

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Let's pray...

[1Sa 12:1-25 NKJV] 1 Now Samuel said to all Israel:

"Indeed I have heeded your voice in all that you said to me, and have made a king over you. 2 "And now here is the king, walking before you; and I am old and grayheaded, and look, my sons [are] with you. I have walked before you from my childhood to this day.

In the last chapter that we covered last week, we saw the newly appointed King Saul, rally Israel in coming together to defend a city that was being tormented by the Ammonites.

The victory over the Ammonites has also led the Israelites to come together and rally behind their king.

There are no more skeptics – everyone is on board.

Saul's approval ratings amongst the people are through the roof.

After all, Saul was the king that they wanted and immediately he delivers on what they expected from a king.

Samuel knows this – he sees a changing of the guard.

No longer are the people going to be led by judges that God lifts up – they will be led by a human king.

And here at the beginning of chapter 12, Samuel wants to remind the Israelites that he has been faithful to them in

doing the work of God since the time Hannah brought him to Eli after she weaned him.

He has devoted his entire life – his entire ministry in serving them.

Yet at the end of his ministry, Samuel was a rejected man despite living a life unto the Lord.

And this happened because the elders rejected his leadership as they demanded a king.

3 "Here I am. Witness against me before the LORD and before His anointed: (Saul) Whose ox have I taken, or whose donkey have I taken, or whom have I cheated? Whom have I oppressed, or from whose hand have I received [any] bribe with which to blind my eyes? I will restore [it] to you." 4 And they said, "You have not

cheated us or oppressed us, nor have you taken anything from any man's hand." 5 Then he said to them, "The LORD [is] witness against you, and His anointed [is] witness this day, that you have not found anything in my hand." And they answered, "[He is] witness."

So not only is Samuel reminding them of his dedication and his service to them – he is also reminding them of his integrity.

He is challenging them – have I wronged anyone here?

Have I cheated anyone, have I taken advantage of anyone – speak up.

Samuel didn't follow the footsteps of Eli's sons who stole from God and were only looking out for themselves.

He did not lead them for what he could get from them, but for what he could give to them.

This speech by Samuel is very similar to another one made many years later by Apostle Paul. Turn to Acts 20.

Here Apostle Paul is speaking to the elders of the church in Ephesus – a church that he started.

[Act 20:18-24 NKJV] 18 And when they had come to him, he said to them: "You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you, 19 "serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews; 20 "how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, 21 "testifying to Jews, and also to

Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. 22 "And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, 23 "except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me. 24 "But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

Church, when we get to the age when we are old and grey and some of us start to lose our hair – may we be remembered as someone who served the Lord with integrity – Someone who served the Lord with the right motives – like a Samuel and a Saul.

6 Then Samuel said to the people, "[It is] the LORD who raised up Moses and Aaron, and who brought your fathers up from the land of Egypt. 7 "Now therefore, stand still, that I may reason with you before the LORD concerning all the righteous acts of the LORD which He did to you and your fathers: 8 "When Jacob had gone 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 made them dwell in this place. 9 "And when they forgot the LORD their God, He sold them into the hand of Sisera, commander of the army of Hazor, into the hand of the Philistines, and into the hand of the king of Moab; and they fought against them. 10 "Then they cried out to the LORD, and said, 'We have

sinned, because we have forsaken the LORD and served the Baals and Ashtoreths; but now deliver us from the hand of our enemies, and we will serve You.' 11 "And the **LORD sent** Jerubbaal(**Gideon**), Bedan, Jephthah, and Samuel, and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side; and you dwelt in safety. 12 "And when you saw that Nahash king of the Ammonites came against you, you said to me, 'No, but a king shall reign over us,' when the LORD your God [was] your king. 13 "Now therefore, here is the king whom you have chosen [and] whom you have desired. And take note, **the LORD has set** a king over you.

Samuel gives the Israelites a brief history lesson and recounts to them God's goodness.

In the same way that Samuel said – I have done nothing bad – he declares to them that the Lord has done nothing but good for them.

Remember, the Israelites are all celebrating because they have a new king –

And Samuel reminds them of what they have just rejected, God could have easily walked away at this point – you rejected me for this human king. Good luck.

However, despite their unfaithfulness – God remained faithful to them.

