

**Great Debates in Jewish History:  
The Legal, Philosophical & Ideological Debates of  
Jewish History's Most Celebrated Figures**

יום א' לפרשת תצוה

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Part 1: A Debate from the Bible  
**Monarchy or Madness:  
Shmuel vs. the People on the  
Merits of a Jewish King**

**I) ANTECEDENTS TO THE JEWISH MONARCHY**



**(1) שופטים (יז:ו; כא:כה)**

In those days there was no king in Israel; each person did what they thought to be right.

בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם אִין מֶלֶךְ בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל אִישׁ הַיִּשָּׁר בְּעֵינָיו יַעֲשֶׂה׃

**(2) שופטים (יח:א)**

In those days there was no king in Israel. Also in those days the tribe of Dan was searching for a territory of their own to live in, since no permanent territory had been assigned to them among the tribes of Israel up to that point.

בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם אִין מְלֶךְ בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל וּבַיָּמִים הָהֵם שָׁבַט הַדָּנִי מְבַקֵּשׁ לוֹ נַחֲלָה לְשִׁבְתָּהּ כִּי לֹא נִפְלְאָה לוֹ עַד הַיּוֹם הַהוּא בְּתוֹךְ שְׁבֹטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּנַחֲלָה׃ ס

**(3) שופטים (יט:א)**

In those days when there was no king in Israel, there was a certain Levite living as an immigrant in the far corners of the Ephraim highlands. He married a secondary wife from Bethlehem in Judah.

וַיְהִי בַיָּמִים הָהֵם וּמְלֶךְ אִין בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל וַיְהִי אִישׁ לְגוֹי גֵר בְּיַרְכְּתֵי הַר אֶפְרַיִם וַיִּקַּח לוֹ אִשָּׁה פִּילְגֶשֶׁת מִבֵּית לָחֵם יְהוּדָה׃

(3:8) The LORD became angry with Israel and gave them over to King Cushan-rishathaim of Aram-naharaim. The Israelites served Cushan-rishathaim eight years.

ג) ויחר אף ה' בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּמְכְּרֵם בְּיַד כּוּשָׁן רִשְׁתַּיִם מֶלֶךְ אֲרָם נְהָרַיִם וַיַּעֲבְדוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת כּוּשָׁן רִשְׁתַּיִם שְׁמֹנֶה שָׁנִים:

(3:12) The Israelites again did things that the LORD saw as evil, and the LORD put Moab's King Eglon in power over them, because they did these things that the LORD saw as evil.

ג) וַיִּסְפוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לַעֲשׂוֹת הָרַע בְּעֵינֵי ה' וַיַּחֲזֶק ה' אֶת עֲגִלוֹן מֶלֶךְ מוֹאָב עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל כִּי עָשׂוּ אֶת הָרַע בְּעֵינֵי ה':

(4:1-2) 1 After Ehud had died, the Israelites again did things that the LORD saw as evil. 2 So the LORD gave them over to King Jabin of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. The commander of his army was Sisera, and he was stationed in Harosheth-ha-goim.

ד) וַיִּסְפוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לַעֲשׂוֹת הָרַע בְּעֵינֵי ה' וַיֵּאֱהוּד מֶת: (ב) וַיִּמְכְּרֵם ה' בְּיַד יַבִּין מֶלֶךְ כְּנַעַן אֲשֶׁר מֶלֶךְ בְּחָצוֹר וְשָׂר צָבָאוֹ סִיסְרָא וְהוּא יוֹשֵׁב בְּחַרְשֶׁת הַגּוֹיִם:

(9:6) Then all the leaders of Shechem and all Beth-millo assembled and proceeded to make Abimelech king by the oak at the stone pillar in Shechem.

ו) וַיִּאֲסְפוּ כָל בְּעָלֵי שָׂכָם וְכָל בֵּית מְלוּא וַיִּלְכוּ וַיִּמְלִיכוּ אֶת אֲבִימֶלֶךְ לְמֶלֶךְ עִם אֵלּוֹן מְצַב אֲשֶׁר בְּשָׂכָם:

(11:13) The Ammonite king responded to Jephthah's messengers, "When the Israelites were coming up from Egypt, they seized my land from the Arnon to the Jabbok and all the way to the Jordan. Now give it back peacefully!"

