

# The Book of 1Samuel—7:15-8:22

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## “A Nation Under God”

(5/24/15)

### I. The People Reject God’s Government

**1 Samuel 7:15-8:9a (NKJV)**

<sup>15</sup> And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. <sup>16</sup> He went from year to year on a circuit to Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpah, and judged Israel in all those places. <sup>17</sup> But he always returned to Ramah, for his home *was* there. There he judged Israel, and there he built an altar to the LORD.

<sup>1</sup> Now it came to pass when Samuel was old that he made his sons judges over Israel. <sup>2</sup> The name of his firstborn was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; *they were* judges in Beersheba. <sup>3</sup> But his sons did not walk in his ways; they turned aside after dishonest gain, took bribes, and perverted justice. <sup>4</sup> Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah, <sup>5</sup> and said to him, "Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations." <sup>6</sup> But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." So Samuel prayed to the LORD. <sup>7</sup> And the LORD said to Samuel, "Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them. <sup>8</sup> According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt, even to this day--with which they have forsaken Me and served other gods--so they are doing to you also. <sup>9</sup> Now therefore, heed their voice...

At this point in Israel’s history the nation was a theocracy—a nation governed by God.

Three thousand years before America was born—Israel was the first nation under God.

At that time God mediated His rule through leaders like Samuel who were called ‘judges’.

These judges served God as leaders of the nation for about 340 years.

This was the period of time before the monarchy was established.

Eventually, as we see here in our text, the people demanded a king like the gentile nations around them and so the Lord had Samuel, the last judge, anoint Saul the first king—and the nation moved from a theocracy to a monarchy.

However before God allowed the nation to reject Him as their King in favor of an earthly king (human government) He warned them of how earthly leaders would not serve *them* but would rather turn the people into the slaves of government.

## II. The People are Warned about Slavery to Human Government

### **1 Samuel 8:9b-18 (NKJV)**

**<sup>9</sup> ...However, you shall solemnly forewarn them, and show them the behavior of the king who will reign over them." <sup>10</sup> So Samuel told all the words of the LORD to the people who asked him for a king. <sup>11</sup> And he said, "This will be the behavior of the king who will reign over you: He will take your sons and appoint *them* for his own chariots and *to be* his horsemen, and *some* will run before his chariots. <sup>12</sup> He will appoint captains over his thousands and captains over his fifties, *will set some* to plow his ground and reap his harvest, and *some* to make his weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. <sup>13</sup> He will take your daughters *to be* perfumers, cooks, and bakers. <sup>14</sup> And he will take the best of your fields, your vineyards, and your olive groves, and give *them* to his servants. <sup>15</sup> He will take a tenth of your grain and your vintage, and give it to his officers and servants. <sup>16</sup> And he will take your male servants, your female servants, your finest young men, and your donkeys, and put *them* to his work. <sup>17</sup> He will take a tenth of your sheep. And you will be his servants. <sup>18</sup> And you will cry out in that day because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, and the LORD will not hear you in that day."**

I can't tell you how many Americans are suffering from 'buyer's remorse' with regard to our current president, Barak Obama, who is acting more like a king than an American President.

They bought into the hype about “*hope and change*”—and now they just hope things change.

Lord Acton—

*"Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Great men are almost always bad men."*

I have seen that axiom prove itself true more times than not when it comes to our leaders—and so I am no longer going to put any faith in leaders, from any political party, to turn this nation around and get us going once again in the right direction.

You see what our country really needs is to get back to God.

I'm not advocating a theocracy (that will happen when Jesus returns and establishes His Kingdom)—no what I'm saying is we have to get back to our Judeo-Christian roots so that we can once again call ourselves a nation under God.

However many Americans today like many Israelis back in Samuel's day have decided they don't want to be a nation under God—many today want to be a nation free from God.

Don't forget the book of 1 Samuel takes place during the period of the Judges.

