

1 Samuel 12 - Samuel's Farewell; Samuel Reviews God's Faithfulness; Samuel's Challenge and Reassurance to Israel

III. Samuel and Saul narrative (8:1—15:35)

(5) Samuel's warning against national covenant unfaithfulness (12:1-25)

1 Samuel 12

(5) Samuel's warning against national covenant unfaithfulness (12:1-25)

1 Then Samuel said to all Israel, "Behold, I have listened to your voice for all that you said to me, and I have appointed a king over you.

1 Then Samuel said to all Israel, "Behold, I have listened to your voice in all that you said to me and I have appointed a king over you.

1 Then Samuel told all Israel, "Take note! I've listened to you, to everything you have told me, and I've appointed a king over you.

1 And Samuel said unto all Israel, Behold, I have hearkened unto your voice in all that ye said unto me, and have made a king over you.

2 Now, here is the king walking before you, but as for me, I am old and gray, and my sons are here with you. And I have walked before you since my youth to this day.

2 Now, here is the king walking before you, but I am old and gray, and behold my sons are with you. And I have walked before you from my youth even to this day.

2 Now here is the king walking before you, while I'm old and gray, and my sons are with you. I've walked before you from my youth until this day.

2 And now, behold, the king walketh before you: and I am old and grayheaded; and, behold, my sons are with you: and I have walked before you from my childhood unto this day.

3 Here I am; testify against me before the LORD and His anointed. Whose ox have I taken, or whose donkey have I taken, or whom have I exploited? Whom have I oppressed, or from whose hand have I taken a bribe to close my eyes with it? I will return *it* to you."

3 Here I am; bear witness against me before the LORD and His anointed. Whose ox have I taken, or whose donkey have I taken, or whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed, or from whose hand have I taken a bribe to blind my eyes with it? I will restore *it* to you."

3 Here I am. Testify against me in the LORD's presence and before his anointed. Whose ox have I taken, or whose donkey have I taken? Who have I cheated? Who have I oppressed? Who bribed me to look the other way? I'll restore it to you."

3 Behold, here I am: witness against me before the LORD, and before his anointed: whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it you.

- Samuel reviewed his own ministry and reminded the people that he had been faithful to them and to the Lord. He then reviewed the history of the nation and led the people to see that they had greatly sinned against the Lord by asking for a king. He called for rain to show the people his own faith and the power of God, and the sudden storm in harvest (an unusual event at that time of the year) brought fear to the people.

- Why did Samuel feel the need to justify his behavior publicly?

— Maybe he knew that because the people rebelled against God in demanding a king, they would experience His discipline, and he didn't want anyone to think he was responsible.

— He also likely took the people's request for a king as a personal rejection of himself

— He may have wanted the people to not conclude that living a life of commitment to God, as he had lived, would bring discipline. The discipline to come would result of the sin of the people, not him.

— He also may have wanted to vindicate that the type of rule he represented was God's will for Israel at the time

4 And they said, "You have not exploited us or oppressed us, or taken anything from anyone's hand."

4 They said, "You have not defrauded us or oppressed us or taken anything from any man's hand."

4 They said, "You haven't cheated us or oppressed us, and you haven't taken anything from anyone's hand."

4 And they said, Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken ought of any man's hand.

5 So he said to them, "The LORD is witness against you, and His anointed is witness this day that you have found nothing in my hand." And they said, "*He is witness.*"

5 He said to them, "The LORD is witness against you, and His anointed is witness this day that you have found nothing in my hand." And they said, "*He is witness.*"

5 He told them, "Today the LORD is testifying, along with his anointed, that you haven't found any bribes in my possession."

They said, "He's a witness."

5 And he said unto them, The LORD is witness against you, and his anointed is witness this day, that ye have not found ought in my hand. And they answered, He is witness.

6 Then Samuel said to the people, "It is the LORD who appointed Moses and Aaron and who brought your fathers up from the land of Egypt.

6 Then Samuel said to the people, "It is the LORD who appointed Moses and Aaron and who brought your fathers up from the land of Egypt.

6 Then Samuel told the people, "It is the LORD who appointed Moses and Aaron and who brought your ancestors up out of the land of Egypt.

6 And Samuel said unto the people, It is the LORD that advanced Moses and Aaron, and that brought your fathers up out of the land of Egypt.

7 Now then, take your stand, so that I may enter into judgment with you before the LORD concerning all the **righteous acts** of the LORD that He did for you and your fathers.

7 So now, take your stand, that I may plead with you before the LORD concerning all the righteous acts of the LORD which He did for you and your fathers.

