

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

Psalms 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

וַיֹּדֶבֶר	שָׁמוּאֵל לְ	אֶל	הָעָם	אֵת	מִשְׁפַּט	הַמֶּלֶךְ הַ
told	And Samuel	H413	all the people	H853	the manner	of the kingdom
H1696	H8050		H5971		H4941	H4410
וַיִּכְתֹּב	בְּסֵפֶר	וַיָּח	לִפְנֵי י	יְהוָה הַ	וַיִּשְׁלַח	שָׁמוּאֵל לְ
and wrote	it in a book	and laid it up	before	the LORD	away	And Samuel
H3789	H5612	H3240	H6440	H3068	H7971	H8050
אֶת	כָּל	הָעָם	אֵת יִשׁ	לְבֵיתוֹ:		
H853	H3605	all the people	every man	to his house		
		H5971	H376	H1004		