יג) וַיֹּאמֶר מֶלֶךְ בְּנֵי עַמּוֹן אֶל מְלָאכֵי יִפְתָּח כִּי לָקַח יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת אֶרְצִי בְּעֵלְתוֹת מַמְצָרִים מֵאֲרָנוֹן וְעַד הַיַּבֵּק וְעַד הַיַּרְדֵּן וְעַתָּה הַשִּׁיבָה אֶתְהֶן בְּשָׁלוֹם:

## II) THE DEBATE

### -SHMUEL'S SONS-

1 Now when Samuel got old, he appointed his sons to serve as Israel's judges. 2 The name of his oldest son was Joel; the name of the second was Abijah. They served as judges in Beer-sheba. 3 But Samuel's sons didn't follow in his footsteps. They tried to turn a profit, they accepted bribes, and they perverted justice.

א) וַיְהִי כַּאֲשֶׁר זָקַן שְׁמוּאֵל וַיִּשֶׂם אֶת בְּנָיו שְׁפָטִים לְיִשְׂרָאֵל: (ב) וַיְהִי שֵׁם בְּנוֹ הַבְּכוֹר יוֹאֵל וְשֵׁם מִשְׁנֵהוּ אֲבִיָּה שְׁפָטִים בְּבֵאֵר שֶׁבַע: (ג) וְלֹא הָלְכוּ בְנָיו בְּדַרְכּוֹ בְּדַרְכָּיו וַיִּטּוּ אַחֲרַי הַבָּצַע וַיִּקְחוּ שֹׁחַד וַיִּטּוּ מִשְׁפָּט: פ

### -THE REQUEST OF THE PEOPLE-

4 So all the Israelite elders got together and went to Samuel at Ramah. 5 They said to him, "Listen. You are old now, and your sons don't follow in your footsteps. So appoint us a king to judge us like all the other nations have."

ד) וַיִּתְקַבְּצוּ כָל זִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶל שְׁמוּאֵל הַרְמַתָּה: (ה) וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו הִנֵּה אַתָּה זָקֵן וְבָנֶיךָ לֹא הָלְכוּ בְּדַרְכֶיךָ עַתָּה שִׁימָה לָנוּ מֶלֶךְ לְשִׁפְטֵנוּ כְּכָל הַגּוֹיִם:

### -SHMUEL'S REACTION-

6 It seemed very bad to Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us," so he prayed to the LORD.

ו) וַיִּרַע הַדָּבָר בְּעֵינֵי שְׁמוּאֵל כַּאֲשֶׁר אָמְרוּ תְּנֵה לָנוּ מֶלֶךְ לְשִׁפְטֵנוּ וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל שְׁמוּאֵל אֶל ה': פ

### -GOD'S REACTION & DIRECTIVE-

7 The LORD answered Samuel, "Comply with the people's request—everything they ask of you—because they haven't rejected you. No, they've rejected me as king over them. 8 They are doing to you only what they've been doing to me from the day I brought them out of Egypt to this very minute, abandoning me and worshipping other gods. 9 So comply with their request, but give them a clear warning, telling them how the king will rule over them." 10 Then Samuel explained everything the LORD had said to the people who were asking for a king.

ז) וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל שְׁמוּאֵל שְׁמַע בְּקוֹל הָעָם לְכָל אֲשֶׁר יֹאמְרוּ אֵלַיךְ כִּי לֹא אֶתְּךָ מֵאֲסוּ כִּי אֲתִי מֵאֲסוּ מִמֶּלֶךְ עֲלֵיהֶם: (ח) כְּכָל הַמַּעֲשִׂים אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ מִיּוֹם הַעֲלֵתִי אֶתְּךָ מִמִּצְרָיִם וְעַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וַיַּעֲזְבוּנִי וַיַּעֲבְדוּ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים כִּן הַמָּוָה עֹשִׂים גַּם לָךְ: (ט) וְעַתָּה שְׁמַע בְּקוֹלָם אֵךְ כִּי הָעַד תַּעֲבִיד בָּהֶם וְהַגְדִּיתָ לָהֶם מִשְׁפַּט הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר יִמְלֹךְ עֲלֵיהֶם: ס (י) וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁמוּאֵל אֶת כָּל דְּבָרֵי ה' אֶל הָעָם הַשְּׂאֵלִים מֵאִתּוֹ מֶלֶךְ: ס

