

1Samuel 12:1 ¶ And Samuel said unto all Israel, Behold, I have hearkened unto your voice in all that ye said unto me, and have made a king over you. 1Samuel 12:2 And now, behold, the king walketh before you: and I am old and grayheaded; and, behold, my sons *are* with you: and I have walked before you from my childhood unto this day.

Continuing the narrative from the previous chapter...

After reaffirming Saul as their king, Samuel basically announces his retirement as judge in Israel. They had demanded a king, a new leader, and he had given them one (according to the LORD's direction).

I think the NLT gives a better understanding of verse 2: *"I have selected him ahead of my own sons, and I stand here, an old, gray-haired man. I have served as your leader since I was a boy."*

1Samuel 12:3 Behold, here I *am*: witness against me before the LORD, and before his anointed: whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received *any* bribe to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it you. 1Samuel 12:4 And they said, Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken ought of any man's hand. 1Samuel 12:5 And he said unto them, The LORD *is* witness against you, and his anointed *is* witness this day, that ye have not found ought in my hand. And they answered, *He is* witness.

Samuel wants to be assured that the people recognize that he served them before the LORD to the best of his ability. He asked for a public declaration from anyone that could accuse him of abusing his position as the judge. If he had, he would readily rectify the matter.

The people assured Samuel that they knew he had served them honestly and faithfully.

Samuel responded by calling on the LORD as his witness along with Saul, the newly anointed king, to his faithful service to them before the LORD. The people acknowledged that witness.

1Samuel 12:6 ¶ And Samuel said unto the people, *It is* the LORD that advanced Moses and Aaron, and that brought your fathers up out of the land of Egypt. 1Samuel 12:7 Now therefore stand still, that I may reason with you before the LORD of all the righteous acts of the LORD, which he did to you and to your fathers.

Samuel remind them once again of how the LORD had provided for them as a nation by using Moses and Aaron to lead their ancestors out of bondage in Egypt. He called for them to listen as he reminded them of "all the righteous acts of the LORD" done on their behalf.

1Samuel 12:8 When Jacob was come into Egypt, and your fathers cried unto the LORD, then the LORD sent Moses and Aaron, which brought forth your fathers out of Egypt, and made them dwell in this place.

1Samuel 12:9 And when they forgat the LORD their God, he sold them into the hand of Sisera, captain of the host of Hazor, and into the hand of the Philistines, and into the hand of the king of Moab, and they fought against them.

1Samuel 12:10 And they cried unto the LORD, and said, We have sinned, because we have forsaken the LORD, and have served Baalim and Ashtaroth: but now deliver us out of the hand of our enemies, and we will serve thee.

1Samuel 12:11 And the LORD sent Jerubbaal, and Bedan, and Jephthah, and Samuel, and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side, and ye dwelled safe.

Samuel reiterated how the LORD had responded to the cries of their ancestors in Egypt and sent Moses and Aaron to lead them out of Egypt to take possession of Canaan. When they chose to reject the LORD, He gave them over to Sisera, captain of Hazor, and to the Philistines, and to the king of Moab. Every time that they called out to the LORD in repentance for turning to the false gods of their enemies, the LORD sent them deliverers, e.g., Jerubbaal, Bedan, Jephthah and Samuel. After those times of deliverance, they were able to dwell safely in the land (until rejecting the LORD once again).

Reminder: Jerubbaal = Gideon

JFB offers this note on the mention of Bedan as a judge: "The *Septuagint* reads "Barak"; and for "Samuel" some versions read "Samson," which seems more natural than that the prophet should mention himself to the total omission of the greatest of the judges."

Hebrews 11 would tend to support the above note since the same judges are noted.

Hebrews 11:32 "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...."

1Samuel 12:12 And when ye saw that Nahash the king of the children of Ammon came against you, ye said unto me, Nay; but a king shall reign over us: when the LORD your God *was* your king.

1Samuel 12:13 Now therefore behold the king whom ye have chosen, *and* whom ye have desired! and, behold, the LORD hath set a king over you.

Samuel noted that it was the threat of the attack of Nahash, king of Ammon, that prompted them to demand that Samuel give them a king. In doing so, they had basically rejected the LORD God as their king. He then pointed out Saul as the king they had wanted and that God had chosen.

