

8454U

NEW ZEALAND SUMMER SCHOOL - 1993

SAMUEL THE SEER

Speaker: Bro. Roger Lewis

Study 3: Samuel called and Yahweh sent thunder and rain

Reading: 1 Samuel 11:12 to 12:25

Brother chairman, my dear brethren and sisters in the Lord Jesus Christ. You'll remember then in our last study yesterday, we looked at the way in which Samuel so remarkably supported the appointment of Saul to the office of kingship. We suggested that Samuel probably knew from the outset, that here was a man who wasn't really noted for his remarkable spiritual dimensions. Saul was not one who moved in the first of religious circles, as it were, he was never a man of great spiritual depth, and we believe that Samuel would have only needed one meeting with Saul to have appreciated that! Yet what we found was the extent to which Samuel supported Saul was almost **embarrassing** and the reason why was because he knew that it was the Father's will. The amazing lesson that came out of that story was that here was a man that despite his own feelings, despite Samuel's own feelings that perhaps Samuel wasn't the best of choices, that once he knew that the divine endorsement rested upon this man, then he supported that appointment absolutely and completely. In other words, he was **prepared to subordinate his own feelings in order that that which was best for the truth might be served**. It's a wonderful lesson for us in ecclesial life, isn't it? I think all of us have experienced times in ecclesial life where something happens; well, it's not our particular feeling that it should go that way; but for the sake of the truth, there are times when it's best for us to subordinate our own feelings in order that the truth may be best served. That's what Samuel does on this occasion.

Well, we're going to skip over the details of the actual election of Saul to the kingship and the coronation ceremony that occurs at the end of the 10th chapter, and we're come now to the record that we've had read for us this morning, beginning at chapter 11 verse 12, which really runs through to the end of the 12th chapter. This we might really term SAMUEL'S RESIGNATION SPEECH; here now the old man is about to formally hand over the reigns of government. He's about to abdicate responsibility, as it were, and offer now the responsibility to Saul in a formal way. This is his **farewell speech to the nation**, and remember, it's not just a farewell speech, it's the speech of an **old man** who's grown old in the ways of the truth. So we would expect that what Samuel will speak about in this chapter, are those things that he counts as the **most important** to understand in all the aspects of the truth. Here's Samuel's last chance to spiritually affect the nation in certain ways, his last chance to address the nation on

what he really believes to be the really vital issues of the truth. Samuel is an old man who has experienced life, all his life, in the ways of the truth; we need to see this speech from that point of view. Well, then, we come to the 12th verse of chapter 11, and the record says, 'And the people said unto Samuel, Who is he that said, Shall Saul reign over us? bring the men, that we may put them to death. And Saul said, There shall not a man be put to death this day: for today Yahweh hath wrought salvation in Israel'. That was a good spirit, wasn't it? by the way, in terms of Saul at this particular time of his life, he attributed the victory that he'd just gained against the Ammonites to the hand of God in their midst.

So we're told in the 14th verse, 'Then said Samuel to the people, Come and let us go to Gilgal', come and let us go to Gilgal, now why to Gilgal? Well, I think there were several reasons; first of all, we're told in chapter 13 verse 4, just over the page, and we might just take a look at that, perhaps verse 3 for connection, 'Jonathan smote the garrison of the Philistines that was in Geba, and the Philistines heard of it. And Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying Let the Hebrews hear. And all Israel heard say that Saul had smitten a garrison of the Philistines, and that Israel also was had in abomination with the Philistines. And the people were called together after Saul to Gilgal'. You see, **Gilgal** was as far away from the Philistines as one could possibly get, it was right down in the heart of the Jordan valley. Right away from the coastal land dominance of the Philistines on the other side of the land. The Philistines were on the coastal plain, one came up the plateau, the Judean plateau, Gilgal is down the other side and deep into the heart of the Jordan valley. Gilgal was one of the furthestmost points away from the enemy of the Philistines, from the danger of the Philistines. So perhaps that was one of the reasons why Samuel called Israel together to Israel to Gilgal on this occasion, back in 1 Samuel 11 verse 14, because there was a place of relative physical safety for the nation to assemble together in order that they might hear his farewell address.