### -SHMUEL ADDRESSES THE PEOPLE-

11 "This is how the king will rule over you," Samuel said: "He will take your sons, and will use them for his chariots and his cavalry and as runners for his chariot. 12 He will use them as his commanders of troops of one thousand and troops of fifty, or to do his plowing and his harvesting, or to make his weapons or parts for his chariots. 13 He will take your daughters to be perfumers, cooks, or bakers. 14 He will take your best fields, vineyards, and olive groves and give them to his servants. 15 He will give one-tenth of your grain and your vineyards to his officials and servants. 16 He will take your male and female servants, along with the best of your cattle and donkeys, and make them do his work. 17 He will take one-tenth of your

יא) וַיֹּאמֶר זֶה יְהִי מִשְׁפַּט הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר יִמְלֹךְ עֲלֵיכֶם אֶת בְּנֵיכֶם יִקַּח וְשֵׁם לוֹ בְּמִרְכָּבָתוֹ וּבְפָרָשָׁיו וְרָצוּ לִפְנֵי מִרְכָּבָתוֹ: (יב) וְלָשׂוּם לוֹ שָׂרֵי אֲלָפִים וְשָׂרֵי חֲמִשִּׁים וְלַחְרֹשׁ חֲרִישׁוֹ וְלִקְצָר קִצְרֵהוּ וְלַעֲשׂוֹת כְּלֵי מַלְחָמָתוֹ וְכָלֵי רִכְבוֹ: (יג) וְאֵת בְּנוֹתֵיכֶם יִקַּח לְרִקְחוֹת וְלִטְבַּחוֹת וְלֵאֲפוֹת: (יד) וְאֵת שְׂדוֹתֵיכֶם וְאֵת כְּרָמֵיכֶם וְזִיתֵיכֶם הַטּוֹבִים יִקַּח וְנָתַן לְעַבְדָּיו: (טו) וְזֵרְעֵיכֶם וְכִרְמֵיכֶם יַעֲשֶׂה וְנָתַן לְסָרְסִיו וְלַעַבְדָּיו: (טז) וְאֵת עַבְדֵיכֶם וְאֵת שְׁפֹחוֹתֵיכֶם וְאֵת בַּחוּרֵיכֶם הַטּוֹבִים וְאֵת חֲמֹרֵיכֶם יִקַּח וְעָשָׂה לְמַלְאכָתוֹ: (יז) צֹאנֵיכֶם

flocks, and then you yourselves will become his slaves! 18 When that day comes, you will cry out because of the king you chose for yourselves, but on that day the LORD won't answer you."

**-THE PEOPLE'S REACTION TO SHMUEL-**

19 But the people refused to listen to Samuel and said, "No! There must be a king over us 20 so we can be like all the other nations. Our king will judge us and lead us and fight our battles."

**-SHMUEL'S RESPONSE-**

21 Samuel listened to everything the people said and repeated it directly to the LORD.

**-GOD'S RESPONSE-**

22 Then the LORD said to Samuel, "Comply with their request. Give them a king." Samuel then told the Israelite people, "Go back, each of you, to your own hometown."

יְעֹשֶׂר וְאַתֶּם תִּהְיוּ לוֹ לְעֶבְדִים: (יח) וְזָעַקְתֶּם בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא מִלִּפְנֵי מֶלֶכְכֶם אֲשֶׁר בַּחַרְתֶּם לָכֶם וְלֹא יַעֲנֶה ה' אֶתְכֶם בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא:

(יט) וַיִּמָּאֲנוּ הָעָם לְשָׁמֶעַ בְּקוֹל שְׁמוּאֵל וַיֹּאמְרוּ לֹא כִּי אִם מֶלֶךְ יִהְיֶה עָלֵינוּ: (כ) וְהָיִינוּ גַם אֲנַחְנוּ כְּכָל הַגּוֹיִם וְשָׁפְטָנוּ מִלִּפְנֵי וַיֵּצֵא לְפָנֵינוּ וְנִלְחַם אֶת מַלְחַמָּתָנוּ:

(כא) וַיִּשְׁמַע שְׁמוּאֵל אֶת כָּל דְּבָרֵי הָעָם וַיְדַבֵּר בְּאָזְנֵי ה': פ

(כב) וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל שְׁמוּאֵל שְׁמַע בְּקוֹלָם וְהַמְלַכְתָּ לָהֶם מֶלֶךְ וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁמוּאֵל אֶל אֲנָשֵׁי יִשְׂרָאֵל לָכוּ אִישׁ לְעִירוֹ: פ

### III) THE COMMANDMENT TO APPOINT A KING

14 Once you have entered the land the LORD your God is giving you and you have taken possession of it and settled down in it, you might say: "Let's appoint a king over us, as all our neighboring nations have done." 15 You can indeed appoint over you a king that the LORD your God selects. You can appoint over you a king who is one of your fellow Israelites. You are not allowed to appoint over you a foreigner who is not one of your fellow Israelites. 16 That granted, the king must not acquire too many horses, and he must not return the people to Egypt in order to acquire more horses, because the LORD told you: "You will never go back by that road again." 17 The king must not take numerous wives so that his heart doesn't go astray. Nor can the king acquire too much silver and gold. 18 Instead, when he sits on his royal throne, he himself must write a copy of this Instruction on a scroll in the presence of the levitical priests. 19 That Instruction must remain with him, and he must read in it every day of his life so that he learns to revere the LORD his God by keeping all the words of this Instruction and these regulations, by doing them, 20 by not being overbearing toward his fellow Israelites, and by not deviating even a bit from the commandment. If the king does all that, he will ensure lasting rule in Israel for himself and for his successors.

And so R' Yehudah was wont to say: Israel was commanded to perform three commandments upon their entrance into the land: to appoint upon themselves a king, and to eradicate the offspring of Amalek, and to build the Holy Temple. R' Nehorai says: This passage was said only in response to the nation's complaints; for it is stated: "and you will say: I shall place upon me a king like all the nations that are around me".

It was taught in a Baraisa: R' Eliezer [the son of R' Yose] says: the elders of the generation requested properly, as it is stated: "give us a king to judge us". But the boors among them ruined the request, as it is stated: "and we shall also be like all nations, and our king will judge us, and go out before and fight our battles".

You will say 'Let's appoint a king over us'. In the opinion of our Rabbis [who say that "The Israelites were obliged to fulfill three commandments upon their entry into the Land: to appoint a king etc.] this verse is like "and you shall surely say, let's appoint a king over us" – this is a positive commandment, for He has obligated us to say so after conquering and settling [in the land]. The expression is similar to "and you shall make a fence for your roof" [which is also a matter of obligation and not one of

