

## Samuel's Farewell Address 1 Samuel 12

### INTRODUCTION

If you have a Bible, turn with me to 1 Samuel 12. **This chapter formally marks the end of the period of the Judges.** Samuel stepped down as Israel's judge at this point and turned his judicial function over to Saul. We might say that he retired as Israel's judge. But Samuel did not retire from being a prophet. He continued to exercise his prophetic ministry, evidently for the rest of his life. Scholars debate as to whether the events of chapter 12 happen as part of chapter 11 or some time later. Honestly, it can go either way. For our purposes, this is not of ultimate importance.

**What we do know is that Saul and the people rejoiced greatly over the deliverance of Jabesh Gilead from the Ammonites, and Saul was careful to give glory to the Lord** (11:13). Samuel saw the victory as a great opportunity to **“renew the kingdom”** (v. 14) and remind the people that Jehovah God was still their King. The fact that Saul had led the army in a great victory would tempt the Israelites to put their faith in their new king, and Samuel wanted them to know that their future success rested in trusting the **LORD** alone.

Saul is now well and truly established as king. The people had asked for a king and a king they now have. At this moment they were all feeling very pleased with themselves. In a moment of crisis their new king had performed magnificently. The last chapter closed with all the people enjoying a great celebration. All was now well in the world and there was nothing to look forward to but great times. **Samuel rightly detects that they had a little too much confidence in this new king and the whole notion of a monarchy.**

In his farewell message, **Samuel defended his own ministry** (vv. 1–5), **reviewed God's mercies to Israel** (vv. 6–11) **and admonished the people to fear the Lord and obey the covenant** (vv. 12–25). Samuel mentions the **LORD** at least thirty times in this message, because his heart's desire was to see the people return remain faithful to Him and His covenant.

### I. A \_\_\_\_\_ reflection (12:1-5)

It fits the context of the passage to see in these verses a resumé of the kind of leadership God blesses. Samuel's years of service had been arduous ones, and yet he had served the Lord and the nation with unswerving fidelity. **His example was one that the people, the king, and those of succeeding generations could well emulate.**

When compared with the way in which other notable leaders of antiquity spoke of their accomplishments, **Samuel's review of his many years of service was clear and concise and without exaggeration.** He called on those assembled to testify against him.

**In bearing witness to Samuel's unswerving honesty, the Israelites unwittingly condemned themselves.** They had no real reason to be dissatisfied with his leadership. The real reason they wanted a king was that they had grown tired of the restraints of Samuel's godly piety and wanted a more glamorous kind of leader...one like the nations around them.

## II. A \_\_\_\_\_ rebuke (12:6-13)

Samuel then showed the importance of an accurate understanding of history. He underscored how involved the Lord their God had been in the past. In rehearsing Israel's history Samuel stressed two sets of **facts: (1) whenever they had forsaken the Lord, they had been brought into trouble; and (2) whenever they had repented and cried out to God, He had delivered them out of their difficulties.**

**The Lord had consistently shown His sovereignty by disciplining His people; spiritual apostasy had been punished by physical oppression.** Repentance had always brought deliverance (1 Samuel 12:10–11). But the nation had not learned the lessons embedded in their own history. When Nahash came up against them they yielded before an external fear-object. **Choosing to rely on human wisdom they had demanded a king to save them (12:12).**

**Israel's restlessness and discontent evidenced a distrust in the providential care and blessing of the Lord.** They ignored the fact that no external form of government could secure for them the spiritual and material blessings they sought. Refusing to consult with Samuel or the priests, they demanded instead a king so that they could be like the other nations.

Don't miss the **point: the established pattern of God as King has been a pattern of faithfulness again and again and again. The established pattern of the people is rebellion, idolatry and sin again and again and again.**

Remember what we mentioned some weeks ago when we studied chapter 8 (8:4-8) that bears witness to our study **today: the consistent pattern of the people of God has not been primarily faithfulness with a little bit of rebellion. On the contrary, the pattern has been primarily rebellion with seasons of faithfulness.**

## III. A \_\_\_\_\_ reminder (12:14-25)

**To convince the people of their sin in seeking to set aside the Lord as their rightful sovereign, and to show them that His judgments are always ready to fall on the ungodly, he called on the Lord.** A sudden, heavy, and unexpected storm broke upon the assembly. Because it was so evident that this intense storm was the result of Samuel's prayer, the people were filled with fear. Their consciences suddenly convinced them that they had been wrong to persist in their request for a king. They earnestly requested Samuel to intercede for them that God's judgments might not fall on them.

## **CONCLUSION**

What can we take with us this morning? **Our study this morning has much to say to us. Let me share some truths to ponder:**

- **We must be careful not to \_\_\_\_\_ sin**
  
- **We must \_\_\_\_\_ godly leadership but recognize the \_\_\_\_\_ some practice in regard to their leaders**

**Let us never give to men that which belongs only to God. Let us not suppose that “a man” will save us, that our future or the future of our church or of our nation depends on one man.** This is especially important to remember in presidential elections. Men ought never to idolized. God is the ultimate source of our trials and testing, and chastening, and God is ultimately the source of our salvation and blessing. Men are, at best, only God’s instruments. **The best of men are still men at best.**

- **Let us \_\_\_\_\_ a word of hope and encouragement for those devastated by their sin and failures to live up to God’s standard**

**Our hope of salvation is not based upon our performance, but upon God’s grace. It is ultimately not our choice of Him, but His choice of us, not our faithfulness, but His.**

- **Our text this morning is a commentary on \_\_\_\_\_.**

The Israelites of Samuel’s day look to Saul (their king) for their salvation, their deliverance. They view salvation in military and monetary terms, not spiritual terms. **Our text informs us that no human “king” can save or deliver men from their sin. What Israel’s “king” could not do, God’s “King” has accomplished – salvation for sinful men who call upon Him for grace.** All of Israel’s “kings” failed, even the best of them -- David, Solomon, and others. The Israelites are tempted to take a man, appoint him as their king, and trust him as their god. Such a king cannot save. But God sent His own Son, Jesus Christ, to be the Savior of all who would believe in Him. God (the second person of the Trinity) became man, coming first to live a perfect life, die for the sins of men, and then be raised from the dead and ascend back into heaven. **This One, Jesus Christ, is God’s King.** He came first to save men from their sins, and He will return soon to establish His kingdom. He is our hope! He is our salvation! What man’s king could never do, God’s King has accomplished.

**You do not have to become \_\_\_\_\_ enough for God to save. You are already \_\_\_\_\_ enough to qualify for His grace.**