

EPISODE NO. 123

1 Sam. 8:1-22

The People Insisted upon Having a Human King

1 When Samuel became old, he appointed his sons as judges over Israel. 2 His oldest son's name was Joel, and his next son's name was Abijah. They were acting as judges in Beer-Sheba. 3 However, Samuel's sons did not live the same way he did. Instead, they tried to get money dishonestly. They took bribes. They twisted justice to obtain money.

4 Therefore, all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together and came to Samuel at Ramah. 5 They said to him, "Look, you are old, and your sons are not following your good example. Appoint us a king to lead us — like all the other nations have!"

6 When the elders said THAT, Samuel knew this was a very bad idea. So he prayed to Yahweh. 7 But Yahweh told Samuel, "Listen to whatever the people say to you. They have not rejected YOU. They have rejected ME; they do not want Me to rule over them! 8 They are doing as they have always done. Since the day I brought them up out of Egypt until today, they have abandoned Me. They have served different gods. They are treating YOU the same way, too! 9 Go on, listen to the people. But you must surely give them a very stern warning. Tell them what the ruling king would do — he will exercise his special privileges over them!"

10 Samuel answered those who were begging him for a king. He repeated all the words of Yahweh to them. 11 Samuel said, "If you have a king ruling over you, then these are the kinds of special privileges that he will get: He will take your sons and he will make them serve him with his chariots and his horses. They will run ahead of his chariots. 12 The king will appoint some of your sons to be commanders over groups of 1,000 men or captains over groups of 50 men. He will force more men to plow his ground and to harvest his crops, to make weapons of war and weapons for his chariots. 13 This king will take your daughters, too. Some of your daughters will make perfume. Others will cook and bake for him. 14 He will take over your best fields, your best vineyards, and your best olive trees. And, he will give them to his servants. 15 He will put a 10-percent tax on your grapes, and he will give that to his officers and servants. 16 He will take your servant boys and servant girls. He will take your best cattle and your donkeys. And, he will use them all for his own work. 17 And, he will put a 10-percent tax on your flocks. And, you yourselves will become his servants. 18 When that time comes,

you will cry out for relief because of your king whom you chose for yourselves. However, Yahweh will NOT answer you at that time.”

19 But the people refused to listen to Samuel. “No!” They cried out. “We want a KING to rule over us! 20 Then we will be just like all the other nations. Our king will lead us. He will be our hero and lead us and fight our battles!”

21 Samuel heard all that the people were saying. Then he reported everything to Yahweh. 22 Yahweh answered Samuel, “Listen to them. Set up a human king over them.”

So, Samuel told the men of Israel: “Everyone go back home!”