**(6) פְּרֻשַׁת שׁוֹפְטִים (דְּבָרִים יז: יד-כ)**

(יד) כִּי תָבֹא אֶל הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לָךְ וַיִּרְשָׁתָהּ וַיִּשְׁבַּתָּהּ בָּהּ וַאֲמַרְתָּ אֲשִׁימָה עָלַי מֶלֶךְ כְּכָל הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר סְבִיבֹתַי: (טו) שׁוֹם תַּשִּׁים עָלֶיךָ מֶלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ בּוֹ מִקִּרְבֵּי אֲחֵיךָ תַּשִּׁים עָלֶיךָ מֶלֶךְ לֹא תוּכַל לָתֵת עָלֶיךָ אִישׁ זָכְרִי אֲשֶׁר לֹא אֲחִיךָ הוּא: (טז) רַק לֹא יִרְבֶּה לוֹ סוּסִים וְלֹא יֵשֵׁב אֶת הָעָם מִצְרַיִם לְמַעַן הִרְבוֹת סוּס וְה' אָמַר לָכֶם לֹא תִסְפוּן לָשׁוּב בְּדָרֶךְ הַזֶּה עוֹד: (יז) וְלֹא יִרְבֶּה לוֹ נָשִׁים וְלֹא יִסוּר לְבָבוֹ וְכִסְף וְזָהָב לֹא יִרְבֶּה לוֹ מֵאֹד: (יח) וְהָיָה כְּשִׁבְתוֹ עַל כִּסֵּא מַמְלַכְתּוֹ וְכָתַב לוֹ אֶת מִשְׁנֵי הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת עַל סֵפֶר מִלִּפְנֵי הַכֹּהֲנִים הַלְוִיִּם: (יט) וְהָיְתָה עִמּוֹ וְקָרָא בּוֹ כָּל יְמֵי חַיָּיו לְמַעַן יִלְמַד לִירְאָה אֶת ה' אֱלֹהָיו לְשִׁמּוֹר אֶת כָּל דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת וְאֶת הַחֻקִּים הָאֵלֶּה לַעֲשׂוֹתָם: (כ) לְבַלְתִּי רוּם לְבָבוֹ מֵאֲחֵיו וּלְבַלְתִּי סוּר מִן הַמִּצְוָה יְמִין וּשְׂמֹאל לְמַעַן יֵאָרִיךְ יָמָיו עַל מַמְלַכְתּוֹ הוּא וּבָנָיו בְּקִרְבֵּי יִשְׂרָאֵל: ס

**(7) תַּלְמוּד בַּבְּלִי – מִסַּכַּת סְנַהֲדְרִין (כ:)**

וכן היה רבי יהודה אומר: שלש מצות נצטוו ישראל בכניסתן לארץ: להעמיד להם מלך, ולהכרית זרעו של עמלק, ולבנות להם בית הבחירה. וכן היה רבי יהודה אומר: שלש מצות נצטוו ישראל בכניסתן לארץ: להעמיד להם מלך, ולהכרית זרעו של עמלק, ולבנות להם בית הבחירה. רבי נהוראי אומר: לא נאמרה פרשה זו אלא כנגד תרעומתן, שנאמר ואמרת אשימה עלי מלך וגו'.

תניא, רבי אליעזר אומר: זקנים שבדור - כהוגן שאלו, שנאמר תנה לנו מלך לשפטנו, אבל עמי הארץ שבהן קלקלו, שנאמר והיינו גם אנחנו ככל הגוים ושפטנו מלכנו ויצא לפנינו.

**(8) פִּירוּשׁ הַרְמַב"ן עַל הַתּוֹרָה (דְּבָרִים יז: יד)**

(יד) ואמרת אשימה עלי מלך - על דעת רבותינו (ספרי ראה סז), (סנהדרין כ ב) כמו ואמור אשימה עלי מלך, והיא מצות עשה שיחייב אותנו לומר כן אחר ירושה ושיביה, כלשון ועשית מעקה לגגך (להלן כב ח), ויולתם. והזכיר "ואמרת", כי מצוה שיבואו לפני הכהנים הלויים

choice], and other verses besides these. [The Torah] uses the term "you will say" because it is commanded that the people come before the priest of the tribe of Levi and to judge and say to them, "it is our wish that we set a king over us".

It is my further opinion that this is also one of his [Moses'] allusions to future events...for what reason is there that the Torah should say in connection with a commandment ["I will set a king over me] like all the nations of the world that are around me"? when it is not proper for Israel to learn their ways ...

...But I contend that this [the appointing of an Israelite King] is an optional commandment, and in this, the Torah did not explicitly command its practice or its abolishment, because the Torah [here] speaks only to the evil inclination of man...such is the matter of the king, where the request to appoint the king is not a commandment, nor is it a prohibition, and therefore, once it was requested and the king was appointed, the decision was not reversed and it sufficed to fulfill the commandment to appoint a king from amongst the people.

5 And because I have made you the ancestor of many nations, your name will no longer be Abram but Abraham. 6 I will make you very fertile. I will produce nations from you, and kings will come from you.

10 God said to him, "Your name is Jacob, but your name will be Jacob no longer. No, your name will be Israel." And he named him Israel. 11 God said to him, "I am El Shaddai. Be fertile and multiply. A nation, even a large group of nations, will come from you; kings will descend from your own children.

