

Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

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Diversion From The Divine To The Human Kingdom

by Dan Trygg

“Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah; ⁵ and they said to him, ‘Behold, you have grown old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint a king for us to judge us like all the nations.’ ⁶ But the thing was displeasing in the sight of Samuel when they said, ‘Give us a king to judge us.’ And Samuel prayed to Yahweh. ⁷ And Yahweh said to Samuel, ‘Listen to the voice of the people in regard to all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them. ⁸ Like all the deeds which they have done since the day that I brought them up from Egypt even to this day-- in that they have forsaken Me and served other gods-- so they are doing to you also. ⁹ Now then, listen to their voice; however, you shall solemnly warn them and tell them of the procedure of the king who will reign over them.’”

1 Samuel 8:4-9

“And they arose early; and it came about at daybreak that Samuel called to Saul on the roof, saying, ‘Get up, that I may send you away.’ So Saul arose, and both he and Samuel went out into the street. ²⁷ As they were going down to the edge of the city, Samuel said to Saul, ‘Say to the servant that he might go ahead of us and pass on, but you remain standing now, that I may proclaim the word of God to you.’ ^{10:1} Then Samuel took the flask of oil, poured it on his head, kissed him and said, ‘Has not Yahweh anointed you a ruler (prince, leader) over His inheritance?’”

1 Samuel 9:26-10:1

We saw how God made a covenant with the Israelites at Mount Sinai, when they came out of Egypt. **He had based His offer of covenant with them on His good heart and benevolent actions toward them, and the mighty power He had demonstrated on their behalf.** By defeating the Egyptians, He had shown Himself to be more powerful than the greatest national power on earth. **As a Protector-King, there certainly was none like Him.** Moreover, He had miraculously and repeatedly provided for them, and their animals, ...even through the desolate wilderness through which they came out of Egypt. **As a Provider-King, there certainly was none like Him.** He gave them just and wise laws, statutes and directives by which to live. **As a Prudent-King, there certainly was none like Him.** When they walked in His ways, they enjoyed success and blessing. They saw “the land of milk and honey” become their possession. Everything He had spoken to them about came to pass (Josh. 23:14). **As a Promise-keeping-King, there certainly was no one like Him.** At Sinai, **He had invited them to make a voluntary covenant with Him, and they had responded to His offer with a resounding, “Yes!”** They had promised to **be loyal to Him** as their only God and King, and **they had also promised to obey His covenant commands and the direction given by His voice.** As they were obedient to Him, and followed His counsel, they defeated those who opposed them, and they obtained the inheritance He had promised them.

However, after only a few decades, that original generation began to die off, and **another generation came along who had not seen what God could do**, ...ones who had benefitted from the lessons of the past. Because they and their fathers had not *fully* carried out the commands of Yahweh, they were influenced by other people who were not following God. **They soon began to compromise their beliefs, made allowances for things that Yahweh had forbidden, and soon were serving other gods in addition to Yahweh, then in place of Yahweh. Before long, they, as a people, became both disloyal and disobedient to God.** God had warned them of this. Although they had been disloyal to Him, Yahweh continued to faithfully bring them back into the covenant arrangement that their forefathers had committed their families and their nation to. God had even foretold of this potentiality, and described in the covenant documents what He would do to try to bring them back into covenant (Deut. 27,28). We read, in the book of Judges, how God would withdraw His blessings and protections to attempt to get the nation to turn back to their covenant commitments and their relationship with Him. **For the next 300 years, the nation went through the cycle of compromise, disloyalty toward God by worshipping other gods, and disobedience to the covenant commands.** Eventually, **God’s protection would be withdrawn, and enemy nations would begin to defeat and control the Israelite people.** They would oppress them until they finally would come to their senses, and return to God. **Then, God would raise up a “judge” or a deliverer to free them from their overlords.** The book of Judges mentions 12 such leaders who became God’s emissaries to deliver the Israelites and bring the people back to Yahweh.

The book of 1 Samuel begins with recounting the compromise, downfall and conclusion of the house of Eli, who judged Israel for 40 years, ...and the introduction of the next judge, the prophet Samuel. When Samuel had become old, the people did not desire his sons to serve as leaders after him, because they had become corrupt. Instead, **the people asked Samuel to appoint a human king over them to judge them “like other nations”.** Samuel recognized right away the shift away from God, and he was displeased by the suggestion. **God saw this as a rejection of His Kingship**, as well. Nevertheless, **He told Samuel to comply with their request, but he was to**

solemnly warn the people concerning the abusive nature of human kings. They wanted a king “like other nations”? Well, they should take a careful look at how those potentates operate! God had Samuel warn them of the abuses of power and resources that typically characterized a king in that time. He would take their sons and daughters to serve him; he would take the best of their land to give to his servants; he would tax them and take their livestock for his servants and administration, until they cry out because of the oppression of the human king they were asking for. Nevertheless, **in spite of this warning, the people still demanded that a human king be over them.**

