn't.
- F. The more significant point, however, in this passage is not the action of Samuel leaving his sons in office, nor even the wicked actions of his sons, but rather the consequence. The consequence of Samuel leaving them in office was that it led the people to reject God! You may say, "They didn't reject God; they just wanted a King." Some commentators surprisingly suggest that very thing, even though we are going to read very plainly and bluntly in this chapter, that they were absolutely rejecting God.

- G. I will say some might argue that Samuel could have never foreseen that Israel would use the actions of his two sons as the justification to abandon faith in God for faith in a human King. As accurate as that might be, it doesn't change that it's precisely what happened, and it becomes evident as we continue reading this chapter.
- H. The consequence of Samuel's action of inaction lit the fire of rebellion against God! Inaction is, of itself, an action, and it causes a reaction—a consequence. Therefore, when you decide what to do or say, you have to calculate the result of not doing or not speaking just as much as you have to determine the consequence of any other response. Sometimes in life, it is wiser to say nothing and do nothing, but like any other decision, we better understand the consequences.
- I. In this case, Samuel's inaction allowed his sons to exhaust whatever motivation the people had left in them to resist the temptation of abandoning God for a King. The people had spent generations under the corrupt leadership of Eli, his sons, and the priests in Shiloh; now they find themselves with two more corrupt leaders in Samuel's sons. Abandoning God is always irrational, but you can understand what got them to this point. However, that's where the empathy should stop.

The second example of a foolish action that resulted in terrible consequences for Israel was done with full knowledge of the consequences!

(2) Knowing full well the tyranny they were signing up for, the Israelites still demanded a human king! (8:6-22)

- A. This example begins with Samuel going to the Lord because he realizes a mob is forming in Israel demanding a king. The author records,
- B. **6 But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." And Samuel prayed to the LORD. 7 And the LORD said to Samuel, "Obey the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them. 8 According to all the deeds that they have done, from the day I brought them up out of Egypt even to this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are also doing to you.**
 - 1. In verse seven, God clarifies what's going on here. There is no justification nor righteousness in Israel's demand for a human King. It is squarely an action based on a complete lack of faith in God, a total rejection of Him as their King. God says, "They have rejected me from being king over them."
 - 2. Verses seven and eight also increase the measure of guilt and foolishness in the Israelites' demand but do so empathetically for Samuel. Obviously,

Samuel is feeling rejected. Yes, he made a bad decision with his two sons, but nobody says, "Hey Samuel, your sons are terrible. Can you appoint a different judge or judges to lead with you?" Instead, they are demanding to get rid of the entire system of judgeship and thus get rid of Samuel's position. There's no way for Samuel not to take this personally! If your spouse says they no longer want to be married, no matter how much they may insist it has nothing to do with you, it will obviously feel like it has everything to do with you!

3. But here is where the empathy for Samuel comes out. Not only does God assure Samuel that this is ultimately a rejection of Him as their King, but God also says, "Hey, I get how you feel." God reminds Samuel that the Israelites have had a pattern of rejecting Him for a very long time! It wasn't long after God parted the Red Sea for them to escape Pharaoh's army, whom He then destroyed, that they wanted to return to Egypt and be ruled by Pharaoh!
4. In addition, despite their commitment at Mizpah to put away their idols and God's unequivocal testimony of power that enabled them to rout the Philistines in battle and even take back cities the Philistines had previously conquered, they had nonetheless once again returned to the worship of false gods! Despite all that God had done for them, they are demanding a mortal, sinful human being have the right to not only exercise complete authority over them but also to own them, their lands, and their possessions! So, God finally has enough of their lack of faith in Him and their constant longing for idols, including a human king, by giving them what they want, not as a blessing but rather as a judgment. However, before He does, He tells Samuel to ensure they fully understand what they are asking for! God tells Samuel,