The period of the Judges was one of the blackest in Israel's history characterized by lawlessness, violence and social chaos—a period summed up by the phrase “*there was no king in Israel so everyone did whatever seemed right in their own eyes*”.

There was a King in Israel—the God of Israel—but the people had already rejected Him in their hearts long ago (7:7-8). They didn't want to live under His authority but rather wanted to do whatever they thought was right.

Whenever a nation rejects God's authority over them—that nation will begin to decline and then degrade until it is finally destroyed.

Our nation has entered into a period not unlike the period of the Judges in Israel's history where we have rejected God's laws in favor of doing whatever seems right in our own eyes—everything from murdering children in their mother's womb to legalizing gay marriage.

In an article entitled, "*Is The Great American Dream Turning into a Nightmare?*" the author had this to say about our heritage as a nation:

*"God has showered upon America 200 years of blessing. As she acknowledged and obeyed her Creator, God elevated her from infancy to a place of world leadership. He has allowed her to enjoy unprecedented wealth, freedom and influence...*

*With grateful and humble hearts, Americans once honored the God who granted her blessings and freedoms. But slowly—almost imperceptible—she began to attribute her blessings not so much to God, but to man. [The result was] her citizens began to congratulate themselves on their own achievements—to celebrate man, while relegating God to the back seat—the god of secular humanism began to infiltrate all of her institutions.*

*Wallowing in materialism, self-centeredness and pride, many Americans decided that they really did not need God after all. Some began to tamper with God's absolute standards, and to tolerate what they would never have allowed before in their own lives or in society around them.*

*That which God says is **never** right could be **sometimes** right, depending on the situation. Courts that had once legislated against immorality began to grant freedom to every man to **'do that which was right in his own eyes'**. Lines of right and wrong blurred. In time, all sorts of ungodly behavior became acceptable—even admired. Americans no longer were shocked. Eyes grew **'accustomed to the dark.'** Few citizens rose up in outrage.*

*When God fades from a nation's conscience, one can justify almost anything."*

And so when a people turn their backs on God the first thing that gets discarded are the laws of God—however that's not all.

When people reject God's rule over them they will always turn to human government to step in and fill the void.

That is exactly what we see going on in our own country as many are advocating a totally secular society free from God and His laws and in His place they want government to be god and take care of them from cradle to grave.

What they don't realize is that when you give government that much power the result is tyranny.

There is a famous quote attributed to Thomas Jefferson (although many dispute that he said it), *"A government big enough to give you everything you want, is a government big enough to take away everything you have."*

And that's why Ronald Regan said in his first inaugural speech said, *"Government is not the solution to our problem: government is the problem."*

Star Parker, an African-American author, activist and former welfare mother, has seen firsthand the damage that a life of dependency to the state can have on families rendering them slaves to the government.

She says that *"years of massive government spending have left America's inner cities in shambles, black families destroyed, and youth uneducated and directionless."*

In her book, *Uncle Sam's Plantation*, she writes of how that:

*"Thirty-five years of Great Society social engineering have forced the disadvantaged to live under the control of the federal government. Politicians control their housing, their food supply, their schooling, their wages, and their transportation. A centralized government makes decisions about their childcare, healthcare, and retirement. It controls their reproduction through abortion and wants to control their deaths through euthanasia."*

*Through the welfare system, "Uncle Sam has developed a sophisticated poverty plantation, operated by a federal government, overseen by bureaucrats, protected by media elite, and financed by the taxpayers. The only difference between this plantation and the slave plantations of the pre-Civil War South is perception."*

This is exactly what happened to the Egyptians in the days of Joseph (give background).