But perhaps there was another reason as well, because remember that Joshua 5 verse 10 tells us, that it was at Gilgal that the nation had made a new start before their God as they entered into the Land. There in Gilgal, Israel had made a **fresh start**, the beginnings of their inheritance of the Land, and they marked out that occasion by the circumcision of Gilgal and the rolling away of the principles of the flesh. So it's almost as if, Samuel says, 'let's go back, let's go back to where the nation first began again at Gilgal, when the nation first pledged themselves to the faithful service of God, as they entered into the Land'. Let's go back, says Samuel, and capture that spirit again.' Now we know that, because when we read verse 14 here, it says, 'Let us go to Gilgal and **renew the kingdom there**'. And you see again, just by the proper and careful emphasis of the verse, that was obviously the intention of Samuel on this occasion. Let's go back to Gilgal and **renew** the kingdom, where it all began, let's start again! The word 'renew' means 'to rebuild' (2318), you know, there's a lovely spirit here in Samuel because here's an old man about to hand the reins of government over to someone else, and yet Samuel was ever one to see the opportunity for the positive work of rebuilding Israel, even if it was the very moment of his own resignation. He so desired

that which might be good for his people; so he says, 'come on, let's go back to where it all began, let's start again, shall we? let's take this opportunity to renew ourselves and start again, with the opportunity you have now with the new king that stands before you'.

So verse 15 tells us, 'And all the people went to Gilgal; and there they made Saul king before Yahweh in Gilgal; and there they sacrificed sacrifices of peace offerings before Yahweh'. Interesting thing actually, a couple of interesting things about the peace offerings: first of all, peace offerings were **always offered with leaven**, and the lesson of that is, that the peace offering, which of course, stands for the idea of **fellowship with God**, the fact that they were always offered with leaven tells us that our fellowship with God is never on the basis of human perfection! What fellowship we do find with God is never founded on the principle of human perfection; far from it! there was always **leaven** offered with those offerings. The second interesting thing about the peace offering in this context was, that the fat of the peace offering was never burnt alone, it was always burnt with something else. The thing that was always burnt with it was, **the fat of another offering**. Does anyone know what the offering was? it was always burnt **with the fat of the burnt offering**, in fact, what happened was, the fat of the peace offering was lifted and placed on **top of the fat of the burnt offering**, and always burnt in that way. Now what that's telling us, of course, well what does the burnt offering stand for? **the principle of dedication**, doesn't it? To me, anyway, one of the lessons of the peace offering therefore was that the Father is pleased to extend fellowship to those who despite their sinfulness (leaven is always present) are prepared to dedicate themselves to Him, (the burning of the fat). God is pleased to accept us on that basis! Of course, in our Romans studies, we are seeing in a bit more detail, the exact details on which God is pleased for us to approach unto Him in order that we might have that fellowship. But here in the essence of the Law and the offering of peace offerings, was that principle, and I think Samuel wanted to bring that idea before the nation. 'Of course, we're sinners, he said, all of us, but if we're only prepared to repledge ourselves in dedication and to renew the kingdom, we can find fellowship with Almighty God. Let's go back and start again', says Samuel.

Do you see at the end of the verse it says, 'and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly'. Actually, the Septuagint translation changes the word 'Saul' and for Saul reads 'Samuel', so the Septuagint translation says, 'and there **Samuel** and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly', I'm not suggesting that that's necessarily a better translation because I don't know, but the one thing I do know is that I believe that that would be true; that Samuel genuinely rejoiced with Israel on that occasion, at the appointment of another man, a lesser man, a weaker man, an inferior man to take over from him, and yet Samuel rejoiced with all of Israel. You see, there was no hateful spirit of envy in Samuel, was there? There was no spirit of bitterness that he'd been displaced, no feeling of malice towards the nation that they pass over him in favour of someone else. Samuel was never really worried about his own position, he was worried about that which would be good for his nation. When he takes them down to Gilgal, his own heart rejoiced greatly as they offered those peace offerings together and **renewed**

themselves before Yahweh. Now he's going to begin his speech which we're going to look at in chapter 12.