14 "If you fear the LORD and serve Him and obey His voice, and do not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then both you and the king who reigns over you

will continue following the LORD your God. 15

"However, if you do not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then the hand of the LORD will be against you, as [it was] against your fathers.

Samuel tells the Israelites that even though they blew it in wanting a human king to rule over them – their blessings will still be up to them to decide.

The can chose obedience and submission to God or they can chose disobedience and rebellion.

And if they chose the wrong path – they can be assured that God will not bless it.

During these times of rebellion and disobedience is when we see God's chastening.

He allows us to make the choice but if we chose the wrong one he chastens us because He still our Father and He still loves us.

That is grace church. That God doesn't give up on Israel and He will never give up on you and me.

16 "Now therefore, stand and see this great thing which the LORD will do before your eyes: 17 "[Is] today not the wheat harvest? I will call to the LORD, and He will send thunder and rain, that you may perceive and see that your wickedness [is] great, which you have done in the sight of the LORD, in asking a king for yourselves." 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.

Now, the wheat harvest occurred during the dry season.

It seldom every rains during this time of year.

The last thing you want to occur during the harvest is a downpour because it will damage the crop.

You see, Samuel is trying to impress the people with the notion that the things he's saying are from God.

He wants them to pay attention.

He's making them think about his own integrity.

He wants them to realize the severity of what they have just done.

And he is hoping – that after they see God's warning that they will repent.

Do they???

You would think after seeing God's warning that they would be repenting of what they have just done.

Verse 19 should read – we don't a human king – we want God to rule over us.

Church, it doesn't.

19 And all the people said to Samuel, "Pray for your servants to the LORD your God, that we may not die; for we have added to all our sins the evil of asking a king for ourselves."

They acknowledged their sin – but they chose not to repent from their sin.

In other words – "Samuel we're sorry for doing what we did"

Sorry is not repentance.

They Israelites were not concerned that they had sinned against God – they were concerned that God was going to judge them right there.

They were concerned about their well being.

20 Then Samuel said to the people, "Do not fear. You have done all this wickedness; yet do not turn aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart. 21 "And do not turn aside; for [then you would go] after empty things which cannot profit or deliver, for they [are] nothing. 22 "For the LORD will not forsake His people, for His great name's sake, because it has pleased the LORD to make you His people. 23

"Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you; but I will

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

Israel has sinned against God but Samuel wants to make sure that they don't simply dwell on their past sin.

They are stuck now with the consequences of the decision they made in selecting a king.

But, Samuel still charges them to press forward and continue to serve the Lord faithfully.

We can't do anything about yesterday – and we certainly have no control over how we will serve the Lord tomorrow - all we can do right now is have control over how we are going to serve Him right now.

That is the message that Samuel is giving Israel. Despite your disobedience. Serve Him now.

I asked you to make a note of verse 23 –

Despite their rejection of Samuel, Samuel knew the best thing he could do for Israel was to pray for them.

His words would make no difference if the LORD did not work in their hearts, and the best way to promote the work of the LORD in their hearts was through prayer.

I asked you also to make a note of the last portion of verse 24.

for consider what great things He has done for you.

Church, all our obedience, all of our love for God, it is all done as a response for this.

We don't serve God because we try to persuade Him to do great things for us – we serve Him because of the great things He has already done.

The children of Israel had the history of God righteousness that they could look upon – and they chose not to serve Him.

And then we come to the last verse in chapter 12,

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

Samuel gives Israel a warning – and Israel chooses to not heed his warning.

And when the Kingdoms split up – Israel does wickedly and the Assyrians come and take them away and their king, then

its Judah's turn as Babylon comes and takes them away along with their king – just as Samuel warned them.

[1Sa 13:1-23 NKJV] 1 Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel, 2 Saul chose for himself three thousand [men] of Israel. Two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and in the mountains of Bethel, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin. The rest of the people he sent away, every man to his tent. 3 And Jonathan attacked the garrison of the Philistines that [was] in Geba, and the Philistines heard [of it]. Then Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, "Let the Hebrews hear!" 4 Now all Israel heard it said [that] Saul had attacked a garrison of the Philistines, and [that] Israel had also become an

abomination to the Philistines. And the people were called together to Saul at Gilgal.

Here in chapter 13, we are introduced to Jonathan.

Jonathan is the eldest son of Saul.

He is the crown prince of Israel.

