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The People's Refusal to Listen

First Samuel 8: 19-22

The people's refusal to listen DIG: Why did the Israelites want a king? Why were they unsatisfied with judges? What part did Samuel's sons play in Isra'el's desire for a king? What part was played by their envy of the surrounding nations? How would the monarchy change the lives of the Israelites? What were they gaining? What were they losing?

REFLECT: Why did the LORD allow Isra'el to have a king, even though He knew it would bring suffering to them? How does ADONAI take our own sins and sovereignly use them as part of His perfect will? Are you content to live as God directs, or do you tend to want things your own way? What areas of your life might the Lord want you to submit to Him?

ADONAI is sovereign, but people are still responsible for their actions.



In spite of ADONAI's warnings (**to see link click [Br - Samuel's Warnings](#)**), the people insisted that **God** give **them** a king. **They** were the victim of **their** own unbelieving folly, and **their** cries for relief went unanswered. Pleasing **the LORD** wasn't the thing uppermost in **their** minds; what **they** wanted was guaranteed protection against **their** enemies. **They**

wanted someone to judge **them** and fight **their** battles, someone **they** could see and follow. **They** found it too demanding to trust an invisible **God** and obey **His** wonderful mitzvot. In spite of all **YHVH** had done for **Isra'el** from the call of Abraham to the conquest of the Promised Land, **they** turned **their** back on **Almighty God** and chose to have a frail man to rule over **them**.²⁰⁰

The people refused to listen to what Samuel told them, and they said: No! We want a king over us, so that we can be like all the nations, with our king to judge us, lead us and fight our battles (8:19-20). As we have seen repeatedly, there were aspects of **the LORD's** role in the nation of **Isra'el**. However, **the people** were indeed rejecting **ADONAI** by demanding to have a mortal lead and defend **them**. **The more people** depend on human government, the less **they** depend on **YHVH**.²⁰¹ **Samuel heard everything the people said and repeated them for ADONAI to hear. ADONAI said to Samuel, "Do what they ask, and set up a king for them." So Samuel told the men of Isra'el, "Each of you, return to his city" with the understanding that the request would be granted in due time (8:21-22).**

It is important to distinguish three aspects of the will of **ADONAI**. **God's** sovereign will is what **He** decrees to come to pass. It includes all things and is irresistible and absolute. **In Him, we were chosen, having been predestined according to His plan that works everything in conformity with the purpose of His will (Ephesians 1:11).** We do not regard this as fatalism, for **God** is involved and concerned, and we are responsible for our actions. **ADONAI's perfect will** is what **He** advocates and prefers. This aspect of **God's** will includes **His** moral desires as revealed in **His Word** (see the commentary on **Exodus Dh - ADONAI and the Torah**). Finally, **His permissive will** refers to what **YHVH** permits even when it is not in conformity with **His** perfect will. **Ha'Shem** may permit sin, though it is not in keeping with what **He** prefers. At this time **God** has granted certain powers to **Satan as the god of this World (2 Corinthians 4:4)** until **the Lord** returns (**Isaiah 63:1-6**) with the title deed to the earth (see the commentary on **Revelation Cf - You Are Worthy to Take the Scroll**) at the beginning of **His** Messianic Kingdom (see **Isaiah Jt - Isra'el in the Messianic Kingdom**).²⁰²

Was it **ADONAI's** will for **Isra'el** to have a **king**? The answer is "yes!" Prophecies dating back to **Moses** indicate that this was **God's** plan (**Genesis 49:10; Number 24:17; Deuteronomy 17:14-20**). The fact that the monarchy was actually instituted indicates that it was part of **God's** sovereign will - **His** decree. But was it **God's** will that **they** acquire a **king** in the manner in which **they** were doing it? No. **The people** were rejecting the kingship of **YHVH (First Samuel 8:7)** and were motivated by a desire to be **like all the**

nations (8:20). Nevertheless, **ADONAI** allowed this to take place, because it was within **His** permissive will of **the nation**.

Ironically, **Ha'Shem** gave **them their king**, but it ended up being part of **His** judgment against **the nation**. As **they** were sitting in **the Babylonian captivity** (see the commentary on [Jeremiah Gu - Seventy Years of Imperial Babylonian Rule](#)), **Zedekiah** would be the last human **king** of **Isra'el** (see [Jeremiah Ey - A Warning to Zedekiah](#)). **God's** ultimate answer to **their** foolish decision is recorded in **Hosea 13:9-11**, "**It is your destruction, Isra'el, although your help is in Me. So now, where is your king, to save you in all your cities? Where are your judges, of whom you said: Give me a king and leaders? I gave you a king in my anger; and in my fury I took him away.**"²⁰³ There is application for us today. When believers are in **God's** permissive will, but disobedient, then they alone are responsible for their actions. **YHVH** is sovereign, yes, but people are still responsible for our actions. With respect to **sin** and **evil**, **the LORD** wills to permit **it** (**Genesis 50:20; Acts 2:23**), but not to effect **it**, for **He** is not the author of **evil** (**James 1:13**).²⁰⁴

*Dear heavenly **Father**, praise **You** for being such a wonderful **Father**! People often choose to listen to the world, rather than to go to **You** for advice; but **You** are wise and always give the best to those who love **You**. **Your** advice is far better than what anyone else says. When **Isra'el** begged **You** for a king, **You** gave **them** what **they** wanted, but **Sha'ul** turned out to be an evil king. It would have been so much better if **the people** had trusted **You** as **their King**, then the problem would seem small. When problems seem big, it is such a comfort to realize that **You** are always bigger, wiser and stronger! **David** was an excellent example of a man with problems, which many could have been thought of as "Big problems." **Sha'ul** was out to kill **him**, but **David** trusted strongly in **You**, so **he** saw "small problems" and a "Big God! **David** cried out: Answer me when I call to You, my righteous God! You set me free when I am in distress. Have mercy on me and hear my prayer (Psalms 4:1).*

*You have the victory all worked out, if only **Your people** would put their **trust** in **You** rather in the world. **ADONAI**, how many are my foes! Many are rising up against me! Many are saying to my soul: "There is no deliverance for him in God." Selah But **You**, **ADONAI**, are a shield around me, my glory and the lifter of my head. I cry out to **ADONAI** with my voice, and He answers me from His holy mountain. Selah I lie down and sleep. I awake - for **ADONAI** sustains me (Psalms 3:1-5). Dear **Father**, I love **You** and seek to follow **David's** example and run to **You** with my problems for **You** are almighty, loving and wise! In **Messiah's** holy **Name** and power of **His** Resurrection. Amen*