

Samuel Has Been Faithful to the Lord and Israel, and Israel Is Called to Witness It

1 Samuel 12:1-5

- Samuel begins his farewell address by focusing on his own faithful record as God's servant to Israel. This will serve to eventually indict them, but stands alone to point to God's gift of leadership, the importance of faithfulness, and the One who perfectly fulfills what Samuel pictures.
 - The key verses that shape the chapter: **Vs. 5** - You have not found anything in my hand. **Vs. 7** - All the righteous deeds of the Lord that he performed for you and for your fathers. **Vs. 17** - And you shall know and see that your wickedness is great, which you have done in the sight of the Lord, in asking for yourselves a king." **Vs. 22** - For the Lord will not forsake his people, for his great name's sake, because it has pleased the Lord to make you a people for himself. **Vs. 24** - Only fear the Lord and serve him faithfully with all your heart. For consider what great things he has done for you.
 - Purposefulness of this coming immediately after the high point of chp. 11. This deals with Israel breaking the covenant, and God's verdict. But then his grace.
- I. Vs. 1-5 - Samuel's reminder to Israel of his faithful leadership for his whole life relates to the context of constructing a charge against Israel for its grievous sin in rejecting God and asking for a king. But it also stands alone in its importance.
- A. Vs. 1 - He begins with a reminder that focuses on the gravity of the situation.
- **Vs. 1** - And Samuel said to all Israel (Representative.), "Behold, I have obeyed your voice in all that you have said to me and have made a king over you.
 - 8:4-9 - ⁴Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah ⁵and said to him, "Behold, you are old and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint for us a king to judge us like all the nations." ⁶But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." And Samuel prayed to the Lord. ⁷And the Lord said to Samuel, "Obey the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them. ⁸According to all the deeds that they have done, from the day I brought them up out of Egypt even to this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are also doing to you. ⁹Now then, obey their voice; only you shall solemnly warn them and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them."
 - This is a significant marker, along with chp. 8, in Israel's history. Rejection of God and his provision.
- B. Vs. 2a - His presentation of Saul stresses what God has done in blessing, while maintaining the simultaneous complexity of God's discipline.
- **Vs. 2a** - And now, behold, the king walks before you (God's sovereignty in 9. God's enabling in 10. 11's positive portrayal. Coexisting with the other reality of God giving them what they want. Not only in Saul's upcoming disobedience, but in the dynamics of their freedom with God as King, but realities of a human king [8:10-18].),
- C. Vs. 2b - His faithful ministry is right, good, and important, yet the contrast is troubling.
- **Vs. 2b** - and I am old and gray (Some estimates suggest he will live another 30 plus years, but this is signifying the transfer. He has to anoint another king. He will also be the contrast to and voice of God's displeasure with Saul as his sin increases.); and behold, my sons are with you (8:1-3. Joel and Abijah. Bribes. Contrast.). I have walked before you from my youth until this day (3:19-20. This is ironic as you think about him presenting Saul, for Saul will walk for many years in unbelief and disobedience. Two negative contrasts. Leaders are going to get old and die.).
- D. Vs. 3 - The record of his life and ministry to Israel, before the Lord, is without fault.
- Obviously "without fault" is subjective.
 - **Vs. 3** - Here I am; testify against me before the Lord and before his anointed (The Lord, and the "anointed," Saul, as witnesses, stressing: 1) That Samuel has been faithful to God and Israel; 2) That Samuel hasn't given them a reason for their desiring a king like the nations.). Whose ox have I taken? Or whose donkey have I taken? Or whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed (Ironically these two will mark Saul's dealings with David.)? Or from whose hand have I taken a bribe to blind my eyes with it (Five total questions. His record of faithfully leading and being led by God are ideal. Last question contrasts with his sons [8:3]. He lived his life to honor the Lord, before the Lord, for Israel's good.)? Testify against me and I will restore it to you (If fault is found, he will act appropriately, unlike Saul later.)"

- E. Vs. 4 - Israel's response affirms Samuel's faithfulness, but will also serve to indict them later.
- **Vs. 4** - They said, "You have not defrauded us or oppressed us or taken anything from any man's hand."
- F. Vs. 5 - The witness of the Lord and of Saul affirm the verdict on Samuel.
- **Vs. 5** - And he said to them, "The Lord is witness against you, and his anointed is witness this day (God declares Samuel innocent, and will declare Israel guilty. Saul, as the one the people wanted instead of Samuel and the Lord, is witness to Samuel's clear record.), that you have not found anything in my hand." And they said, "He is witness (This is both a simple demonstration of how he has led and served as God's prophet and judge and there is nothing to indict him. But it is also the first of the evidences of their lack of belief, rejection of God's leader, rejection of God, and sin in desiring a king like the nations. Witness against. [8:5 - Appoint for us a king to judge us like all the nations. Also vs. 12 here - when you saw that Nahash the 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. A king who will go out to battle. But God, and his hand on Samuel, always did this, even in chp. 11 [11:13 - The Lord has worked salvation in Israel.])."
- II. The rest of the farewell speech continues to construct a charge against Israel, yet offers the promise God's grace and blessing if Israel and the king will trust and obey him.
- A. Vs. 6-11 - The Lord has been faithful throughout Israel's history, particularly in sending deliverers.
- B. Vs. 12-13 - Israel has asked for a king, in spite of God's faithfulness, and here he is, stressing the complexities of God's judgment and provision.
- C. Vs. 14-15 - God's conditions offer blessing if Israel and the king trust and obey, but judgment if they don't.
- D. Vs. 16-18 - God performs a miracle through Samuel to officially emphasize Israel's pivotal sin, and to emphasize the judgment that will accompany unbelief and disobedience.
- E. Vs. 19 - Israel recognize the magnitude of their sin in asking for a king.
- F. Vs. 20-25 - God's mercy, for his glory, is promised, if Israel will follow him.
- III. Besides its larger scope, Samuel's focus on his record has compelling significance for us.
- A. God is good in his gifts of human leadership.
- Israel's history - prophets, priests, kings.
 - Ep. 6:1 - Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Ep. 5:22 - Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 5:25 - Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 1 Pt. 5:2-4 - ²shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; ³not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.
- B. This stresses the importance of trust in the Lord and faithfulness to him and others.
- Co. 2:6-7 - ⁶Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, ⁷rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.
 - 1 Co. 15:10 - But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.
- C. Thankfully, as we remember Samuel's limitations, we are reminded of the One who perfectly fulfills what Samuel pictures.
- He will die. His sons. His need for grace. Saul. Jesus is the only one who can truly say this. The faithfulness of the one whom God sent, who was rejected, and in that rejection, saves. Jesus is the greater leader who is not replaced.
 - He. 2:17 - Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.
 - The One whose verdict was truly innocent was condemned as guilty and suffered on behalf of the guilty, so that by faith, through grace, we can reflect, like Samuel does, the grace and strength of God for his glory.