22 Then the Israelites said to Gideon, "Rule over us, you and then your son and then your grandson, because you've rescued us from Midian's power." 23 Gideon replied to them, "I'm not the one who will rule over you, and my son won't rule over you either. The LORD rules over you."

## IV) THE REQUEST OF THE PEOPLE

4 So all the Israelite elders got together and went to Samuel at Ramah. 5 They said to him, "Listen. You are old now, and your sons don't follow in your footsteps. So appoint us a king to judge us like all the other nations have."

19 But the people refused to listen to Samuel and said, "No! There must be a king over us 20 so we can be like all the other nations. Our king will judge us and lead us and fight our battles."

## V) SHMUEL'S APPROACH

1 Samuel said to all Israel: "Listen: I have done everything you asked of me and have placed a king over you. 2 The king will lead you now. I am old and gray, though my sons are still with you, and I've been your leader since I was young until now. 3 So I'm here: Tell the truth about me in the presence of the LORD and his anointed. Have I ever stolen someone's ox? Have I ever taken someone's donkey? Have I ever oppressed or mistreated anyone? Have I ever taken bribes from someone and looked the other way about something? Tell me the truth. I will make it right." 4 "You haven't oppressed

ואל השופט ויאמרו להם רצוננו שנשים עלינו מלך:

ולפי דעתי עוד, שגם זה מרמיזותיו על העתידות... כי מה טעם שתאמר התורה במצוה "ככל הגוים אשר סביבותי" ואין ישראל ראויים ללמד מהם...

### 9 פירוש אברבנאל על התורה (דברים יז)

...אבל אני לא אמרתי אלא שהיה הדבר דבר הרשות, ובהיותו כן לא צותה התורה עליו וגם לא צותה על עזיבתו, לפי שדברה תורה בזה כנגד היצר הרע, ... ככה היה ענין המלך ששאלתו אינה מצוה ואיננה גם כן עבירה נאסרת בתורה, ולכן אחרי ששאלו אותו ונמשח לא חזרו ממנו והיה די להם שיקיימו המצוה לשום להם אותו המלך מקרב אחיהם

### 10 פרשת לך לך (בראשית יז-ה)

(ה) ולא יקרא עוד את שמך אברהם והיה שמך אברהם כי אב המון גוים נתתיך: (ו) והפרתי אתך במאד מאד ונתתיך לגוים ומלכים ממך יצאו:

### 11 פרשת וישלח (בראשית לה-יא)

(י) ויאמר לו אלהים שמך יעקב לא יקרא שמך עוד יעקב כי אם ישראל יהיה שמך ויקרא את שמו ישראל: (יא) ויאמר לו אלהים אני אל שדי פרה ורבה גוי וקהל גוים יהיה ממך ומלכים מחלפיך יצאו:

### 12 שופטים (ח-כב-כג)

(כב) ויאמרו איש ישראל אל גדעון משל בנו גם אתה גם בנד גם בן בנד כי הושעתנו מיד מדין: (כג) ויאמר אלהם גדעון לא אמשל אני בכם ולא ימשל בני בכם ה' ימשל בכם:

### 13 שמואל א' (ח-ד-ה; יט-כ)

(ד) ויתקבצו כל זקני ישראל ויבאו אל שמואל הרמתה: (ה) ויאמרו אליו הנה אתה זקנת ובניך לא תלכו בדרךך עתה שימה לנו מלך לשפוטנו ככל הגוים:

(יט) וימאנו העם לשמע בקול שמואל ויאמרו לא כי אם מלך יהיה עלינו: (כ) והיינו גם אנחנו ככל הגוים ושפטנו מלכנו ויצא לפנינו ונלחם את מלחמתנו:

### 14 שמואל א' (יב-א-יז)

(א) ויאמר שמואל אל כל ישראל הנה שמעתי בקלכם לכל אשר אמרתם לי ואמליך עליכם מלך: (ב) ועתה הנה המלך מתהלך לפניכם ואני זקנתי ושבתי ובני הנם אתכם ואני התהלכתי לפניכם מנערי עד היום הנה: (ג) הנני ענו בי נגד ה' ונגד משיחו את שור מי לקחתי וחמור מי לקחתי ואת מי עשקתי את מי רצותי ומיז מי לקחתי כפר ואעלים עיני בו ואשיב לכם: (ד) ויאמרו לא עשקתנו ולא רצותנו ולא לקחתי מיד

or mistreated us, and you've never taken anything from anyone," the people answered. 5 Samuel replied, "The LORD and his anointed one are witnesses against you today that you haven't found anything in my possession." "Agreed," they said. 6 Then Samuel told the people: "The witness is indeed the LORD, who appointed Moses and Aaron and brought your ancestors up from the land of Egypt. 7 So now stand here, and I will judge you in the LORD's presence because of all the LORD's righteous acts that he has done for you and your ancestors: 8 "When Jacob entered Egypt, the Egyptians oppressed them. So your ancestors cried out to the LORD. The LORD then sent Moses and Aaron, who brought your ancestors out of Egypt and settled them here. 9 But your ancestors forgot the LORD their God, so he handed them over to Siserah the commander of Hazor's army, and to the Philistines, and to the Moabite king, all of whom fought against them. 10 Then your ancestors cried out to the LORD and said: 'We have sinned because we have abandoned the LORD and have worshipped the Baals and the Astartes. But now deliver us from the power of our enemies, and we will worship you.' 11 So the LORD sent Jerubbaal, Barak, Jephthah, and Samson, and he delivered you from the power of your enemies on every side. And you lived safe and secure. 12 But when you saw that Nahash the Ammonite king was coming against you, you said to me, 'No! There must be a king to rule over us.' But the LORD your God was already your king! 13 "So now, here is the king you chose, the one you asked for. Yes, the LORD has put a king over you! 14 If you will fear the LORD, worship him, obey him, and not rebel against the LORD's command, and if both you and the king who rules over you follow the LORD your God—all will be well. 15 But if you don't obey the LORD and rebel against the LORD's command, then the LORD's power will go against you and your king to destroy you. 16 "So now take a stand! Look at this awesome thing the LORD is doing. 17 Isn't the wheat harvest today? I will call upon the LORD to send thunder and rain. Then you will know and will see for yourselves what great evil you've done in the LORD's eyes by asking for a king."

איש מאומה: (ה) ויאמר אליהם עד ה' בקם ועד משיחו היום הזה כי לא מצאתם בנדי מאומה ויאמר עד: פ (ו) ויאמר שמואל אל העם ה' אשר עשה את משה ואת אהרן ואשר העלה את אבותיכם מארץ מצרים: (ז) ועתה התיצבו ואשכטה אתכם לפני ה' את כל צדקות ה' אשר עשה אתכם ואת אבותיכם: (ח) כהאשר בא יעקב מצרים ואת אהרן ויוציאו את אבותיכם אל ה' וישלח ה' את משה ואת אהרן ויוציאו את אבותיכם ממצרים וישבוים במקום הזה: (ט) וישכחו את ה' אלהיהם וימכרו אתם ביד סיסרא שר צבא חצור וביד פלשתים וביד מלך מואב ויחלמו בם: (י) ויזעקו אל ה' ויאמרו חטאנו כי עזבנו את ה' ונעבד את הבעלים ואת העשתרות ועתה הצילנו מיד איבינו ונעבדך: (יא) וישלח ה' את ירבעל ואת בן ואת יפתח ואת שמואל ויצל אתכם מיד איביכם מסביב ותשבנו בטח: (יב) ותראו כי נחש מלך בני עמון בא עליכם ותאמרו לי לא כי מלך ימלך עלינו וה' אלהיכם מלכם: (יג) ועתה הנה המלך אשר בחרתם אשר שאלתם והנה נתן ה' עליכם מלך: (יד) אם תיראו את ה' ועבדתם אותו ושמעתם בקלו ולא תמרו את פי ה' והייתם גם אתם וגם המלך אשר מלך עליכם אחר ה' אלהיכם: (טו) ואם לא תשמעו בקול ה' ומירתם את פי ה' והייתה נד ה' בקם ובאבותיכם: (טז) גם עתה התיצבו וראו את הדבר הגדול הזה אשר ה' עשה לעיניכם: (יז) הלא קציר חטים היום אקרא אל ה' וייתן קלות וקטר ודעו וראו כי רעתכם רבה אשר עשיתם בעיני ה' לשאול לכם מלך: ס

## VI) GOD'S APPROACH

7 The LORD answered Samuel, "Comply with the people's request—everything they ask of you—because they haven't rejected you. No, they've rejected me as king over them. 8 They are doing to you only what they've been doing to me from the day I brought them out of Egypt to this very minute, abandoning me and worshipping other gods. 9 So comply with their request, but give them a clear warning, telling them how the king will rule over them." 10 Then Samuel explained everything the LORD had said to the people who were asking for a king.

