

1 Samuel 10:25

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the LORD. And Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house.

Analysis

Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the LORD. Then Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house.

Samuel formally establishes constitutional boundaries by declaring 'the manner of the kingdom' (mishpat hammelukah). This 'manner' or 'judgment' likely expanded upon the royal regulations of Deuteronomy 17:14-20, which limited royal acquisition of horses, wives, and wealth while requiring personal Torah study. Writing these regulations 'in a book' (sepher) and placing them 'before the LORD' created covenant documentation, witnessed by God Himself in His sanctuary. This act constitutionalized the monarchy: Israelite kingship would be limited, regulated, and accountable to divine law. The dismissal 'every man to his house' concludes the formal assembly while anticipating the narrative of the 'worthless fellows' who rejected Saul. Samuel's constitutional work attempted to prevent the abuses he had warned about (8:11-18), though subsequent history would show how rarely kings honored these limits.

Historical Context

Written covenant documents placed in sanctuaries were standard ancient Near Eastern practice. The Hittite suzerainty treaties, for instance, required copies to

be deposited in temples. Samuel's action followed this pattern while giving it distinctly Israelite meaning: the king served under divine law, not above it.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. Why is written accountability important for those in positions of power?
2. How does Israel's constitutional monarchy challenge both absolute monarchy and unfettered democracy?

Interlinear Text

בְּמַלְכֵי הָמָשֵׁפֶט מִשְׁפָט הַמְּדִינָה רְשָׁמְוֹא לְיִזְבֶּר
told And Samuel H413 all the people H853 the manner H4941 of the kingdom H4410
H1696 H8050 H5971 H3240 H6440 H3068 H7971 H8050

שְׁמָוֹא לְיִשְׁלַח וַיַּכְתֵּב בְּבָסְפָר וְיִקְרָא כִּי־לְפָנֵי הָיְהָנָה וְיִשְׁלַח כִּי־לְפָנֵי הָיְהָנָה וְיִקְרָא כִּי־לְפָנֵי הָיְהָנָה
and wrote it in a book and laid it up before the LORD away And Samuel H3789 H5612 H3240 H6440 H3068 H7971 H8050

לְבַיִתָּוֹ אֲוֹשֶׁב מִשְׁמָר כָּל אֶת
to his house every man all the people H853 H3605 H5971 H376 H1004

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