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Samuel's Warnings

First Samuel 8: 10-18

Samuel's warnings DIG: If you had heard these warnings, what would you have done? Why? What was wrong with their willful intent to have a king? What were the kings of other nations like, Pharaoh in Egypt, or Jethro in Midian, for example? How could they forget so soon how God had led them into battle? Why did God relent and give them a king?

REFLECT: When are you inclined to want or do something just to be "like everyone else?" How do you prevent sin from blinding you to your choices? If someone rejects your believing witness, is that person necessarily rejecting YHVH? Have you ever gone through a period of rebellion? What persuades you to submit to God's will in your life?

When all this happened, it was too late to complain, for the people had reaped the consequences of their own fleshly desires.



Samuel reported everything ADONAI had said to the people asking Him for a king (8:10). What follows is an extraordinarily accurate picture of the ordinary results of human lordship. Even though **the LORD** sanctioned the monarchy, **He** gave advance **warning** of the price **Isra'el** would pay for **asking Him for a king**.

If **the rulings** below were to be realized, the average **Israelite** would soon be little more than the private property at the disposal of **the monarch king**. **Samuel** describes human **kingship**, not just at its worst, but in **its** very nature, featuring two verbs **take** (six times) and **serve** or **servant** (five times).¹⁹⁷

He said: Here is the kind of rulings your king will make:

He will draft your sons and assign them to **take care of his chariots, be his horsemen and be bodyguards running ahead of his chariots (8:11).**

He will appoint them to **serve him as officers in charge of a thousand or of fifty, plowing his fields, gathering his harvest, and making his weapons and the equipment for his chariots (8:12).**

He will **take your daughters and have them be perfume-makers, cooks and bakers (8:13).**

He will **take your fields, vineyards and olive groves - the very best of them! - and hand them over to his **servants** (8:14).**

He will **take the ten-percent tax of your crops and vineyards and give it to his officers and **servants**, in addition to the approximately 23 percent they were already paying (8:15).**

He will **take your male and female **servants**, your best young men and your donkeys, and make them work for him (8:16).**

He will **take the ten-percent tax of your flocks, and you will become his **servants** (8:17).**

All of these **warnings** came true, word for word.

This was **Samuel's** message then, and it is still true today. If **the Israelites** did not want divine rule, but the kind of leaders who rule **all the nations**, then **they** would experience the usual life of mankind: slavery to oppressive masters. Like today, those who want national government to provide all their needs must be ready to sign away their rights as free people. If the government is to solve all our problems, then the government must be obeyed in all things and most of what we have must be given to it. But, as much as **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** in our lives. This principle is even more true when it comes to our yielding to sin, the great slave master of our world. **Yeshua** 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’s not true. Sin takes and we **serve**, until finally sin destroys us in **God’s** holy judgment.¹⁹⁸

As Richard Phillips relates in his commentary on **1 Samuel**, undoubtedly, **the people of Isra’el** wanted to have **their** cake and eat it, too. **They** were willing to observe **God’s** “religion” only if **they** had a secular government; **they** wanted a private faith, not public reliance. Likewise, the trappings of “religion” are permitted by secular governments today, enlisting **God’s** endorsement of the sovereign rule of mankind, so long as **God** agrees not to have any say in our affairs. But **God** doesn’t agree with such an arrangement. **He** told **the Israelite elders** that if **they** wanted **a human king**, **they** would have to rely on **him** without **His** help. **Samuel warned them** that as much as they wanted a king now, in the future they would live to regret it. **In the day, you will cry out because of your king whom you have chosen, but ADONAI will not answer you” (8:18)**. In other words, there would be no return to the cycle of judges.

Tragically, this scenario played itself out within two generations, as **Isra’el** experienced the very oppression that **Samuel** had predicted under **David’s son** and successor, **King Solomon**. **Solomon** spent seven years building **the LORD’s Temple** (see the commentary on **the Life of Solomon, to see link click Bb - Inside Solomon’s Temple**), but **he** took **thirteen years** building an even more spectacular **palace** for **himself (First Kings 7:1)**. To accomplish that feat, **Solomon** pressed much of **Isra’el** into forced labor (see **the Life of Solomon Az - Materials and Labor for the Temple**). **Solomon took** and **the people served**, and when **Solomon** died **the elders** appealed to **his son Rehoboam** for leniency. **They** pleaded: **Your father made our yoke heavy. Now, therefore, lighten our hard service . . . and we will serve you (First Kings 12:4)**. **Rehoboam** responded as any king would, refusing to begin his reign with a sign of weakness. Therefore, **he** boasted: **My little finger is thicker than my father’s thighs. Yes, my father laid heavy burdens on you, but I’m going to make them even heavier! My father beat you with whips, but I will beat you with scorpions (First Kings 12:10-11 NLT)**!¹⁹⁹ When all this happened, it was too late to complain, for **the people** had reaped the consequences of **their** own fleshly desires.

Dear heavenly **Father**, praise **You** for **Your** steadfast and wise love! **You** are such a perfect **Father**! You delight in blessing **Your** children. When **You** give **warnings** it is always for our own good. **You** want to bless us by following paths that lead to joy and peace, and **You** know all things, **You** direct us in paths to bring us the greatest joy. **I have come that they might have life, and have it abundantly (John 10:10c)! Your love is so great that You willingly gave Your own Son to bear our sin. He who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all, how shall He not also with Him freely give us all things (Romans 8:32)? You can see the future. So when You warn me through Your Word, and Your Spirit, it is out of love to protect me from what is going to hurt me in the future. Your steadfast love is both a love in the past when Messiah Yeshua paid sin's ransom, and it is also a love looking forward to the future when Your children are in heaven and You will reward us with our obedience. For no one can lay any other foundation than what is already laid - which is Yeshua the Messiah. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear. For the Day will show it, because it is to be revealed by fire; and the fire itself will test each one's work - what sort it is. If anyone's work built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward (1 Cor 3:11-14).** Thank **You** for guiding and **warning** me so that I can find the best paths to life's peace and eternal joy. In **Messiah's** holy **Name** and power of **His** Resurrection. Amen