**Genesis 47:13-21, 23-26 (NLT)**

<sup>13</sup> Meanwhile, the famine became so severe that all the food was used up, and people were starving throughout the lands of Egypt and Canaan. <sup>14</sup> By selling grain to the people, Joseph eventually collected all the money in Egypt and Canaan, and he put the money in Pharaoh's treasury. <sup>15</sup> When the people of Egypt and Canaan ran out of money, all the Egyptians came to Joseph. "Our money is gone!" they cried. "But please give us food, or we will die before your very eyes!" <sup>16</sup> Joseph replied, "Since your money is gone, bring me your livestock. I will give you food in exchange for your livestock." <sup>17</sup> So they brought their livestock to Joseph in exchange for food. In exchange for their horses, flocks of sheep and goats, herds of cattle, and donkeys, Joseph provided them with food for another year. <sup>18</sup> But that year ended, and the next year they came again and said, "We cannot hide the truth from you, my lord. Our money is gone, and all our livestock and cattle are yours. We have nothing left to give but our bodies and our land. <sup>19</sup> Why should we die before your very eyes? Buy us and our land in exchange for food; we offer our land and ourselves as slaves for Pharaoh. Just give us grain so we may live and not die, and so the land does not become empty and desolate." <sup>20</sup> So Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh. All the Egyptians sold him their fields because the famine was so severe, and soon all the land belonged to Pharaoh. <sup>21</sup> As for the people, he made them all slaves, from one end of Egypt to the other... <sup>23</sup> Then Joseph said to the people, "Look, today I have bought you and your land for Pharaoh. I will provide you with seed so you can plant the fields. <sup>24</sup> Then when you harvest it, one-fifth of your crop will belong to Pharaoh. You may keep the remaining four-fifths as seed for your fields and as food for you, your households, and your little ones." <sup>25</sup> "You have saved our lives!" they exclaimed. "May it please you, my lord, to let us be Pharaoh's servants." <sup>26</sup> Joseph then issued a decree still in effect in the land of Egypt, that Pharaoh should receive one-fifth of all the crops grown on his land. Only the land belonging to the priests was not given to Pharaoh.

Notice how the Egyptians were so happy just to have food to eat they welcomed being made slaves to the government—they were even grateful!

The ironic thing about was that the government was essentially redistributing back to the people the very abundance they themselves had produced.

One pastor pointed out in a sermon on this portion of Genesis—

*"So we see that economic hard times fell upon Egypt, and the people turned to the government of Pharaoh to deal with this for them. ... What can we learn from this, brothers and sisters? That turning to the government instead of to God to be our provider in hard times only leads to slavery? Yes. **That the only reason government wants to be our provider is to also become our master.**"*

*“But I also tell you a great truth today, and an ominous one. We see the same thing happening today – the government today wants to ‘share the wealth’ once again, to take it from us and redistribute it back to us. It wants to take control of health care, just as it has taken control of education, and ration it back to us, and when government rations it, then government decides who gets it, and how much, and what kind. And if we go along with it, and do it willingly, then we will wind up no differently than the people of Egypt did 4,000 years ago – as slaves to the government and as slaves to our leaders.”*

## **I. The People Reject God’s Government**

## **II. The People are Warned about Slavery to Human Government**

## **III. The People Remain Stubborn in Wanting Government to be their God**

### **1 Samuel 8:19-22 (NKJV)**

**<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, "No, but we will have a king over us, <sup>20</sup> that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles." <sup>21</sup> And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he repeated them in the hearing of the LORD. <sup>22</sup> So the LORD said to Samuel, "Heed their voice, and make them a king." And Samuel said to the men of Israel, "Every man go to his city."**

Many in our nation are looking to nations in Western Europe and their governments based on democratic socialism as a model for our nation.

Which is interesting to me seeing that so many of them are in serious financial trouble—as Margaret Thatcher once said,

*“The problem with socialism is that you eventually run out of other people’s money.”*

And that is why democracies built on socialism will always crumble and fall.