His name means “Yahweh has given”

He is an excellent military leader and a good guy.

So the Israelites are at war with the Philistines once again and it is Jonathan that defeats them.

However, notice that Saul takes credit for the victory –

This is a much different Saul than we saw last week. No longer is it humble Saul – it is now, **look at me Saul.**

5 Then the Philistines gathered together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which [is] on the seashore in multitude. And they came up and encamped in Michmash, to the east of Beth Aven. 6 When the men of Israel saw that they were in danger (for the people were distressed), then the people hid in caves, in thickets, in rocks, in holes, and in pits. 7 And [some of] the Hebrews crossed over the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. As for Saul, he [was] still in **Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling.**

The Philistines show up with a huge army.

The Jewish historian Josephus writes that there were 300,000 Philistines that came to battle.

The Israelites are abandoning Saul.

Unlike last week, when we saw Israel unite against the Ammonites, here everyone is fleeing. Even Saul's own men are leaving him.

8 Then he waited seven days, according to the time set by Samuel. But Samuel did not come to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him. 9 So Saul said, "Bring a burnt offering and peace offerings here to me." And he offered the burnt offering.

So as everyone is abandoning him. Saul feels that he has to do something, so he assumes the role of a priest and offered a sacrifice to God.

10 Now it happened, as soon as he had finished presenting the burnt offering, that Samuel came; and

Saul went out to meet him, that he might greet him. 11

And Samuel said, "What have you done?" Saul said,

"When I saw that the people were scattered from me,

and [that] you did not come within the days appointed,

and [that] the Philistines gathered together at

Michmash, 12 "then I said, 'The Philistines will now

come down on me at Gilgal, and I have not made

supplication to the LORD.' Therefore I felt compelled,

and offered a burnt offering." 13 And Samuel said to

Saul, "You have done foolishly. You have not kept the

commandment of the LORD your God, which He

commanded you. For now the LORD would have

established your kingdom over Israel forever. 14 "But

now your kingdom shall not continue. The LORD has

sought for Himself a man after His own heart, and the LORD has commanded him [to be] commander over His people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you." 15 Then Samuel arose and went up from Gilgal to Gibeah of Benjamin. And Saul numbered the people present with him, about six hundred men.

Samuel shows us and when he confronts Saul comes up with a list of excuses for his disobedience.

1. I had no choice – I had to do it. The Philistine army was ginormous, my men were running away – I had to do something to regain the support of my men. The problem with this excuse is that Saul did have a choice. He could have placed his trust in God and God would have easily

defeated the 300,000 Philistines with or without the 600 men that stayed with Saul.

2. He placed the blame on Samuel – it is your fault because you didn't come when you said you were. Church, our flesh will always try to blame our sin on others. Just like Saul is doing here.

The consequences of his sin –

Your reign is over. Your children will not succeed you.

Now, Saul actually remained king for another 20 years – this is all grace church – yet, he never repented for what he did that day in Gilgal.

16 Saul, Jonathan his son, and the people present with them remained in Gibeah of Benjamin. But the Philistines encamped in Michmash. 17 Then raiders

came out of the camp of the Philistines in three companies. One company turned onto the road to Ophrah, to the land of Shual, 18 another company turned to the road [to] Beth Horon, and another company turned [to] the road of the border that overlooks the Valley of Zeboim toward the wilderness. 19 Now there was no blacksmith to be found throughout all the land of Israel, for the Philistines said, "Lest the Hebrews make swords or spears." 20 But all the Israelites would go down to the Philistines to sharpen each man's plowshare, his mattock, his ax, and his sickle; 21 and the charge for a sharpening was a pim for the plowshares, the mattocks, the forks, and the axes, and to set the points of the goads. 22 So it came about,

on the day of battle, that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people who [were] with Saul and Jonathan. But they were found with Saul and Jonathan his son. 23 And the garrison of the Philistines went out to the pass of Michmash.

The Philistines are maneuvering now to take control over the Israelite cities.

Saul's army now consists of 600 men.

If that isn't bad enough – the Israelites don't have weapons because the Philistines were the ones that used to supply their weapons.

So Israel is outnumbered, the Philistines have a huge technological advantage over them – the only way that the

Israelites will win this battle is if they place their trust in the Lord for everything.

And that will be our study in a few weeks.

Let's pray...

