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A Solemn Warning

Samuel Begins His Farewell Address (1 Sam. 12:1)

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.”

- This is the beginning of we can call Samuel’s farewell speech. He is going to withdraw somewhat from active public ministry.
- This is an extremely important transition point in the history of Israel, as Samuel would be the last of the 14 named Judges that we know of.
- Israel is now moving into a true monarchy, which it will retain for centuries, although Samuel will still be involved in national life in an important way.

Whom Did I Oppress? (1 Sam. 12:2-5)

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. 3 Here I am. Witness against me before the LORD and before His anointed: 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.”

- Samuel makes sure he has a clean conscience, and compels the people to admit that he has walked before them in a blameless manner.
- Here is perhaps our final contrast with the wicked family of Eli.
- He makes a point of saying that both God and the anointed king are witnesses. Samuel is willing to subject himself to judgment here. How many of us would do the same before others?
- The people agree, in the presence of God and the king, that there is no accusation that can be made against Samuel.

When The Lord Your God Was King (1 Sam. 12:6-12)

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, 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.

- Samuel reminds them again that it was God who raised up leaders throughout their history. He uses the story of the Exodus, because the Exodus from Egypt was a situation vastly more difficult. Every Israelite knew of the tremendous power that God had displayed in setting them free from Pharaoh.
- Sisera was the Canaanite general who was defeated under the leadership of Deborah and Barak in the early part of the Book of Judges.
- He reminds the people of the recurring cycle of revival and ruin which is found in Judges.
- Jerubbaal is another name for Gideon, meaning *Baal contends*.
- The name of Bedan is an uncertain reference. The rabbinic explanation was that this referred to Samson as “ben Dan,” the son of Dan.
- In verse 12 we have the first direct explanation for the people’s hunger for a king at this time in history. It was the Ammonite King Nahash who threatened them.
- Samuel pokes hard here by pointing out that the Lord their God was their king.

A Promise And A Warning (1 Sam. 12:13-15)

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. 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.

- Four things Samuel commands: (1) *fear the Lord*; (2) *serve Him*, and (3) *obey His voice*. That could be a way of saying to the people that must continue to obey Samuel’s prophetic commands.
- The last thing was: (4) *not rebel against the Lord’s commandment*. This seems more serious.
- They must do these things to secure God’s blessing.
- The hand of the Lord being turned against them is a concept we’ve already seen on multiple occasions. His hand can bless or oppose.
- Obedience was a key to blessing going all the way to Cain in Genesis 4.

A Demonstration (1 Sam. 12:16-19)

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. 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.”

- God reveals His power. The people now realize that their sin was great.
- Notice the sentiment: they call themselves Samuel’s *servants* and call Yahweh *his* God, not theirs God.

Only Fear The Lord (1 Sam. 12:20-25)

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

- This is a beautiful ending not only to this story , but it’s a beautiful address to end Samuel’s sermons that we have.
- Keep pursuing Him, and don’t go after vain things!
- Verse 22 is highly significant, because ultimately, He will not forsake them. He will preserve them for the sake of His own Name.
- Even the Church is warned not to boast ourselves against Israel. God will reveal Himself to them again, and all Israel shall be saved.
- They are warned not to behave wickedly and be “swept away.”

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