Alexander Fraser Tytler—

*“A democracy cannot exist as a permanent form of government. It can only exist until the voters discover that they can vote themselves largesse from the public treasury. From that moment on, the majority always votes for the candidates promising the most benefits from the public treasury with the result that a democracy always collapses over loose fiscal policy, always followed by a dictatorship. The average age of the world's greatest civilizations has been 200 years. These nations have progressed through this sequence: From bondage to spiritual faith; From spiritual faith to great courage; From courage to liberty; From liberty to abundance; From abundance to selfishness; From selfishness to apathy; From apathy to dependence; From dependence back into bondage.”*

Ben Kinchlow author and one time host of the 700 Club—

*“Does any of the above sound familiar, even vaguely familiar? Perhaps one of the most chilling statements is that civilizations rise and fall in 200-year cycles. If this is true, America is almost 40 years overdue for collapse and dictatorship. The really scary part to me is the sense of dependency all around us right now, encouraged by politicians, bureaucrats, social workers and think-tank elitists who sanctimoniously pontificate, “We don’t want anyone to fail.”*

*The elitists encourage and, in fact, actually guarantee mass failure by removing the incentive to work, take risks and succeed. They eliminate the rewards of the Judeo-Christian virtues of hard work, sacrifice, personal responsibility and thrift. What they are doing is promulgating the position that the government is responsible for supporting the “have nots.” It’s called socialism, and it has been tried; it fails miserably, yet the bureaucrats, pseudo intellectuals and social engineers keep trying to implement it in America. They continue to expand the social bureaucracy and pour money into a failed welfare system. Almost 50 years and more than \$22 trillion after launching the “Great Society” and its child, “The War on Poverty,” we are actually farther away than ever from the stated goal of eliminating poverty.*

*Why? It’s simple. We discourage people from achieving and becoming productive by taking away their incentive, their sovereign responsibility and their freedom to fail. It is a horribly malignant, degrading thing to take away a person’s right to fail. That in itself is an act of enslavement.*

*We pledge and give our allegiance (and our fair share of taxes) to our government – but not our personal sovereignty and decisionability. We are to take responsibility for our own lives, and our own successes or failures, because we, not the government, are the masters. In America, we the people are endowed with the power to succeed and the freedom to fail.”*

On July 4, 1776, in the City of Philadelphia, there was signed one of America’s most famous documents: the Declaration of Independence.

It marked the birth of this nation which, under God, was destined to be one of the greatest nations this world has ever seen.

People often forget that, in declaring independence from an earthly power, like Great Britain, our forefathers made an unashamed declaration of dependence upon Almighty God.

The closing words of this document solemnly declare: *“With a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.”*

Little did John Adams know how significant his words would be when he spoke to his wife, Abigail, on the passing of the Declaration of Independence and said,

*“I am well aware of the toil, and blood, and treasure that it will cost to maintain this declaration, and support and defend these states; yet through all the gloom I can see the rays of light and glory. I can see that the end is worth more than all the means.”*

Eleven years later in 1787, when the Constitutional Convention had come to a close; a lady came up to Ben Franklin and said, *“Well, Dr. Franklin. What have you given us?”*

The old statesman looked her in the eyes and said, *“You have a republic, Madame, if you can keep it.”*

And so our founding fathers created a *republic* for us to live in, not a *democracy*.

Our founding fathers studied democracies and rejected them outright. They said that democracy was of the devil.

Why? Because a democracy is rule by the majority—where half plus one can squash the will of the others.

It's basically tantamount to mob rule—where a fanatical majority can deprive the other individuals in the minority of their rights, property, and even their lives if it benefits the majority.

Our founding fathers were too smart and too godly to fall for that.

They knew that democracy was given over to excesses and contained within itself the seeds of its own destruction.

They knew about Plato's warning that unrestricted democracy must result in a dictatorship.

The very essence of democracy rests in the absolute sovereignty of the majority—our founding fathers could never accept such tyranny.

They recognized only one rightful Sovereign over men and nations, not the state, not the majority—only God Almighty.

And that is why they chose to make our nation a **republic**—a form of government built on God's unchanging laws instead of a democracy which is built on whatever morality and definition of good and evil the people currently hold to.

In a republic built on God's laws—murder is always wrong, adultery is always wrong, homosexuality is always wrong—even if the majority thinks these things are right and good—if God says they're wrong they're wrong.