7 Now stand up and I'll pass judgment on you in light of the LORD's righteous acts that he did for you and your ancestors.

7 Now therefore stand still, that I may reason with you before the LORD of all the righteous acts of the LORD, which he did to you and to your fathers.

- "...righteous acts" - those acts whereby He vindicated the helpless in delivering them from their enemies

8 When Jacob went into Egypt and your fathers cried out to the LORD, then the LORD sent Moses and Aaron who brought your fathers out of Egypt and settled them in this place.

8 When Jacob went into Egypt and your fathers cried out to the LORD, then the LORD sent Moses and Aaron who brought your fathers out of Egypt and settled them in this place.

8 After Jacob went to Egypt, and your ancestors cried out to the LORD, he sent Moses and Aaron, who brought your ancestors out of Egypt and settled them in this place.

8 When Jacob was come into Egypt, and your fathers cried unto the LORD, then the LORD sent Moses and Aaron, which brought forth your fathers out of Egypt, and made them dwell in this place.

9 But they forgot the LORD their God, so He sold them into the hand of Sisera, commander of the army of **Hazor**, and into the hand of the **Philistines**, and into the hand of the king of **Moab**, and they fought against them.

9 But they forgot the LORD their God, so He sold them into the hand of Sisera, captain of the army of Hazor, and into the hand of the Philistines and into the hand of the king of Moab, and they fought against them.

9 But they forgot the LORD their God, so he handed them over to the domination of Sisera, the commander of the army of Hazor, and into domination by the Philistines and by the king of Moab, and Israel fought against them.

9 And when they forgot the LORD their God, he sold them into the hand of Sisera, captain of the host of Hazor, and into the hand of the Philistines, and into the hand of the king of Moab, and they fought against them.

- God's abandonment of the people of Israel to their foes is described under the figure of a sale, just as the deliverance of Israel is called redemption or buying back

- "...Hazor...Philistines...Moab" - these were the three chief oppressors of Israel during the period of the Judges

10 They cried out to the LORD and said, 'We have sinned, because we have abandoned the LORD and have served the Baals and the Ashtaroth; but now save us from the hands of our enemies, and we will serve You.'

10 They cried out to the LORD and said, 'We have sinned because we have forsaken the LORD and have served the Baals and the Ashtaroth; but now deliver us from the hands of our enemies, and we will serve You.'

10 "Then they cried out to the LORD: 'We have sinned because we have forsaken the LORD and have served the Baals and the Ashtaroth. Now deliver us from the hand of our enemies, and we will serve you.'

10 And they cried unto the LORD, and said, We have sinned, because we have forsaken the LORD, and have served Baalim and Ashtaroth: but now deliver us out of the hand of our enemies, and we will serve thee.

11 Then the LORD sent **Jerubbaal, Bedan**, Jephthah, and Samuel, and saved you from the hands of your enemies all around, so that you lived in security.

11 Then the LORD sent Jerubbaal and Bedan and Jephthah and Samuel, and delivered you from the hands of your enemies all around, so that you lived in security.

11 Then the LORD sent Jerubbaal, Barak, Jephthah, and Samuel and he delivered you from the hand of your enemies on every side, so that you lived securely.

11 And the LORD sent Jerubbaal, and Bedan, and Jephthah, and Samuel, and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side, and ye dwelled safe.

- "...Jerubbaal" - another name for Gideon (Judges 6:32)

- "...Bedan" - does not occur in the list of the judges. Bedan and Barak are almost identical in Hebrew; the LXX, Syriac, and Arabic all read Barak.

— Moreover, in Heb 11:32, Gideon, Barak, Samson, and Jephthah are named together. In addition, the mention of Sisera in v9 makes it almost a necessity to read Barak here.

12 But when you saw that Nahash the king of the sons of Ammon was coming against you, you said to me, 'No, but a king shall reign over us!' Yet the LORD your God *was* your king.

12 When you saw that Nahash the king of the sons of Ammon came against you, you said to me, 'No, but a king shall reign over us,' although the LORD your God *was* your king.

12 But when you saw that Nahash, king of the Ammonites, was coming to fight you, you told me, 'No, let a king rule over us instead,' even though the LORD your God *was* your king.

12 And when ye saw that Nahash the king of the children of Ammon came against you, ye said unto me, Nay; but a king shall reign over us: when the LORD your God *was* your king.

Samuel recounted God's goodness throughout Israel's history that proved they had no good reason to demand a human king. They thought to be set apart to follow God as king was more of a problem than a privilege. They felt they could be happy only if they had what God warned them against—a king like the other nations.

