

While Everything Has Changed, Nothing has Changed

(1 Samuel 12:6-15)

1. Samuel's Superior Leadership (v.1-4)

- Samuel is going to clear himself of all accusations from the nation of Israel. Afterwards, he is going to rebuke them for their wickedness (12:17-19).
- From his youth (v.2): Samuel ministered to the LORD (2:11; 3:1) and grew in favor with God and man (2:26) since his youth. Despite the presence of Hophni and Phinehas (2:1-7, 22-24), other temptations, trials, and snares, Samuel was dedicated to the LORD.
- To the demand of a king: while Samuel had not taken anything from them (v.3), the human king whom they desire above the LORD will take from them until they become his slaves (8:11-18).

2. Shallowness and Stupidity of the People in their Wickedness (v.5)

- Despite Samuel's blameless character, the people still demand a king. Their desire for a king surfaces from a deep, sinful longing to continue in their sin, and conform to the world around them.

3. Structure (A.B.C.D.) and a Summary of Deliverance by the LORD (v.6-13)

- Samuel now transitions from his blamelessness before the nation to the LORD's righteousness acts towards the people: The LORD is "witness."
- Sequence and economy from wilderness wandering through Samuel:
 - A. Sin (typically idolatry/murmuring/grumbling)
 - B. Oppression (slavery/military advancement from the enemy)
 - C. Crying Out (in pain/suffering: would have elements of repentance)
 - D. Deliverance (The LORD would deliver them Himself, or raise a judge/prophet to free His people from the oppression)

Events from Egypt and Exodus (v.8):

- The LORD appointed Moses and Aaron to deliver the nation from their bondage in Egypt (Ex. 4:29, 30; 5:1; 6:13, 26, 27; 7:10, 20; 10:3; 11:10; 12:28, 50).
- Notice the sequence (B-C-D)

Occupation of the Promise Land (v.9-11):

- Samuel transitions from deliverance to occupation, as the nation entered the Promise Land under Joshua's campaign.
- The nation forgot the LORD (v.9). This "forgetting" is a willful choice of rebellion, not an absence of knowledge. They were warned by Moses not to "forget the LORD your God" (Deut. 8:2, 11). If they did, they would "perish" (Deut. 8:19-20).
- The judges/deliverers listed (v.9-11) are not in chronological order:
 - Sisera (v.9): general of Jabin's army (king of Moab in Canaan). Sisera was defeated by Barak.

- Jerubbaal (v.9): This Hebrew word means "let Baal contend and grapple." It was Gideon's nickname after he tore down the Astherah pole and Baal altar at Ophrah (Judg. 6:25-26).
- Jephthah (Judg. 11:1-12:7): defeated the Ammonites.
- Samuel as a judge of Israel following his episode at Mizpah (1 Sam. 7).

- Samuel's main thrust: "God has delivered you from the consequences of your sin." Judgeship has worked. The nation, in their request for a king, is not only going to transition from judgeship to kingship, but from a theocratic system to a theocracy; they will exchange their A.B.C.D. to an A.B.K. (sin, oppression, and deliverance through their human king). Will the LORD empower His king as He did the judges?

4. Sequence of Events (v.12-13)

- New information has been disclosed to the audience regarding this pericope (chapters 8-12). The fear of Nahash prompted their request for a king (8:5, 19).
- Chronological Order:
 - Saul departs from Gibeah in search of his father's lost donkeys (9:1-5).
 - The elders arrive at Ramah and demand a king (8:1-9, 19-22). The circumstance that prompted their demand for a king was the military pressure from Nahash, the Ammonite king (11:1-4). We do not find out this detail until 12:12.
 - Samuel dismisses all of the elders to their hometown. That day, or the following day, the LORD tells Samuel that he is sending "a man from Benjamin..." (9:15). Meanwhile, Saul and his servant are on their way to Ramah. The total amount of days that elapsed from Saul's search for lost donkeys to his pre-coronation meal at Ramah was three days (9:15).
 - Saul was anointed privately (10:1), prophesied (10:10) and made his way back to his hometown at Gibeah (10:14) within a day or two.
 - Samuel called together the nation at Mizpah (10:17) within days of their request for a king (8:4-5). Lots are cast, and Saul's name is revealed. He is acclaimed as "king" (10:24). Meanwhile, no one other than Saul and Samuel know that he has been anointed as king.
 - Saul, empowered by the LORD, defeated Nahash (11:11-12). The nation afterwards renewed their commitment to the LORD at Gilgal (11:15).

5. Scenario for Success (v.14-15)

- There are conditions for this climactic change. Notice the conditional statement: "if." There is only one path for the nation now moving forward. Both the king and the people must follow through with v.15. If not, the LORD has threatened to chastise the nation of Israel.
- Kingship was not desired by the LORD, nor ideal at this point. The LORD has sovereignly accommodated their sinful request. Their renewal at Gilgal was Samuel's attempt to integrate the people within God's purposes.