

Samuel's Farewell Address – 1 Samuel 12:1-25

Introduction:

Can you imagine a politician, the leader of a nation giving the people permission to review his career, which spans a lifetime, to see if he/she has ever cheated anyone, acted unfairly, taken a bribe or worked circumstances to benefit themselves instead of the people they served? Most public figures could not stand the scrutiny, and certainly would not want it.

Yet here in chapter 12 Samuel challenges the people to look over the many years he has served them and find anything that was not in keeping with what a godly man should do. The word "integrity" comes to mind, that willingness to do what is right no matter the cost to yourself, no matter what others are doing, no matter who is looking. Integrity speaks of character.

This study looks at the integrity check of Samuel, as well as his parting words to the nation as the reigns of power move from his hands to those of the newly appointed king.

Test Me – 1 Samuel 12:1-5

1. It appears Israel is still at Gilgal where Saul is anointed king. Verse 1 sounds like he is handing over the leadership to the king. It also sounds like he has acted solely on the behest of the people. Is that true?
2. Samuel seems to contrast himself to the new king in verse 2. Describe the comparisons implied here.
3. In verse 3 Samuel challenges the people to name anything he has taken from them that did not belong to him, or if in anyway he had defrauded or oppressed the people. If he had in any way cheated the people he would pay them back. What is the response of the people in verse 4?

4. Samuel starts with a challenge for the people to find anything he had “taken” from them (v. 3). Contrast that with what he predicted would happen in chapter 8:11-17 when the king takes over.
5. Who does Samuel call as a witnesses to the people’s declaration of his integrity (vs. 5)? Why was this important?
6. What might be the purpose of Samuel bringing the people to confess he had done them no wrong?

Samuel Reminds the People of God’s Faithfulness – 1 Samuel 12:6-11

7. Samuel starts to recount God’s faithfulness to the people. Where does he start in verse 6? Why here?
8. Samuel is not simply giving a history lesson here. Looking at verse 7, what was the point of this walk through history?
9. In verse 8 Samuel takes us back to how the nation came to be in Egypt. Why did Jacob go into Egypt? What happened to the people there?
10. How did God deliver the people according to verse 8? Where did God bring them?
11. Despite all God did for the people of Israel, how did they respond (v. 9)?
12. What happened when the people forgot God (vss. 9-10)? How did things get back to the way they should be?
13. What is the message of verse 11?

Call for a King – 1 Samuel 12:12-15

14. According to verse 12, what prompted the people to desire a king?
15. What must happen for things to go well in the nation according to verse 14?

16. If the people do not obey the voice of the Lord and rebel against his commands, what will happen (v. 15)?

Hear from God – 1Samuel 12:17-25

17. What time of the year was it when the people met with Samuel (v. 17)? Why is this detail important to the narrative?
18. Samuel still insists that the request for a king was a great display of wickedness and sin. How will God verify that his perspective is correct (v. 17)?
19. How did God respond to Samuel's request (v. 19)? How did the people respond to what God does?
20. What do they request Samuel do for them (v. 19)? Do you notice anything interesting about the way they phrase their request? What do they admit?
21. Samuel assures the people they need not be afraid. It is true they have sinned but there is hope. What are the people to do according to verses 20-21?
22. What wonderful promise do we find in verse 22?
23. What promise do the people receive in verse 23?
24. Verses 24-25 sum up and repeat the message to the people. What is that message?

Conclusion:

Samuel's time as a leader has ended. He is passing that responsibility over to King Saul. Before he leaves the public square, he has one last message for the people: God has always been faithful to you, now you must remember to be faithful to Him. Though you sinned in demanding a king to rule over you, God has not given up on you. He will still guide and protect you IF you stay faithful to Him. If you turn away from Him you will be left on your own and you will be swept away.

Can you hear it? God is the God of second chances. The people failed miserably in their challenge to trust in God alone for leadership and governance. They demanded a king to take God's place. God gives them their desire – not His first choice for them – yet still promises to watch over them. How many times have we failed to do what God wanted, desiring our own way, yet God still stayed with us and blessed us? I do not know if there is a second choice with a sovereign God, but we do see that our failure does not change who God is.

This is very reassuring for us. We may make the wrong choice, but God will not abandon us. The Apostle Paul said in 2 Timothy 2:13, "If we are unfaithful, he remains faithful, for he cannot deny who he is." This is good news for us today.