



SAMUEL RUTHERFORD 1600 - 1661

If you found yourself in legal trouble today because your religious liberties were restricted, you might want to contact a firm who provides free legal services to those whose constitutional rights have been threatened or violated. Who would you contact? Well, perhaps you would contact the Rutherford Institute. Founded in 1982 by attorney and author John Whitehead, the Rutherford Institute educates and litigates on behalf of individual freedoms in the United States and throughout the world. Mr. Whitehead named his organization after Scottish theologian and politician Samuel Rutherford who believed that no one, not even the King, was above the law. Samuel Rutherford remains a hero of the church even until today.

Rutherford lived in Scotland during the time when many people were leaving England to escape religious persecution and sailing to the developing colonies in America. Rutherford decided to remain at home and fight the political and spiritual battles in Scotland. He wrote and preached extensively in his position as a college Professor of Divinity and as a minister of the Gospel. He was regularly involved in controversies between church and state and spent much time in prison from where he wrote volumes of works still acclaimed today. Some of his work developed concepts which were later used in the formation of the U.S. Constitution.

After Rutherford served time in prison, he resumed preaching and teaching and was the major author of the *Westminster Catechism* with its famous beginning question and answer:

What is the chief end of man?

To glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

He is probably best known for the book which inspired the Rutherford Institute's name: *Lex Rex* or *The Law of the King*, where he showed that God has absolute authority and that even the king must obey the laws of the land. The idea was radical at the time, so much so that the King had the book burned, and Rutherford was charged with treason. On his deathbed at the time, Rutherford replied this: "I have got a summons already before a superior judge and judiciary, and I behoove to answer my first summons, and ere your day come I will be where few kings and great folks come."