

Tragedy

“Give us a king to judge us like all the other nations have.” (1 Samuel 8:5b, GWT)

Samuel's sons Joel and Abijah turned out to be just the opposite of their God-fearing dad. They were corrupt, turned aside after dishonest gain, accepted bribes and perverted justice (V 3). That's why all the elders of Israel cried out for a king to succeed their aging faithful judge Samuel. In fact, they demanded to be ruled just like all the other nations. Voluntarily they forfeited their unique status of being governed and led by the King of kings!

That of course displeased Samuel but even more so God since it was an open rejection of Him (V 6-8). Yet He relented and instructed Samuel to give the people just what they wanted (V 9), albeit not without warning them of the immense cost involved (V 10-18):

From now on they would be under the reign of a human king with all his faults and egoistic approach, and no longer directly under God's just and merciful rule. They would lose their sons to serve the king in the army, his fields, vineyards and arms industry. They would also lose their daughters to serve the king as perfumers, cooks and bakers. The best of their fields, vineyards and olive groves would go to the king's attendants. Besides still having to pay the tithes and offerings according to the Mosaic law, 10% of their grain and vintage would go to the king's officials and attendants, and 10% of their flocks to the king. They would lose their menservants and maidservants and the best of their cattle and donkeys to the king, and they themselves would become slaves to him. And when the time would come that they finally realized their calamity and cried out for relief from their chosen king, God would not listen to them. Despite Samuel making this very plain, the people refused to listen and demanded a king, to become just like all the other nations. What a tragedy!

- As I am watching world events unfolding I cannot help but wonder whether we are just like Israel was then. I know it's a blanket statement that does injustice to those believers who earnestly seek God and resolve to follow Him wholeheartedly, no matter what. Yet all in all people look to worldly kings in government, communities, courts, organizations, banks and businesses to lead the way and fight on their behalf to turn the tide. There is the mess of the ever so increasing economic problems due to the financial crisis. There is a new and probably even bigger financial crisis building up again. There is an increased encroachment on people's freedom and liberty through host of laws and regulations fueled by all sorts of fears. Poverty, hunger, injustice, greed, ruthlessness, egoism, etc. are ever so increasing. There are social riots and wars, alleged epidemics, pandemics and terror to combat, natural disasters with untold tragic results, and so forth. And in all of it people generally look to human leaders for solutions, to solve the problems on their behalf.
- But who is looking to God? Who allows the One to take control through whom and for whom everything was created and in whom everything holds together? Who is willing and humble enough to cast aside limited human wisdom, knowledge and insight, allowing the governor of the King of kings, the Holy Spirit, to guide us out of this mess?
- 2010 will most likely become a difficult year with untold challenges for the believers. May the Lord have mercy on us and give us the willingness, courage and strength to be different from the world and to turn to Him for solutions in these increasingly dark times rather than demanding a worldly king to lead us. May we avoid another tragedy amongst God's people.

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me.” (John 14:1, NIV)