

1st Samuel

Lesson 19

(c) Those Who the LORD will Not Abandon (12:22)

Continuing with the principle he just laid out, Samuel addresses those the LORD will not abandon. Verse 22.

“For the LORD will not abandon His people on account of His great name, because the LORD has been pleased to make you a people for Himself.” (12:22)

The people of Israel were a family that was special to the LORD. Throughout the rest of the Bible, we will see a term come into use that calls them the *elect* people of God. To be part of the *elect*, you must be in the bloodline of Jacob. You must be a Jew. Why? Because a Jew is in the bloodline that the LORD selected to be His family. As His family, He made promises and covenants with them that He will keep. His family will one day be the premier nation of the world, but that will not occur until He is the King of the world, reigning from Jerusalem after the time of Israel’s troubles are over. In the four hundred years following this point in the storyline, the future trouble and rescue of God’s elect people, the Jews, will be developed and recorded in the pages of the prophets of Israel. But even at this point in the story, the people had already heard hints about that time because every seven years, in the sabbatical year, they heard the last song that Moses had written, which foretold Israel’s future until the reign of the LORD as King on the earth. It included Israel’s trouble, often called Jacob’s trouble. We, as part of the Church today, are not part of the *elect* described in the Bible. Some have taken the stance that the Church has replaced the nation of Israel, but that would mean that the LORD had abandoned His people, their bloodline, His family. He has not abandoned them at all. It was His pleasure to make Israel His family, and He will not abandon His family or the covenant and promises He made to them and them alone. He will fulfill His promises because of His great name. He knows His people are sinners. All people are sinners. But even as sinners, He has provided a way for people to take a different path in life and receive a different outcome full of His blessings.

(d) Those Who Samuel Will Pray (12:23)

Continuing, Samuel points the finger at himself with another important principle. He is speaking about those who Samuel will pray for. Verse 23.

“Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by ceasing to pray for you; but I will instruct you in the good and right way.” (12:23)

Here is the principle Samuel pointed at himself. Because we all sin, Samuel did not want to be a sinner by not praying for someone who asked for prayer. That principle is profound. How often have we been asked to pray for someone, and we said “yes,” but we never really prayed for them. That, my friends, is a sin against the LORD. Samuel knew it. We should know it too.

But Samuel added a caveat to the principle. When someone asked for prayer, he had the right to speak into their lives. But there was even a caveat to the caveat. What Samuel said when he spoke into their lives, it had to be *“the good and right way,”* not evil and the wrong way. How did Samuel know *“the good and right way?”* The answer to that was easy. The LORD had already laid out for Samuel, as well as the rest of the Israelites, *“the good and right way”* through Moses’ writings. It was all they needed to know the *“good and right way.”* The people of Israel had their instruction in this area from the very beginning. When Joshua became the leader, he did not change a thing, and the people experienced the untold and wonderful blessings of the LORD because Joshua led the people under the leadership of the LORD as the King of Israel. When Joshua died, the people did not continue

to read the words of Moses and keep the LORD as their king. The people had all they needed to keep the LORD as their King, but they abandoned Him for other false gods. All Samuel had to do to instruct the people in “*the good and right way*” was to instruct the people in the information passed down from the writings of Moses.

(e) Those Who Samuel Warns (12:24-25)

What was in the writing of Moses? They contained warnings and blessings. The blessings came to the people because they took to heart the warnings. We come to those who Samuel warns in his last statement to the people at Gilgal, which included the new King Saul. It is not a new statement by far. It has been said to the people in one way or another since the time of Moses but this time with an added caveat because the people had a human king that needed to be included in the warning. Samuel said in verse 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, both you and your king will be swept away.*” (12:24-25)

Over the next four hundred years, prophets of the LORD will come and warn Israel of their continued wickedness and how the LORD will sweep them away if they do not change their hearts and yearn for Him and Him alone, but, in the end, all their prophecies will be to no avail. Their prophecies will have a point and be purposeful. Their point and purpose will be the LORD’s intention that He warned the people again and again through His prophecy as a witness until the people had been warned enough and they were without excuse for the paths in their lives they have chosen to take instead of following the LORD and His clear instruction given through Moses. Finally, about two hundred and fifty years in the future, from this point in the story, Israel will begin to be swept away with her kings and lose possession of the Promised Land. It will happen in stages. By four hundred years in the future, from this point in the story, all of Israel will be swept away along with its kings, and not one Jew will own a single piece of land given to his family in the Promised Land by Moses and Joshua. Why will they lose the land? It will be because the people of Israel will forget the LORD, forget His warnings, and do “*wickedly*.”

Chapter 13

b) The Timing for the Confirmation of Saul (13:1)

The writer continued the storyline of King Saul’s second consecration as the King of Israel with the support of all the people at Gilgal. Specifically, the writer will tell us the timing for the confirmation of Saul and his first two years. Chapter 13, verse 1.

“*Saul was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty two years over Israel.*” (13:1)

This verse is not without controversy and difficulty in the way it is presented in this and some other English versions and translations. For these lessons, the Scripture verses and passages are always totally in *italics*. However, in your Bibles, the Scripture verses and passages are always in regular text. When the translations are done, it sometimes becomes necessary to add English words to allow the translation to make sense to the English readers. In the preface or forward material at the front of most Bibles, the committee members who made the revisions or translations provide a list of markings that you will find in the text that indicated their changes to the original. Chapter 13, verse 1 in your Bible, will probably read like the following.

“Saul was *thirty* years old when he began to reign, and he reigned *forty* two years over Israel.” (13:1)

You will notice that the words *thirty* and *forty* are in *italics*. In the forward of the NASV, which I am using, the committee members tell us that any word in the text in *italics* is not found in the oldest

and most reliable Hebrew or Greek manuscripts. It also tells us that these *italicized* words are put in the text by the committee members to help interpret the intent of the text. In many places, the committee members help us with these added words. However, here, in this verse, the added words hurt us.” As stated in a previous lesson, we do not know exactly how old Saul was when he became king. There are those scholars who look to this altered verse and say Saul was thirty years old when he became king. But, those same scholars him-haw around with the last part of the verse that says he ruled for forty-two years because, in other places in the Bible, we are told that he ruled for just forty years. Then, with the discoveries of the Dead Sea Scrolls and additional ancient copies of 1st Samuel, it has become clear that this verse did not originally include the words *thirty and forty*.

The literal translation of Hebrew into English should read as follows. “*One year Saul had reigned, and when two years he had reigned over Israel.*”