C. **9 Now then, obey their voice; only you shall solemnly warn them and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them." 10 So Samuel told all the words of the LORD to the people who were asking for a king from him. 11 He said, "These will be the ways of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and appoint them to his chariots and to be his horsemen and to run before his chariots. 12 And he will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and some to plow his ground and to reap his harvest, and to make his implements of war and the equipment of his chariots. 13 He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. 14 He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards and give them to his servants. 15 He will take the tenth of your grain and of your vineyards and give it to his officers and to his servants. 16 He will take your male servants and female servants and the best of your young men and your donkeys, and put them to his work. 17 He will take the tenth of your flocks, and you shall be his slaves. 18 And in that day you will cry out because of your king, whom you have chosen for yourselves, but the LORD will not answer you in that day."**

1. We need to be clear here. Samuel wasn't saying something that wasn't already well-established as truth. It wasn't like Samuel was giving them any deep insight here. This is what it means to be a king, and this is how kings act. The very definition of a king is that all are subservient to him because he owns all—people, lands, money, whatever is on the land, in the land, or passing over or through the land. Furthermore, because everyone and everything in a king's kingdom belongs to the king, he has the right to do with it whatever he wants—it's all his!
2. The contrast couldn't be sharper. Israel was a free people who could live before the Lord, who was their king. They were literally unlike almost all the people on the earth. Everybody else had a human king, but Israel didn't. Israel had what our forefathers in the United States fought for us to have—FREEDOM!
3. Although the Israelites were expected to make offerings to the Lord, they had no governmental taxes. Furthermore, God GAVE THEM the lands of Canaan. He didn't tell them they could go live on His lands; instead, He told them that He had given them the land (Joshua 1:6), and therefore, they needed to claim it! He even set up extensive laws to guarantee the lands stayed in their families. If you made a bunch of terrible financial decisions and lost your land in the year of Jubilee, it would go not to the "government" but back to you or your survivors!
4. But now Israel wanted a human king, which meant all their lands would functionally be the king's lands for him to do with whatever he pleased. If he pleases to let you continue to lay claim to it and make a profit from it, then that is entirely up to him. But, at any moment of his choosing, he could also decide to take your land from you or force you to do what he wants you to do with it. A king could take anything he wanted from you, including your sons and daughters! Samuel assured them that when they got a king, this was precisely what would happen.
5. By contrast, the judges of Israel didn't own anybody; they merely administered the Law of God on His behalf because He alone was King. God alone is the Lawgiver, and as such, when ruled by a judge, everybody ultimately answered to God for their life and actions because the King, the judge, and everybody else answered to, was God! No one could claim anything that belonged to anybody else because it all belonged to God, and He alone had claim to it!
6. Some then, one might say, how is that any different? If God also functioned as their King, what difference would it make if they had a human King? If God has rights to everybody and everything as a King, how would things be any different with a different King? R.D. Philipps answered this question well when he wrote,

7. **"However much a king may accomplish for the nation, it is certain that he will take more than he gives. He will take and you will serve: such is the despotism whenever sinful men are set in the place of God over our lives. This principle is even more true when it comes to our yielding to sin, the great slave master of our world. Jesus said, "Everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin" (John 8:34). We think we will dabble in sin while retaining control over our passions, but it is not true. Sin takes and we serve, until finally sin destroys us in the holy judgment of God."**²

8. So, to the question of the difference between having God as your king or some other king, I say yes, it is true that God created the universe and everything in it and exists to glorify and please Him. However, because God is also perfect love, all those who willingly submit to His kingship are sincerely blessed by Him for their good. No human king can do this because, as good as that king might be, every human king is still a sinner who is also limited by his humanity in what He can accomplish. But God is the eternal loving king who is also unlimited in His power, so much so that all He does is entirely and perfectly for His glory, yet still completely and fully for our good. The Bible says,
 - a. **8 Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him! (Psalm 34:8)**

 - b. **11 For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. (Jeremiah 29:11)**

 - c. **40 For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day." (John 6:40)**

9. When you serve God as King, yes, He owns you as He already did. However, in living your life submitted to Him, you introduce yourself to His immeasurable goodness and love as well! As every King does, God demands everything, but unlike every King, what God gives back is not just temporally good; it's eternally good!

10. So, how did the people respond when Samuel made it abundantly clear what they were getting ready to end up in? Did they cry out to God for mercy? Did they repent and tell God they were wrong to demand a King? Did they

² Phillips, R. D. (2012). [1 Samuel](#). (P. G. Ryken & R. D. Phillips, Duguid Iain M., Eds.) (1st ed., pp. 137–139). Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing.

fall on their faces and realize how foolish their actions were? No! Here's what happened.

