

1 Sam 12:1-25 [16]-RE-AFFIRMING the COVENANT

PRELIMS. Saul is now King. Israel have had their wish. Although Saul is not God's man, he has had a great start.

Israel's demand for a king meant there was **constitutional** change. All at Israel's request "*I have obeyed your voice in all that you have said to me and have made a king over you*"[1]

Giving people what they want is very often **judgment!** When we give **children** what they want, we are not **leading** them – they are **driving** us! We live today in the times forecast by Isaiah when children rule the home "*I will give **children** to be their **princes**, And **babes** shall **rule** over them*"[Isa 3:4 NKJ] "**Woe** to you O land when your **king** is a **child**"[Ecc10:16] ie, when **inexperienced** and unable to **govern wisely!** It amazes me how many parents just give in to their children – in the supermarket, in the home, wherever - children just need to **keep asking** for what they want – and they eventually get it!

One of the greatest **needs** today, both in Church and State, is **leadership!** Leaders are those who **have a conviction** and believe in it strongly, and are prepared to **pay the price** it takes to **hold** it. It is **sad** to hear leaders of political Parties saying, 'We are hearing what you (the public) are saying, and we will deliver what you want'! That is **not** leadership – that is **bribery!**

A leader is someone who **influences** people so that they **voluntarily follow** them. People follow them, **not** because they are **coerced/forced** to do so, but because they **believe** the leaders are **right**. In real leadership the people **gladly** follow **out of choice**. They do not follow because they **have** to, but because they **want** to! A leader is **distinct** from a **dictator!** In a dictatorship the people do not have the 'freedom' to choose.

Leaders are **also** followed because they can be **trusted!** Sam was a **trusted** leader. He could say "*testify against me before the Lord... Whose ox have I taken... Whom have **oppressed?***"[3]

Many leaders are **terrified** that people **will** testify against them! Many leaders in parliament are **not transparent!** Not so Sam! He is open to **scrutiny**, ‘Look at my **expense account!**’ Some MPs are **unwilling to ‘pay-back’** what they stole! Not Sam, if he took anything *“I will **restore** it to you”*[3c]! It is not just that he asks **God** to examine/judge him but also the people *“**you** have not found anything in my hand”*[5]! Paul was **able** to say *“**you yourselves** are our letter of **recommendation**”*[2C3:2]!

Now, although it was their **leaders** who **led** them, yet there was a **collective responsibility!** Each individual Israelite bore the responsibility and suffered the consequences of the decisions of the leadership! As in all democracies, innocent people do suffer when leaders make mistakes! Leaders must realize they are responsible for the outcome – but the people **must realise** that they are responsible for **electing/choosing** such leaders! Israel were choosing to **abandon** God as king and have Saul instead! Not **only** do we get the ‘government we **deserve**’, we get the government we **chose** – albeit collectively!

Not only if we did not vote, should we not **complain**, but even if we voted for someone else, we are **in** the situation of **collective responsibility** and must go along with the majority, whether ‘**1st past the post**’, or **proportional representation**’! But leaders **must** give account – thus **nations** must be **judged** as in [Mat 25] *“before Him will be gathered **all nations**”* regarding the treatment of their citizens, those **ill** and in **prison!** But also a **personal/individual** judgment as Paul says *“we must **all** appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that **each one** may receive what is due for what he has **done** in the body, whether good or evil”*[2 Cor 5:10]!

So, Sam feels that such an important decision (of choosing our king) **demands** another **firm reminder** of their **identity** and **history** once again! **Why** is this important? Because the type of king/leader you choose **indicates** your **character/values/ideals**

It tells a huge story about **who** you are and what you want to be! Your **choices** indicate the **type** of person you are! Who **motivates** you? Who is your idol? Who do **you** want to follow?

So Sam outlines what their previous king had done for them in the past “*stand still that I may plead with you...concerning all the **righteous deeds** of the Lord that He performed for you and for your fathers*”[7] This is what they were **forsaking!** As Chris Tarrant’s ‘**Final Answer**’ in Who Wants to be a Millionaire? God wants to be sure **you know** what you are doing when you say ‘No’ to Him! He knows what you are doing – but do **you?**

Sam specifically mentioned how Israel “*forgot the Lord their God*”[9a] When you forget something you do it **unconsciously** You **cannot deliberately** forget! And that is what happens when we forget God! You do it **subconsciously** – without realizing! **Until that is,** the **judgment** comes! “*He sold them into the hand ...Sisera...the Philistines...king of Moab*”[9]! **APP** Its amazing, but **problems** often brings us to our **senses**. It gives ‘**insights**’ that we did not see before!! Its very often God’s way of getting our attention.

When God sold Israel, that meant **struggle!** “*they fought against them. And they cried out to the Lord and said ‘We have **sinned** because we have **forsaken** the Lord and have served the Baals...but now **deliver us** from the hand out of the hand of our **enemies**’*”[10] Amazing - no need to explain – they **knew** the struggle was **because** they had **forsaken** the Lord!

And yet, despite the **seriousness** of their decision, and the **wrongness** of their choice, God has **not** yet **forsaken** them! There is still **hope** for Israel. Look; “*If you will **fear** the Lord and **serve** Him and **obey** His voice and **not rebel**...and if **both you and your king**...will **follow** the Lord your God **it will be well***”[14] Isn’t that **marvelous?** Isn’t that **unbelievably patient** and **longsuffering?** But **that** is Israel’s God! And if you are a Xn that is **your** God! And if you cannot **recall** God’s

patience with you in **your** life, you are either **forgetful indeed** or **spiritually blind!** **APP** All the experiences of [vv6-11], the ‘cycle’ of ‘blessing, sin, judgment’ are actually **covenant blessings!** To have a patient God that **reminds** us of where we are **heading** and calling us to repentance is a great blessing! Israel’s God and the Xn’s God is the God of **second chances!**

Now, in order to **show** that God is indeed a **longsuffering** God and is willing to accept Israel back, His servant Sam is going to perform a wonder! In the **middle** of **Wheat Harvest**, when usually there is no rain at all! *“Now therefore stand still and see this **great thing** that the **Lord** will do before your eyes”*[16]

There are **three purposes** why Sam is doing this. **(1)** Its to bring **conviction** to Israel, so that they will *“**know and see** that their **wickedness** is **great** ...in the sight of the **Lord**”*[17] As is often the case, their and our wickedness, may not be great in the sight of men, but **is** great in the sight of God!

The **(2)** purpose of this wonder is that Israel will **fear** the **Lord** which they **did** *“the people **greatly feared** the Lord”*[18]! The Psalmist **identified** the wicked as those who did **not fear** the Lord! *“the **wicked**...there is **no fear of God** before his eyes”* [Psa 36:1] This matter of ‘no fear of God’ is a big problem! People today **think** that it is **wrong** to **motivate** people by fear, especially re the gospel! What **irresponsible** talk! As Dale Ralph Davis points out, if there is **reason** to fear, we **ought** to fear! There **are** sins which **bring** the **wrath** of God down on us *“On **account** of these the **wrath** of God is coming”*[Col 3:6]

(3) purpose is to get Israel to **pray** for the **mercy** which He has promised to His covenant people! *“**For the Lord will not forsake** His people”*[22] That means God will not forsake the **promise** He made to His people. He **will** forsake them if they **continue** to deny Him! That is **part** of the **covenant promise!** Why should **you** continue to **deny** God when He has promised **you** total forgiveness and eternal blessings?