**15) שמואל א' (ח: י-ט)**  
 (ז) ויאמר ה' אל שמואל שמע בקול העם לכל אשר יאמרו אליך כי לא אתך מאסו כי אתי מאסו ממלך עליהם: (ח) ככל המעשים אשר עשו מיום העלתי אתם ממצרים ועד היום הזה ויעזבני ויעבדו אלהים אחרים כן המה עשים גם לך: (ט) ועתה שמע בקולם אך כי העד תעיד בהם והגדת להם משפט המלך אשר ימלך עליהם: ס (י) ויאמר שמואל את כל דברי ה' אל העם השאלים מאתו מלך: ס

## VII) EARLY MODERN CRITIQUES OF MONARCHY

### **16) Letter of Thomas Jefferson to James Madison (1787)**

Societies exist under three forms, sufficiently distinguishable. 1. Without government, as among our Indians. 2. Under governments, wherein the will of everyone has a just influence; as is the case in England, in a slight degree, and in our States, in a great one. 3. Under governments of force; as is the case in all other monarchies, and in most of the other republics. To have an idea of the curse of existence under these last, they must be seen. It is a government of wolves over sheep. It is a problem not clear in my mind that the first condition is not the best. But I believe it to be inconsistent with any great degree of population. The second state has a great deal of good in it. The mass of mankind under that, enjoys a precious degree of liberty and happiness. It has its evils, too; the principal of which is the turbulence to which it is subject. But weigh this against the oppressions of monarchy, and it becomes nothing."

### **17) Common Sense – Of Monarchy and Hereditary Succession (Thomas Paine, 1776)**

In the early ages of the world, according to the scripture chronology there were no kings; the consequence of which was, there were no wars; it is the pride of kings which throws mankind into confusion. Holland, without a king hath enjoyed more peace for this last

century than any of the monarchical governments in Europe. Antiquity favours the same remark; for the quiet and rural lives of the first Patriarchs have a snappy something in them, which vanishes when we come to the history of Jewish royalty.

Government by kings was first introduced into the world by the Heathens, from whom the children of Israel copied the custom. It was the most prosperous invention the Devil ever set on foot for the promotion of idolatry. The Heathens paid divine honours to their deceased kings, and the Christian World hath improved on the plan by doing the same to their living ones. How impious is the title of sacred Majesty applied to a worm, who in the midst of his splendor is crumbling into dust!

As the exalting one man so greatly above the rest cannot be justified on the equal rights of nature, so neither can it be defended on the authority of scripture; for the will of the Almighty as declared by Gideon, and the prophet Samuel, expressly disapproves of government by Kings.

All anti-monarchical parts of scripture have been very smoothly glossed over in monarchical governments, but they undoubtedly merit the attention of countries which have their governments yet to form. "Render unto Cesar the things which are Cesar's" is the scripture doctrine of courts, yet it is no support of monarchical government, for the Jews at that time were without a king, and in a state of vassalage to the Romans.

Near three thousand years passed away, from the Mosaic account of the creation, till the Jews under a national delusion requested a king. Till then their form of government (except in extraordinary cases where the Almighty interposed) was a kind of Republic, administered by a judge and the elders of the tribes. Kings they had none, and it was held sinful to acknowledge any being under that title but the Lord of Hosts. And when a man seriously reflects on the idolatrous homage which is paid to the persons of kings, he need not wonder that the Almighty, ever jealous of his honour, should disapprove a form of government which so impiously invades the prerogative of Heaven.

Monarchy is ranked in scripture as one of the sins of the Jews, for which a curse in reserve is denounced against them. The history of that transaction is worth attending to