Now I'm already running behind time, so I'm going to say now that we're not going to be able to get through all of this speech because it's a wonderful chapter, this one, but it needs a little more time. So what we're going to do and perhaps we should provide a chapter breakdown; we've exhorted about the need for an overview last night, so let's first of all, just break up the chapter a little further, and then what we're going to do is have a look at one or two of the sections in detail, capture the essence of the argument for the rest, and then to expect a couple of exhortations, out of the life of Samuel himself in the balance of the story.

Alright! a breakdown first of all!

- Verses 1 to 5 Samuel's claim of integrity.
- Verses 6 to 11 Lessons from the epoch of the judges.
- Verses 12 and 13 Israel's sin in seeking a king. That's a particular point that Samuel makes in the middle of his resignation speech.
- Verses 14 and 15 followed by verses 20 to 25  
Samuel's counsel for king and people.
- Verses 16 to 19 The lesson of the thunder - this is a separate little aside in the middle of the counsel that he gives to the nation.

So here we have then, a broad outline of Samuel's resignation speech. First, he's going to press his own integrity, then he's going to take them back to the story of the judges and to the lessons that they needed to learn from that era of the nation; because remember he's the last judge. They've come now to the end of the epoch of the judges and Samuel says, 'I want you to learn the lesson of that epoch before you move forward'. Then he presses their sin in seeking for a king, and then proceeds to give them counsel on what he really believes are the key issues of the truth, followed by a practical illustration in the middle of his story, to impress upon them the lessons that he wanted them to learn.

So let's come back then to verse 1 now, and we begin this first section; we're going to perhaps look at one of these sections in detail and we might just choose this first one here, verses 1 to 5, Samuel's claim of integrity. So we're told in verse 1, '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'. Is that really what he'd done? Do you think that's really what Samuel had really done? lets' change the emphasis, you know there's so much that all of us can achieve in our bible study, just by changing the emphasis, anyone can do this, it's not a special secret, just change the emphasis and see how it changes the outlook! Let me read it to you again. 'And Samuel said unto all Israel, **behold, I have hearkened unto your voice**, in all that you said unto me', is that really what Samuel did? if you think that he didn't do that, then what did he do? If he didn't really hearken to the people's voice, then what did he do? **he hearkened to God!** yes! and that's the

whole lesson of this story! in fact, I might make a slight digression on this right now.

You know, there's been some disagreement or some doubt as to the meaning of Samuel's name. I believe that it does mean 'heard of God', in other words it's 'shama-El' (8050, 8085 + 410) 'shama' = hearing or heard and El, but Strong's tells us in the particular form in which it's found in Samuel's own name, that 'shama' is in the passive, so instead of 'shama-El' (hear God) it's in the passive, it's not 'hear God, it's **'heard of God'**, and I believe that those were the two watch words of Samuel's life; **hear God, heard of God**, and because Samuel **always listened to God's voice** whenever it rang in his ear, in turn, when he prayed to the Father, **God always heard Samuel's voice**. Those were the two pillars as it were of Samuel's life in the truth, hearing God and being heard of God. When he says in chapter 12 verse 1, 'I have hearkened unto your voice', look, he didn't really hearken to the voice of the people, it was because **God had told him** to appoint a king; we're told in chapter 8, 3 times that God said, 'hearken to their voice', but he didn't do it because of the people, he did it because God told him to, and that was ever Samuel's principle for life, I think Samuel is an 'all or nothing' man, you know, he was very reluctant to move in this matter, but once he's decided that God has spoken, then he gives **everything** he can to that cause, and that's a wonderful spirit for the truth. He's absolutely focussed in what he does, once he's convinced that God has spoken in the matter.