James Madison, the chief architect of the Constitution said,

*“We have staked the whole future of American civilization, not upon the power of government, far from it. We have staked the future of all of our political institutions...upon the capacity of each and all of us to govern ourselves according to the Ten Commandments of God.”*

Noah Webster, one of our founding fathers—

*“The religion which has introduced civil liberty is the religion of Christ and His apostles...to this we owe our free constitution of government.”*

The idea that our founding fathers wanted a secular state that was completely free from religion is absolutely untrue.

Patrick Henry, who said, “Give me liberty or give me death,” said a lot of other things—one of those being: *“It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often that this great nation was founded not by religionists but by Christians, not on religions (plural) but on the gospel of Jesus Christ.”*

John Quincy Adams, our sixth president said,

*“The highest glory of the American Revolution was this, it connected in one indissoluble bond the principles of civil government with the principles of Christianity.”*

In 1892 the Supreme Court made a ruling and then made this statement,

*“Our laws and our institutions must necessarily be based upon and embody the teachings of the Redeemer of mankind. It is impossible that it should be otherwise, and in this sense and to this extent our civilization (our country) and our institutions are emphatically Christian...This is a religious people. This is historically true. From the discovery of this continent to the present hour, there is a single voice making his affirmation...we find everywhere a clear recognition of the same truth... that this is a **Christian nation**.”*

That’s right; our nation was established as a Christian nation, a nation under God Almighty.

Abraham Lincoln—

*“It is the duty of nations, as well as of men, to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God and to recognize the sublime truth announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history, that those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord.”*

In the 1830's the noted French sociologist and political theorist Alexis de Tocqueville came to America to discover the secret of our greatness.

He noted in his journal—

*“The Americans combine the notion of Christianity and of liberty so intimately in their minds that it is impossible to make them conceive the one without the other. I sought for the greatness and genius of America in her commodious harbors and ample rivers but it was not there. In her fertile fields and boundless prairies and it was not there. In her rich mines and her vast world commerce and it was not there. Not until I went to the churches of America and heard her pulpits **afame with righteousness** did I understand the secret of her greatness and power.”*

Returning to France, he summarized his findings: *“America is great because America is good; and if America ever ceases to be good, America will cease to be great.”*

The only way America will ever be great again is if she comes back to the God that established her above every nation upon the face of the earth—when she was truly a nation under God—a nation that honored Him and kept His Word.

And yet the Psalmist said, *“If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?”* (11:3)

Well, I don't know if we'll ever see the Judeo-Christian foundation of our nation restored—but I know where we need to start—

**Joel 2:12-14 (NKJV)**

<sup>12</sup> "Now, therefore," says the LORD, "Turn to Me with all your heart, With fasting, with weeping, and with mourning." <sup>13</sup> So rend your heart, and not your garments; Return to the LORD your God, For He *is* gracious and merciful, Slow to anger, and of great kindness; And He relents from doing harm. <sup>14</sup> Who knows *if* He will turn and relent, And leave a blessing behind Him...

**2 Chronicles 7:14 (NKJV)**

<sup>14</sup> if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

Remember that national revival is really the result of personal revival taking place on a national level.

And personal revival on a national level is the result of one person's life being revived at a time.

In the late 1800's there was a great revivalist known as Gypsy Smith.

He traveled around the world twice preaching in every continent in many different countries the gospel of Jesus Christ, and wherever he preached revival broke out.

One day a delegation of people from a certain community came to him and said, "*Rev. Smith, we desperately want to see revival in our area, what can we do?*"

Gypsy said,

*"I'll tell you exactly what to do and how it will come about. You go home, lock yourself in your bedroom, take a piece of chalk, draw a circle on the floor, kneel in that circle and pray fervently and brokenly that God would start a revival in that circle."*

Remember revival isn't going to start in Washington—not in the Supreme Court or the Congress or the White House—revival has to start in your house—and mine.