



## Grain

“I am responsible for the house I did not build, but in which I live.”

—Dorothee Sölle Submitted by Vernita Kennen, Roseville, MN

## Field

<sup>4</sup>Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah, <sup>5</sup>and said to him, “You are old and your sons do not follow in your ways; appoint for us, then, a king to govern us, like other nations.” <sup>6</sup>But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, “Give us a king to govern us.” Samuel prayed to the LORD, <sup>7</sup>and the LORD said to Samuel, “Listen to the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them. <sup>8</sup>Just as they have done to me, from the day I brought them up out of Egypt to this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so also they are doing to you. <sup>9</sup>Now then, listen to their voice; only—you shall solemnly warn them, and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them.” <sup>10</sup>So Samuel reported all the words of the LORD to the people who were asking him for a king. <sup>11</sup>He said, “These will be the ways of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and appoint them to his chariots and to be his horsemen, and to run before his chariots; <sup>12</sup>and he will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and some to plow his ground and to reap his harvest, and to make his implements of war and the equipment of his chariots. <sup>13</sup>He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers... <sup>19</sup>But the people refused to listen to the voice of Samuel; they said, “No! but we are determined to have a king over us, <sup>20</sup>so that we also may be like other nations, and that our king may govern us and go out before us and fight our battles.”

1 Samuel 8: 4-12; 19-20

## Thoughts

The elders of Israel thought it was time for a king. Samuel didn't like it. He prayed and received the message that handing their authority over to one individual would lead to abuse of power and war. But what about their current system with Judges ruling over individual tribes? Leaders of smaller areas could exercise their own share of corrupt leadership. In addition, the tribes may not have been unified enough against a common enemy.

So what did God want? An improved or a new more creative system? It is difficult to say. However, it seems key that Samuel warned the people about the seductions that accompany becoming a kingdom or empire. Following this story there would be many examples of kingships gone wrong. And yet God also worked through kings. It's complicated. What is clear is that in Samuel's voice we hear the echo of a prophecy that follows us through time: Do not become too enamored with any one powerful system. You belong to God.

Today, increasing numbers of people in the U.S. have recognized oppressive aspects of the Israeli government. It has taken awhile for many Americans to admit how brutally Palestinians have been treated. Perhaps Christians have exoticized our Jewish neighbors and the Holy Land, wanting to be enamored even with its government. We also witness people seduced into committing unconscionable acts in retaliation, and within the U.S., tapping into the destructive system of anti-Semitism. How do we respond? Remember that you belong to God and what that means. Happy Monday!

## Share

Send any quotes you'd like to share with our network to [cindyc@loppw.org](mailto:cindyc@loppw.org)

For all reflections go to [www.loppw.org](http://www.loppw.org) - Resources & Advocacy Tools - Monday Quotes

Many blessings upon you,

Pastor Cindy