So he says in the second verse, 'And now, behold, the king walketh before you: and I am old and gray headed: and, behold, my sons are with you', so he says in the 2nd verse here, I'm **old and gray headed**, actually that's interesting ! Just a couple of interesting references with regard to that, Proverbs 16 (we might just look at these ones actually because they're quite good cross-references) Proverbs 16 verse 31, I am old and grey headed, 'The hoary head is a **crown of glory**, if it be found in the way of righteousness. So the hoary head, and by the way, the word 'hoary' (7872) here comes from the same root word in the Hebrew when Samuel talks about being 'gray headed' (7867); to be gray headed and to be hoary headed is drawn from the same word in the Hebrew. So to be gray headed was to have the experience of life that others would look up to, the hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness; and surely if ever there was a gray headed man of whom the proverb could be said, it was Samuel here, a man who had always been found in the way of righteousness.

If you come back to Leviticus 19, we're told there in verse 32, another phrase with regard to the hoary head; 'Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, **and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God**: I am Yahweh', thou shalt rise up before the hoary head and honour the face of an old man, so I think the first thing is that when Samuel says, I'm old and gray headed that he's first of all saying, 'now look, I've got the experience and the maturity in life, that you ought to pay attention to my words. What I'm going to say comes from the experience of life in the way of righteousness. You ought to listen to what I'm about to say; you ought to respect me, you ought to rise up before the hoary head! I think that's the first thing, when Samuel says here that I'm old and gray headed.

But here's the second point, come and have a look at Psalm 71 and firstly verse 9. This is a psalm of David in his old age, interestingly enough, as he's about to pass the reigns of government over to Solomon, it's one of the prayers uttered by David at the time when Solomon takes over the government from David. He says in verse 9, 'Cast me not off in the time of old age: forsake me not when my strength faileth. Verse 18, 'Now also when I am old and gray headed, O God, forsake me not; **until I have showed thy strength unto this generation**, and thy power to every one that is to come'. Don't you get the idea there that the idea of being old and gray headed in this passage is a man who is truly feeling the failing of his powers? Verse 9, '**forsake me not when my strength faileth**, when I'm old and gray headed', so you see, I think there were 2 things that Samuel was thinking on when he said these words: first of all, that the nation ought to respect him, but secondly, that he really does feel that sense of age hanging heavily upon him now. In fact, it was his age that had caused him to appoint his sons as judges, wasn't it? when Samuel was old, he made his sons judges.

If you come back to 1 Samuel 12 now and verse 2, look what he does say about his sons here, by the way. Verse 2, 'And now, behold, the king walketh before you: and I am old and gray headed; and, behold, my sons are with you', now that could mean that he's so old that he's got sons that have grown up to maturity; it doesn't seem to be very clear in the Hebrew what the phrase means, it just says 'my sons are with you', but another suggestion that's been made and I actually think it's a good one, is that what the phrase means here is that Samuel had deprived his sons from their office as judges. In other words, what he'd done was he had reduced his sons to the level of the common people; my sons are with you, they are back amidst the simply common people. You see, the one thing that Samuel would never forget is that the ground of Eli's judgment was, not just that his sons made themselves vile, but that he, Eli, had restrained them not! Samuel might have sons that had misbehaved but there's no way that Samuel would not do anything about that, so that the suggestion has been made that this phrase, behold my sons are with you, is Samuel's way of saying, well, my sons may not have grown up like I have, but they certainly haven't been left in those positions of responsibility; I have removed them from public office and they are reduced now to simply being amongst the common people, perhaps even left for the nation to judge, as they saw fit.

So he says therefore, at the end of the verse 2, 'And I, I have walked before you from my childhood unto this day', **from my childhood unto this day**, from a little boy to an old man, he'd walked before the nation. So what he's really claiming in this second verse here, is the **consistency of his life**. The absolute consistency of his life in the truth, and so he says in verse 3, 'Behold, here I am; witness against me before Yahweh, and before His anointed (Saul): whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? of whom have I oppressed'. Whose ass have I taken? he says, do you know where that comes from? it's quite interesting actually! If you come back to Numbers 16 for a moment, this is a bible echo, and it's not too hard to find the echo because it's in your marginal references, so some good bible echoes