It is interesting to read in the next few chapters, how **God picks Saul, ...a man of great size, and handsome in appearance, ...a man who would fulfill the outward requirements and expectations of the people.** Through divinely directed circumstances, Saul and his servant made their way to the village where Samuel was. God had already revealed to Samuel that he would be coming that day, so Samuel had arranged for a feast, and had a place set at the table for him, and a special portion of prime meat set aside for him. Afterwards, he invited Saul and his servant to stay the night at his house. In the morning, Samuel anointed Saul to become ruler, and gave him three signs that God would arrange to confirm his words, after he left Samuel. **Samuel’s words are significant, and very precise. He did not initially anoint him to be king, but to be a “ruler, prince or leader” of God’s people. God was still the real King; Saul was to be His steward, ...His representative.** Moreover, as the NT points out, “it is required of stewards to be trustworthy” (1 Cor. 4:2). Unlike other monarchs of neighboring nations, **the king of Israel was never to be above the law of God, ...or a law to himself.** He was to enforce the covenant commandments of God through righteous and impartial judgment. **He and his administration were to rightly represent and carry out the covenant directives of Yahweh, and seek to follow His voice.** The king and his kingdom were to be under God’s leadership and direction. It was to be a theocratic monarchy, where God was the King, and the human king was to carry out the will of Yahweh. **In this way the kingdom of Israel was to be a visible manifestation of the Kingdom of God. Thus, it could still fulfill its calling and purpose of being a kingdom of priests (Ex. 19:6), a light of revelation to the other nations.**

Although Saul began his reign as a seemingly humble man, ...a man with no apparent interest in being the center of attention..., it did not take long for that to change. What appeared to be humility was insecurity, and that fostered impatience, rash and foolish decisions, self-aggrandizing disobedience to the specific directives of God, and eventually jealousy and murder. The king the people wanted became an abusive, murderous tyrant. **As Saul turned away from his dependence upon and obedience to God, Yahweh rejected him as king, and commissioned Samuel to anoint another man, David, ...a “man after God’s heart”..., to eventually replace Saul (1 Sam. 13:14; 16:1-13).** David’s reign, in many ways, represented a better example of a God-centered kingdom. Unlike Saul, who seems to have had little personal relationship with Yahweh before his installation as king, **David had a warm, personal and deeply reverent love for God.** When David desired to honor God with a “house to live in” (a temple), God responded by offering to “build David a house”, an enduring dynasty, if his descendants would be obedient to the covenant (2 Sam. 7). God promised to David that, He would raise up one of his descendants after him, and this one would “build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever” (2 Sam. 7:12,13). **Unlike what happened to Saul and his dynasty, God promised to cause David’s house (lineage) and kingdom to endure forever before Him (vs. 16).**

As a result of this prophesy, the expectation was that the Kingdom of God would be established on earth through the dynasty of David. Eventually, David himself was corrupted by power, and thought himself to be above the law. He committed adultery with another man’s wife, and then set up the murder of the husband in an attempt to cover his crime. Like Eli the priest, and Samuel the prophet, David also proved to be an inattentive, ineffective parent, and the arrogance and disregard for the law he embodied was passed along to his sons. Amnon, Absalom, and Adonijah each conspired to commit serious crimes, boldly disregarding God, David or the authority of the law, and all three paid with their lives for their arrogance. Even Solomon, who started out well, disregarded the warnings of the *torah* regarding kings (Deut. 17:15-20), and was corrupted by power, wealth, pride and even fell into idolatry. After his death, the nation was divided, and the line of David was left with only two out of the original twelve tribes. Within five years of Solomon’s death, Shishak the king of Egypt, captured Jerusalem and sacked the city, taking away the majority of the wealth and splendor of Solomon’s kingdom. It is clear, if one has an open mind, that the Kingdom of God was not being made manifest through the kingdom of David, or his descendants, ...at least not in an obvious way.

As you do a word study on the word “kingdom”, most of the occurrences in the OT have to do with the lineage of human kings who ruled over Israel and Judah. There are some prophetic hints, however, in the Psalms and the later prophetic books, that God has another plan to bring His Kingdom into this world in a visible way. It would not be through the natural dynasty of David, as the people had expected. That became clear as the kings were finally removed and taken into exile. **When the Israelites were brought back to the land, there were no more kings, ...yet God was not finished. He had another plan.**