



The story of Haman and Mordecai reminds us that we have a choice to live according to our own dictates or submit to God's plan and desires for our lives. Either way we can expect certain consequences. Os Guinness describes this in what he calls a "Samuel Moment." When the Israel asked Samuel for a king, God gave Samuel a surprising order. "Now then, listen to their voice; however, you shall solemnly warn them and tell them of the procedure of the king who will reign over them" (1 Sam. 8:9).

What then unfolds is remarkable. The people of Israel were wrong to choose a king. They would regret it bitterly at times, and Samuel's predictions came all too true in the end. Jewish society was deeper, older and far more enduring than the Jewish state and is still vital today, having survived the long centuries when there was no state. Jewish society was constituted by God at Sinai and it has lasted four thousand years, whereas the monarchical Jewish state was chosen by the people in order to be like the nations around them, and it lasted only a few hundred years.

Samuel delivers two powerful messages to the people. First, Samuel delivers a prophetic word: *You have chosen, so you must live true to your choice.* God would respect their choice, wrong though it was, but they were responsible for the choice, and their choice would come with a steep price. The kings they chose would abuse their power and exploit their sons and daughters, as indeed they did. Second, Samuel demonstrates this prophetic action: *I have chosen, so I must live true to my calling.* The people's choice was wrong, but God forbid that he, Samuel, should join the people or cease to continue doing what he had been called to do.

The parallels to our own time are profound. The West has almost severed its roots and destroyed the root system. Led by the voices of antifaith and the lure of false visions of freedom, the West is choosing to forget God and go its own way. Unless these choices are reversed, the eventual outcome of this path will be degeneracy and the end of the West as a civilization.

Therefore, like Samuel, we must say the following with boldness and with sorrow to our generation: Leaders and peoples of the West, these are your choices, and these will be your consequences. . . . Whether the bitter harvest you are reaping will take one decade or several to ripen, that day will surely come, and your judgment will be the consequence of your own settled choice. So we solemnly warn you now. Indeed, we plead with you for your own sake and the sake of your children's children, do not go this way. But, and here is the point made clear, if you do go this way, we will not join you. Let the disaster come, but not through us. For our part we are called as the followers of Jesus to be a distinctive people, and we are committed to live differently. We will not worship your gods, and we will not live according to your ways. We will endeavor to live according to a higher law within a society that is now choosing a lower law or no law at all. We are citizens of the City of God and no more than resident aliens in the City of Man. *Impossible People*

Samuel and Mordecai were by no means perfect. Samuel had done poorly raising his children, and Mordecai antagonized people. Nevertheless, they were committed to following God. In the midst of our own imperfections we're similarly called to speak the truth in humility.

Discussion Questions

Pastor Tim mentioned the movement in our culture toward "positive parenting" that assumes that we are essentially born good. What other cultural assumptions and trends are we often encouraged to embrace that might rest in pride and our desire for self-sufficiency?

Assessing ourselves accurately can be difficult. How can we recognize our own pride and live in the humility that God desires?

What must we do to courageously confront others with God's expectations and promises with humility?