D. 19 But the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel. And they said, "No! But there shall be 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 when Samuel had heard all the words of the people, he repeated them in the ears of the LORD. 22 And the LORD said to Samuel, "Obey their voice and make them a king." Samuel then told the men of Israel, "Go every man to his city."

1. Interestingly, God doesn't disqualify Samuel from being the KINGMAKER! God condemned Eli for failing to discipline his sons, but Samuel didn't. The difference in the scenarios is that not only were Eli's two sons using their position as priests to sexually exploit, if not rape women, but more importantly, Eli never even seemed to be interested in knowing and following God. God was the author of the religious system that Eli was leading for his own benefit, rather than being the leader of the religious system that he should have used for what it was made for—to remember to live in submission to God as King!
2. On the other hand, even though Samuel failed in his leadership with his sons, he nonetheless didn't stop seeking to know and follow God and, as such, never disqualified himself from laboring with God. Despite Samuel's foolish action of inaction with his sons, Samuel was still pressing forward in his relationship with the Lord, and God was still going to bless Samuel in how He used him for His glory as the Kingmaker of Israel.
3. However, the more significant point in this text is the insistence of the Jewish people to place their faith in a human king rather than God. No matter how much Samuel pleaded with them, they continued to insist on being owned by a man! They wanted more than an authority figure to judge them and lead them into battle; they wanted a king!
4. The difference between a judge with authority and a king is massive. The elders of the tribes could step in and get rid of a judge who wasn't doing their job because whoever served as a judge didn't have an inherent right to be the judge, but a king did! You can't vote a king out because he's the only one with a vote! He's not king because you gave him the right to be king, but rather, to be king means you, in and of yourself, are the right. Authority is not granted to a king; authority is the king because that's what it means to be king.
5. So, think about what they just said in verse twenty. They plainly and literally say they want a human to have inherent, total authority over them. Why would they do that? Well, there is only one reason. They didn't trust

the Lord to judge them, provide for them, or lead them to victory. They felt they could trust a human king more than God.

6. Now, as crazy as that sounds, and as ludicrous as you might think that is, a noticeable number of Christians in America seem to believe there is only one person in the United States that can save America, and it ain't Jesus they are passionately expressing their confidence in. We need to understand something very relevant to our day. If we believe that out of the 350 million people in America, there is only one who can successfully lead our nation, then we are saying that we want a king! If only one person in America can lead our country right, then this country is doomed! Seriously, let's hypothetically say it's true that it's just one guy; what happens when that guy inevitably dies?
7. As ridiculous as it is for us to think that way, especially as Christians, human history has proven it's the way human beings seem always to end up feeling. We trust in ourselves, we trust in others, we trust in technology, we trust in money, we trust in politicians, we trust in preachers, we trust in doctors, we trust in our country; we seem to be willing to trust in anyone or anything other than God, and it makes no sense, yet we always seem to drift in that direction. Listen to what the Lord said to Jeremiah,
8. **5 Thus says the LORD: "Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart turns away from the LORD. 6 He is like a shrub in the desert, and shall not see any good come. He shall dwell in the parched places of the wilderness, in an uninhabited salt land. 7 "Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose trust is the LORD. 8 He is like a tree planted by water, that sends out its roots by the stream, and does not fear when heat comes, for its leaves remain green, and is not anxious in the year of drought, for it does not cease to bear fruit." 9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? (Jeremiah 17:5-9)**
9. Jeremiah 17:9 is the sad reality of our condition. Despite the fact surrendering to and trusting in God is where true life and true blessings are experienced in an eternally immeasurable and indescribable way, our "hearts" still inevitably deceive us into living for a king and in a kingdom that can never even give back what it takes from us! So, here's my challenge,

CHALLENGE: Serving a king always requires everything from you; the difference is what you get back. Which king and kingdom are you serving, and what are you getting back?

16 Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? 17 But thanks be to God, that you who

were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, 18 and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. 19 I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification. 20 For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. 21 But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. 22 But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life. 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:15-23)