Every choice has consequences, and Samuel set theirs before them. God would give them their king, but the Lord was still to be feared, served and obeyed because their covenant had not changed.

13 And now, behold, the king whom you have chosen, whom you have asked for, and behold, the LORD has put a king over you.

13 Now therefore, here is the king whom you have chosen, whom you have asked for, and behold, the LORD has set a king over you.

13 "Now, here is the king you have chosen, the one whom you asked for. See, the Lord has appointed a king over you.

13 Now therefore behold the king whom ye have chosen, and whom ye have desired! and, behold, the LORD hath set a king over you.

- The grammatical construction of the Hebrew shows that the people had not just requested a king, but demanded him out of a strong self-will

14 If you will fear the LORD and serve Him, and listen to His voice and not rebel against the command of the LORD, then both you and the king who reigns over you will follow the LORD your God.

14 If you will fear the LORD and serve Him, and listen to His voice and not rebel against the command of the LORD, then both you and also the king who reigns over you will follow the LORD your God.

14 If you fear the LORD, serve him, obey him, and don't rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then both you and the king who rules over you will truly follow the LORD your God.

14 If ye will fear the LORD, and serve him, and obey his voice, and not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall both ye and also the king that reigneth over you continue following the LORD your God:

- Even though it wasn't God's will that Israel be ruled by a king at this point, nevertheless He would continue to bless them if they feared Him, obeyed Him, and listened to His voice through the Mosaic Law

15 But if you do not listen to the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the command of the LORD, then the hand of the LORD will be against you, even *as it was* against your fathers.

15 If you will not listen to the voice of the Lord, but rebel against the command of the Lord, then the hand of the Lord will be against you, *as it was* against your fathers.

15 But if you don't obey the LORD and rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then the LORD will turn against you as he did against your ancestors.

15 But if ye will not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall the hand of the LORD be against you, as it was against your fathers.

16 Even now, take your stand and see this great thing which the LORD is going to do before your eyes.

16 Even now, take your stand and see this great thing which the LORD will do before your eyes.

16 "Now then, stand up and see this great thing that the LORD is about to do before your eyes.

16 Now therefore stand and see this great thing, which the LORD will do before your eyes.

17 Is it not the wheat harvest today? I will call to the LORD, that He will send thunder and rain. Then you will know and see that your wickedness is great which you have done in the sight of the LORD, by asking for yourselves a king."

17 Is it not the wheat harvest today? I will call to the LORD, that He may send thunder and rain. Then you will know and see that your wickedness is great which you have done in the sight of the LORD by asking for yourselves a king."

17 Is it not the wheat harvest today? I'll call upon the LORD, and he will send thunder and rain. Then you will know and understand that you have done a great evil in the sight of the LORD by asking for a king for yourselves."

17 Is it not wheat harvest to day? I will call unto the LORD, and he shall send thunder and rain; that ye may perceive and see that your wickedness is great, which ye have done in the sight of the LORD, in asking you a king.

- God confirmed the truth of Samuel's words by sending rain during the wheat harvest, normally the driest time of the year

— While unseasonable storms have occurred in Israel, the evidence of divine intervention in this case is seen in the specific timing of the storm

18 So Samuel called to the LORD, and the LORD sent thunder and rain that day; and all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel.

18 So Samuel called to the LORD, and the LORD sent thunder and rain that day; and all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel.

18 Samuel called upon the LORD that same day, and the LORD sent thunder and rain. So all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel.

18 So Samuel called unto the LORD; and the LORD sent thunder and rain that day: and all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel.

- Finally, Samuel appealed to the LORD to send a sign from heaven both to authenticate his own warnings of judgment and to cause the people to revere the God who had called them and who desired to bless and use them (v16-18)

- The Lord reminded them that their insistent demand for a king, though He would grant it, was still an evil request because it was premature and wrongly motivated

God often displayed His supernatural power to confirm His prophets' words. Here, Samuel called to God, who caused thunder and rain. This amazing act, at harvest time when it was always dry, led the people to stand "in awe of the Lord and of Samuel."

God's presence and power prompted Israel to confess their sin of asking for a king. They asked Samuel to pray for them. Samuel's reassurance of God's faithfulness demonstrates God's grace to those He calls to Himself and promises to save.

19 Then all the people said to Samuel, "Pray to the LORD your God for your servants, so that we do not die; for we have added to all our sins *this* evil, by asking for ourselves a king."

19 Then all the people said to Samuel, "Pray for your servants to the LORD your God, so that we may not die, for we have added to all our sins *this* evil by asking for ourselves a king."

