

Sunday Night Message

August 4, 2019

Samuel's Farewell

Topics –

Series – *1 Samuel*

Text – 1 Samuel 12

Introduction

Chapter 11:14 – 15 give us the historical and geographical context of what takes place in chapter twelve. They are at Gilgal, and they are sacrificing unto the Lord in celebration of their victory over the Ammonites.



Samuel is turning the political reign over to Saul. He will still be the nation's prophet, but he will no longer be the political leader of the nation.

Samuel is saddened. This is not what he would have chosen. By asking for a king, the nation was rejecting the rule of judges, and they were specifically rejecting Samuel's sons who would have been their next judges.

Samuel's Reminds the Nation of their Relationship with Him. (vs. 1 – 5)

The nation is witness to the fact that Samuel had not been guilty of taking advantage of them in any way. He was very ethical in his treatment of them. He had not taken advantage of them as Eli's boys had (See 1 Samuel 2:12 – 17; 22 – 25; 3:11 - 14). Samuel's sons were also corrupt (see 1 Samuel 8:1 – 8). However, Samuel had been faithful in his dealings with Israel.

The people of Israel had dealt with corrupt leaders in the past, and they were afraid that Samuel's sons were going to bring them back to where they were with Eli's sons. They demanded a change. It is an awesome responsibility to serve the Lord (1 Timothy 3:1 – 7; 1 Peter 5:1 – 4). Samuel had served well.

Samuel's Review of the Rule of Judges (vs. 6 – 11)

Here, Samuel gives a brief overview, or history lesson, of the period of the Judges. Judges would deliver the Israelites when they got themselves into trouble, but God was their king. These judges were very limited in their authority. Notice that Samuel includes himself as a judge.

Note – v. 10 – Baalim and Ashteroth - from our notes in chapter seven:

McArthur states that Baal represented the male sky god who fertilized the land (6:25, 28).¹ Baal and Baalim are used interchangeably. Baalim is a plural form of Baal. The idea is that there were many images and altars set up throughout Israel that had to be removed.

According to Ryrie, Ashteroth (plural form of Ashtereth) was the Canaanite fertility goddess and the female counterpart of Baal.² The worship of these gods of the Canaanites was a problem throughout the period of the judges:

"And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim: And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the LORD to anger. And they forsook the LORD, and served Baal and Ashtaroth." (Judges 2:11-13)

The plural Baals and Ashtoreths describe the many local shrines of those Canaanite nature deities. Baal, variously identified as son of El (chief of the Canaanite pantheon) or as son of Dagan (the Mesopotamian deity), was particularly recognized as the god of thunder and rain whose task was to make the earth fertile annually. Ashtoreth (or Astarte) was goddess of both love and war, as were her Babylonian and Greek counterparts Ishtar and Aphrodite respectively. She apparently functioned with Baal as a fertility deity and by their sexual union in some magical way the earth and all its life supposedly experienced annual rejuvenation and fruitfulness.³

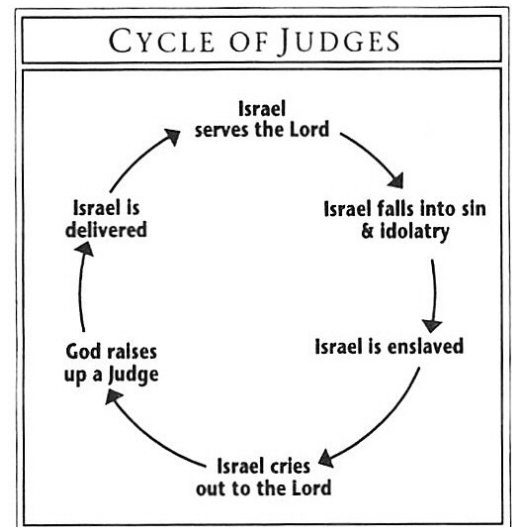
"Jerrubbaal" is another name for Gideon (Judges 7:1).

Notice the name, "Bedan." He was not mentioned anywhere in the Book of Judges, so he is either another judge that was not recorded there; or, "Bedan" is another name for one of the other judges; perhaps Barak.

The Hall of Faith, in Hebrews eleven, mentions some of these judges:

"And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets:"
(Hebrews 11:32)

The people no longer wanted to go through the cycle of Judges, they wanted a stronger leader, a king.



¹ John MacArthur Jr., ed., *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997), 387.

² Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *Ryrie Study Bible: King James Version*, Expanded ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1994), 438.

³ Eugene H. Merrill, "1 Samuel," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 438.

Note – When people cannot govern themselves, they will have to be governed by somebody else.

I sought for the greatness and genius of America in her commodious harbors and in her ample rivers, and it was not there.

I sought for the greatness and genius of America in her fertile fields and boundless forests, and it was not there.

I sought for the greatness and genius of America in her rich mines and her vast world commerce, and it was not there.

I sought for the greatness and genius of America in her public school system and her institutions of learning, and it was not there.

I sought for the genius and greatness of America in her democratic congress and her matchless constitution, and it was not there.

Not until I went into the churches of America and heard her pulpits flame with righteousness did I understand the secret of her genius and power.

America is great because America is good, and if America ever ceases to be good, America will cease to be great.

*Alexis de Tocqueville*⁴

Ronald Reagan said that if America ever forgets that she is one nation under God, then she will be a nation gone under.

Samuel's Rebuke of the Nation for Requiring a King (vs. 12 – 18)

While rebuking the nation for their rejection of the Lord as their king, he also assures them that if they obey the Lord and the king, God will bless them.

Samuel gives them one last sign that signifies that God is the one ultimately with all of the power. He causes it to rain. The time was the wheat harvest (late May to early June), and rain was unusual during this season. Samuel, like Elijah, could preach up a storm. God backed up Samuels words by causing this unusual thunder storm.

Samuel's Refusal to Relinquish His Prophetic Office (vs. 19 – 25)

In this final section, Samuel continues to encourage them to be faithful and warns them of the consequences for disobedience.

Though Samuel, or his boys, would no longer be in charge politically; Samuel promised to continue to minister to the spiritually. Notice that Samuel considered that a failure to pray would be a sin against the Lord.

Though Samuel's plan for Israel's leadership was rejected by the people, he still loves them, and he still promises to pray for them and minister to them.

⁴ Mark Water, *The New Encyclopedia of Christian Quotations* (Alresford, Hampshire: John Hunt Publishers Ltd, 2000), 35–36.