

## Study Aids

### Discussion Questions and Suggested Reading for “What’s the Message?” Lessons

#### Lesson 49

The Ark of the Covenant – which was the sign of assurance to the Israelites that the Lord was in their midst – had been captured by the Philistines. However, instead of being a benefit to the Philistines, it was more of a plague and caused them so much pain that they were glad to get rid of it. But the Israelites were not sure of what to do with it, either. So it sat, pretty much forgotten, for years. And during that time voices were raised, saying – in effect – our problem is that we have no king. That will be our solution! (See 1 Sam. 8:4-5 and 19-20)

#### Questions:

There were some who saw a different solution. What was it? (See Judges 8:23 and 9:7-21, 1 Sam. 8:6 and 1 Sam. 12:14-17)

Was the Lord against Israel having a king *per se*? (See 1 Sam. 8:9 and 8:21-22, 10:1a) Is God against any particular form of government? (See Rom. 13:1-7, 1 Tim. 2:1-3 and 1 Pet. 2:13-14)

The situation that Israel faced some 3000 years ago and the application to our lives today is summarized in the table below.

#### **THEN**

The people say, “we want a king”

- To be like other powerful nations
- To fight our battles

The basic problem was –

- 1 Sam. 8:6-8
- Concern: lose sight of God as Ultimate King

Change –

- Was inevitable
- 1 Sam. 12:14

What had Israel forgotten?

- Gen. 12:1-4
- Judg. 2:10
- Deut. 6:4-9, 17:14-20

## NOW

The people say, “we need a new form of organization” –

- To be like other successful churches
- To deal with today’s challenges

The basic problem is –

- Mistaking means and ends
- Concern: lose sight of organization as an enabling means to achieve a purpose

Change –

- Is inevitable
- Can be good if we focus on our purpose and motivate people from within

What must we always remember?

- The New Covenant (Mt. 28:18-20)
- How God’s Word can motivate people to be Loving Outreaching
- That our spiritual growth begins with teaching God’s Word and becoming obedient disciples

Suggested reading for further study:

Read pages 35 – 44 of **The Kingdom of God**, by John Bright. This will give you an overview and context for what lies immediately ahead in our course of study.