19 Then all the people told Samuel, "Pray to the LORD your God for your servants, so that we don't die, because we made all our sins worse by asking for a king for ourselves."

19 And all the people said unto Samuel, Pray for thy servants unto the LORD thy God, that we die not: for we have added unto all our sins this evil, to ask us a king.

- When the people witnessed the display of thunder and rain, a phenomenon unheard of in early summer, they turned to Samuel and asked the prophet to pray that God might forgive their hastiness in seeking a king

20 Samuel said to the people, "Do not fear. You have committed all this evil, yet do not turn aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart.

20 Samuel said to the people, "Do not fear. You have committed all this evil, yet do not turn aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart.

20 Samuel told all the people, "Don't be afraid. You have done all this evil. Yet don't turn aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart.

20 And Samuel said unto the people, Fear not: ye have done all this wickedness: yet turn not aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart;

- The people's rebellion against God, by demanding a king, was not something they could now undo; consequences would follow

21 Indeed, you must not turn aside, for *then you would go* after useless things which cannot benefit or save, because they are useless.

21 You must not turn aside, for *then you would go* after futile things which can not profit or deliver, because they are futile.

21 Don't turn aside after useless things that cannot profit or deliver because they're useless.

21 And turn ye not aside: for then should ye go after vain things, which cannot profit nor deliver; for they are vain.

22 For the LORD will not abandon His people on account of His great name, because the LORD has been pleased to make you a people for Himself.

22 For the LORD will not abandon His people on account of His great name, because the LORD has been pleased to make you a people for Himself.

22 Indeed, the LORD won't abandon His people for the sake of His great name, for the LORD desires to make you a people for himself.

22 For the LORD will not forsake his people for his great name's sake: because it hath pleased the LORD to make you his people.

- In a marvelous manifestation of the grace of God, Samuel related to the people that God would bless them, in spite of their wrong choice, if they would only be steadfast in their obedience from this point on

— Their past could not be undone but their future was untainted and could be devoted to the Lord (v20-22). So can ours!

The only basis for security for any person is the fact that God will be true to His Name and character. God is holy and just when, in His sovereign grace, He chooses to set His affection on us (John 15:16).

23 Furthermore, as for me, far be it from me that I would sin against the LORD by ceasing to pray for you; but I will instruct you in the good and right way.

23 Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by ceasing to pray for you; but I will instruct you in the good and right way.

23 Now as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by ceasing to pray for you. I'll also instruct you in the way that is good and right.

23 Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way:

- Not only did the Israelites need to walk in obedience to God, they also needed Samuel's intercession for God's enablement to follow Him faithfully

- Samuel regarded failure to pray for Israel as a personal sin against God

- Prayer for one's nation remains an obligation for a believer (centuries later Jeremiah spoke of Samuel as a great man of prayer, Jer 15:1)

- God's people never outgrow the privilege and responsibility to serve Him and His people

For God's people not to pray is to sin against the Lord, yet if there's one thing lacking in our churches today, it is prayer, particularly prayer for those in authority (1 Tim 2:1-4).

[Wiersbe]

24 Only fear the LORD and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you.

24 Only fear the LORD and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you.

24 Only, fear the LORD and serve him faithfully with all your heart. Indeed, consider what great things he has done for you.

24 Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you.

- To fear God and serve Him faithfully, the Israelites would need to remember God's faithfulness to them in the past, and to bear in mind the certain consequences of disobedience (Cf. Deut 28:41,45-64; 30:15-20)

25 But if you still do evil, both you and your king will be swept away."

25 But if you still do wickedly, both you and your king will be swept away."

25 But if you persist in doing evil, both you and your king will be swept away."

25 But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king.

- If the people would respond affirmatively, they could expect God's continued blessing on their nation. But if they did not, they could expect the judgment of God on them.

The record emphasizes that even though the people insisted on having a human king instead of God, God gave them one who was personally admirable and victorious in battle. Everything about Saul in 1 Sam 8-12 is positive. Saul could have been a great king, but his personal choices led to his later downfall, especially his choice not to submit to God. God gave blessing to His people as long as their representative submitted to His authority.

Saul had everything in his favor:

- (1) A strong body (10:23)
- (2) A humble mind (9:21)
- (3) A new heart (10:9)
- (4) Spiritual power (10:10)
- (5) Loyal friends (10:26)
- (6) The guidance and prayers of Samuel

Yet in spite of these advantages, he failed miserably. Why? Because he would not allow God to be the Lord of his life.