are given to us already in our margins, all we've got to do is read our margin. Now what's Numbers 16 all about? Numbers 16 is all about the challenge to the leadership of Moses by Korah and Dathan and Abiram. You'll remember, in fact, that Moses had been appointed as leader and Korah came along and he says, 'Look, there's lots of other people with capability, why should you be leading the nation?' and of course, the silly thing about that was that Moses never lead the nation because he thought that he should lead the nation, in fact, most of the great leaders of scriptural times never ever wanted to lead at all; **God put them there!** Korah comes along and says, 'there's lots of other people with ability, you know!' That really hurt Moses, it really stung Moses the challenge of this chapter; we're told in Numbers 16 verse 15, 'And Moses was very wroth, and said unto Yahweh, Respect not Thou their offering: I have not taken one ass from them, said Moses'. He keenly felt the pain of that challenge and more particularly, the injustice of what had been suggested and the way in which his character and his integrity had been imbued and that's actually how Samuel feels on this occasion, as he's about to hand over the reins of government as an old man, 'whose ass have I taken, cries Samuel? and draws his phrase straight from the life of Moses, one of the great trailblazers of old. Actually, there's an interesting twist to this story, because who was challenging Moses? the answer is Korah, and here in 1 Samuel 12 verse 3, Samuel calls, whose ass have I taken? If you want to take a note of Numbers 26 verse 11 and 1 Chronicles 6 verses 22 to 28, you'll find that Samuel was of the line of Korah; how funny how the circle of life turns full around!

So in 1 Samuel 12 verse 3 he goes on to say, '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 to you?' and those particular words, of course, are really based on the principle of Deuteronomy 16 verse 19, **that a judge was not allowed to accept bribes!** Remember that passage? a judge was not allowed to accept bribes because it would compromise the integrity of his work. So what Samuel is really claiming here is his **purity as a judge**. I've been pure all my life from accepting anything that might compromise the impartiality of my judgment; and he offers it in the form of a challenge, doesn't he? He says, 'you show me one thing I've taken and I'll restore it to you'. Then in verse 4 they said, 'Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken aught of any man's hand', so the people are a witness to his claim, that he was absolutely a man of integrity of character. You know, there's not one single thing recorded in the record against Samuel, **not one single thing recorded** against the life of Samuel. He was a man of absolute integrity of character!

So he says again in verse 5, 'Yahweh is witness against you, and His anointed is witness this day, that ye have not found ought of my hand', so you see, the overall spirit of this section is, that Samuel claims **absolute integrity of character**; you haven't found anything of my hand, and so much so that at the end of verse 5 it says, 'they answered (do you notice the words 'he is' is in italics) so he says, you haven't found anything ought at my hand, and they simply said, 'witness'. You can almost see the old prophet there, thundering these words at them, his eyes flashing and his Nazarite locks streaming there, as he stands before the nation in Gilgal and says, 'you haven't found a

thing of my hand'; and they say, NO! Witness! because they hadn't! they absolutely hadn't, he was a man of absolute **consistency**, a man of **purity**, and man of **integrity**! You see, these are not the words of pride, b&s, they are the challenge of one who knows that that's simply how he's lived his life, and he wanted to make that point because the words that follow were going to be his farewell speech and he wanted them to listen to him with absolute respect for what he was. But he's going to impart to them in this chapter the lessons which he believes are the most vital ones to be learnt for life in the truth. It's interesting actually, just have a look ! So Samuel says, 'I am old and gray headed and I've walked before you from my childhood unto this day. Whose ox have I taken or whose ass have I taken, and whom have I defrauded and whom have I oppressed and of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes? **Yahweh is witness and His anointed is witness this day**, that ye have not found ought of my hand'.