1Samuel 12:14 If ye will fear the LORD, and serve him, and obey his voice, and

not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall both ye and also the king that reigneth over you continue following the LORD your God:
1Samuel 12:15 But if ye will not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall the hand of the LORD be against you, as *it was* against your fathers.

I can almost hear the longing in his heart as Samuel urges the people to fear the LORD and serve Him in obedience to His commandments. He urged both king and people to continue following the LORD “your” God. Samuel warned, however, that if they chose to rebel again the LORD and His commandments, they would experience His judgment just as surely as their fathers had.

1Samuel 12:16 ¶ Now therefore stand and see this great thing, which the LORD will do before your eyes.

1Samuel 12:17 *Is it* not wheat harvest to day? I will call unto the LORD, and he shall send thunder and rain; that ye may perceive and see that your wickedness *is* great, which ye have done in the sight of the LORD, in asking you a king.

1Samuel 12:18 So Samuel called unto the LORD; and the LORD sent thunder and rain that day: and all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel.

Samuel determined to make the people understand what a terrible thing they had done in demanding a human king, basically rejecting God as their king. He pointed out that it was time for the wheat harvest. He called out for the LORD to send thunder and rain to testify to the truth of his message, and He did.

Such evidence of the LORD’s anger against them provoked a healthy fear among the people toward the LORD and Samuel, His prophet.

The NIV Commentary added this insight: “Thunder represents thunder as the loud and powerful voice of God manifested in storms. The driving rain that often accompanied such thunder could be especially destructive to crops (and when it occurred unseasonably, it could leave those who depended on it destitute.”

1Samuel 12:19 And all the people said unto Samuel, Pray for thy servants unto the LORD thy God, that we die not: for we have added unto all our sins *this* evil, to ask us a king.

The people asked for Samuel to pray for them to the LORD “thy” God that they not die. They knew they deserved to because of their wickedness in asking for a king. They had been ready to kill those that refused to follow Saul in light of their victory against Nahash. The LORD had proven Himself to them in so many other ways, yet they had rejected Him as their king. They knew that they deserved no less than they had determined against those who had rejected a human king.

1Samuel 12:20 And Samuel said unto the people, Fear not: ye have done all this wickedness: yet turn not aside from following the LORD, but serve the

LORD with all your heart;

1Samuel 12:21 And turn ye not aside: for *then should ye go after vain things, which cannot profit nor deliver; for they are vain.*

1Samuel 12:22 For the LORD will not forsake his people for his great name's sake: because it hath pleased the LORD to make you his people.

Samuel reassured them that they would not die. If they would choose to follow the LORD and serve Him with all their heart, He would not forsake them. They should remember that nothing and no other false god was worth the consequences of turning away from the LORD.

Samuel told the people that the LORD would not forsake His people because He was jealous for the honor of His name. He had made an unconditional covenant with Abraham, and the other nations knew that He was the LORD God of Israel; He had chosen them as His special possession among the nations.

Genesis 17:6–8 “And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.”

Deuteronomy 7:6 “For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.”

1Samuel 12:23 Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way:

1Samuel 12:24 Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great *things* he hath done for you.

1Samuel 12:25 But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king.

Samuel declared that he would never sin against the LORD by refusing to pray for His people. He was determined to teach them what was good and right. That teaching could be summed up on one statement, the beautiful promise in verse 24, and I believe is applicable to every child of God.

My thoughts as I look at the Hebrew: Only fear and reverence the LORD, YHWH, the self-existent eternal God. They were to serve Him as bondslaves, slaves by choice. They were to serve Him in truth, with confidence and faithfulness. They were to serve Him with all their heart, with every bit of their understanding, with a tender heart—not a hard heart. They should serve Him out of love and gratitude for all He had done for them.

I don't think I had thought of not praying for my brothers and sisters in Jesus as a sin, but I think that is the principle being stated by Samuel. My heart's desire is

to be an effective prayer warrior, but it is an area in which I greatly struggle. Please, LORD, help me to pray more consistently and fervently for my whole spiritual family.