

1 Samuel (Sh'mu'el Alef)

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Chapter 8

1 And it came to pass when Samuel was old¹ that he made his sons judges over Israel.

2 Now the name of his firstborn was Joel (Yo'el),² and the name of his second, Abiah (Aviyah);³ they were judges in Beersheba (Be'er-Sheva).

3 And his sons did not walk in his ways but turned aside after greed, receiving bribes and perverting that which is right.⁴

4 ¶ Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together and came to Samuel in Ramah and said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons do not walk in thy ways; therefore make us a king to judge us like all the Gentiles.⁵

6 But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the LORD.

¹ Sometimes, when leaders get old and concerned about their mortality, they don't make wise decisions in regards to successors. Samuel probably did not know of anyone else who could handle his position. The people depended on him too much, instead of pursuing God, so that they could hear Him for themselves. Samuel probably figured that his sons, at least, knew how to do the job, having grown up in his house and seen how he did things.

² **H3100**

יֹאֵל

yo`e`l

yo-ale'

From H3068 and H410; **Jehovah (is his) God**; Joel, the name of twelve Israelites: - Joel.

³ **H29**

אֲבִיָּהּ אֲבִיָּהוּ

'a`bīya`h 'a`bīya`hu`

ab-ee-yaw', ab-ee-yaw'-hoo

From H1 and H3050; father (that is **worshipper**) of **Jah**; Abijah, the name of several Israelite men and two Israelitesses: - Abiah, Abijah.

Judging by their names, Samuel had high hopes of his sons being devoted to the Lord.

⁴ It seems that there was jealousy and resentment in Samuel's sons because of the demands that his ministry made on his time. Their behaviour possibly was revenge for not having received the amount of attention that they wanted from their father when they were children.

Samuel and his family were not judged like Eli was judged. He possibly took privileges away from his sons when they misbehaved, and it could be that they cleaned up their act, so that their father would set them in place as judges, but reverted to their old ways when they had what they wanted. I am also guessing that, after they saw how the people responded in anger to their leadership, they may have cleaned up their act again.

⁵ Fear of the future, because they trusted in man, rather than in the Lord, gave rise to this rebellion against the Lord.

7 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.

8 According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, with which they have forsaken me and served other gods, so they also do unto thee.

9 Now, therefore, hearken unto their voice; however first protest solemnly against them by declaring unto them the rights of the king that shall reign over them.

10 And Samuel told all the words of the LORD unto the people that asked him for a king.

11 And he said, This will be the right of the king that shall reign over you: He will take your sons and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen, and some shall run before his chariot.

12 And he will appoint captains over thousands and captains over fifties and will set them to plough his ground and to reap his harvest and to make his weapons of war and the munitions of his chariots.

13 And he will take your daughters to be confectioneries and to be cooks and to be bakers.⁶

14 And he will take your fields and your vineyards and your good oliveyards and give them to his slaves.⁷

15 And he will take the tenth of your seed and of your vineyards to give to his officers and to his slaves.

16 And he will take your menslaves and your maidslaves and your good young men and your asses and do his work with them.

17 He will also take the tenth of your sheep, and finally ye shall be his slaves.⁸

18 And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you, and the LORD will not hear you in that day.⁹

19 Nevertheless, the people refused to hear the voice of Samuel, and they said, No, but we will have a king over us

20 that we also may be like all the Gentiles¹⁰ and that our king may govern us and go out before us and fight our battles.¹¹

21 And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he rehearsed them in the ears of the LORD.

⁶ Progressive inroads would be made on their liberty. First, the king will build up military might, and people will consent to this, for the sake of protection from invasion. Then he will amass luxury and splendour for himself, and the means to maintain his extravagant lifestyle.

⁷ The people will lose parts of their inheritance, the right of ownership of their land.

⁸ At first, people will be so flattered to have their talents recognized that they won't mind being commandeered for service to the king, but, eventually, everyone will be his slave, to do any kind of work that he orders.

⁹ It happened with their very first king that the people had complaints. Those who were disgruntled with Saul flocked to David and became part of his army.

¹⁰ They opted for the mediocrity of peer pressure¹⁰, instead of consecrating themselves to the excellence of serving God for His pleasure. They wanted the pageantry of royalty, to compete with the splendour of other nations, instead of being "different."

¹¹ Ridiculous. They had God to fight their battles, bringing plagues and meteorites on their enemies. A king would not have such things at his command.

22 And the LORD said to Samuel, Hearken unto their voice,¹² and place a king over them. Then Samuel said unto the men of Israel, Go each one unto his city.

¹² Sometimes the Lord gives us what we ask for, though it's a really dumb thing we've been asking for, to see how we like it, once we get what we thought we wanted. It's enrollment in the School of Hard Knocks.