Along comes a man later on in the New Testament record; here's another one of those trailblazers, the apostle Paul, and there comes a moment in the apostle's life when he's about to give a farewell speech to a group of people that he's probably not going to see ever again. Does anyone know where that is, by the way? Acts 20! Paul's farewell speech to the elders of Ephesus. So the trailblazer of the New Testament went back in heart and in mind and in spirit to Samuel's farewell speech. Where else could he turn? where better place could Paul turn? and this is what Paul says in his farewell speech in Acts 20; whereas Samuel had said, 'I'm old and gray headed and I've walked before you from childhood until old age', Paul says, 'I've been with you in all seasons serving the Lord' (Acts 20 verse 18 and 19); 'ye all among whom I've gone, I've walked before you', said Samuel. And Paul on this occasion claims the same spirit of consistency in his walk in the truth. Samuel said, 'who's found anything that I've ever taken as a bribe to compromise my spirit?'; and Paul says in Acts 20 verses 33 and 35, 'I have coveted no man's silver or gold, or apparel, yea, ye yourselves know that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me', and he claims in the same way that he's never ever profited from his work, never compromised the spirit of his work. Whereas Samuel had said that Yahweh is witness this day that ye have not found ought at my hand', the apostle Paul says, 'Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure' (Acts 20 verse 26). It's all out of the life of Samuel, isn't it? as one great trailblazer gives his farewell speech, he quotes from Samuel! that's a bible echo, b&s. That's a bible echo, where one man draws on the voice of the past because he's in the same circumstance, he wanted to impress the people with the same principles.

Samuel the **upright**! you know, that's a great exhortation for today, isn't it? because **integrity of principle** is almost a lost thing these days, isn't it? we're living in an age when integrity is no longer seen or counted as important, and there are many circumstances in life where Christadelphians are brought into circumstances where our integrity is tested. Matters where we could compromise our honesty, just a little; where our purity of thought could be tested, where our consistency of practice could be tested. We live in a world that ridicules the idea of integrity, but that was Samuel's rule to life, and nobody in the nation could judge him, that he had been anything other than,



absolutely consistent all his life; it's a wonderful principle for us to aspire to in our lives in the truth, **integrity of character**. So Samuel opens his speech by pleading before the nation, that acknowledgement from them, that in all the years over which he had had responsibility over them as a judge, that he at all times lived by those principles in his life!

So he says now in the 6th verse, 'Now Samuel said unto the people, It is Yahweh that advanced Moses and Aaron, and that brought your fathers up out of the land of Egypt. Now therefore stand still, that I may reason with you before Yahweh of all the righteous acts of Yahweh, which he did to you and to your fathers'. Actually, do you see the words '**righteous acts**' there, in the margin the word is '**righteousness or righteous benefits**', but you'll notice there's a cross reference to Judges 5 (we're not going to turn it up but I believe that Samuel uses that word for a reason) because you see, this section you'll remember, we've entitled, verses 6 to 11, 'lessons from the epoch of the judges'. What Samuel does now, having claimed his personal integrity before the nation, he says, 'now what I want to do, is I want to take you back to the lesson now, of the epoch of the judges', (which is now just come to an end, by the way, with the resignation of Samuel). I mean, this is really an epoch making moment, isn't it? The era of the judges closes this day, because Samuel formally steps down as the last judge with this speech in Gilgal, now is the time to review the lesson of the period or epoch of the judges, and that's what he's going to do in these verses.

Well, let's just summarize it because it's going to save us a little bit of time; we might just pick out one or two of the key words. You'll notice verse 10, 'they cried unto Yahweh and said, We have sinned, because we have forsaken Yahweh; verse 11, 'And Yahweh sent Jerubbaal, and Bedan, and Jephthah, and Samuel, **and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies**', now what he's actually talking about in these verses, is what's come to be known as '**the cycle of the judges**'; and this is the lesson that Samuel says you've got to learn. He says, you've got to learn the lesson of what went on in the epoch of the judges because we went round and round this cycle many times. This cycle is referred to in Judges 2, 1 Samuel 12 here, Nehemiah 9 and in Psalm 106, and what the cycle says quite simply is, **that the nation sinned; they refused to hearken to God** and as a result of that, and as a result of them drifting away from the principles of the truth, then **God sent oppressors** that oppressed the nation bitterly, and they experienced the suffering that came upon them as a result of their sin. Then eventually, the suffering would grow so bad that **they cried unto God that He might deliver them** and we're told in the record of Judges that **God heard their cries and God sent deliverers**. So the simple lesson of the judges was and I think this is why Samuel takes them back to this epoch, he says, 'look, life in the truth really is very simple, you've got to remember just two things; this is the whole story of the judges says Samuel, if only you can see this! because if you can't see this, then having a king won't help you anymore! The lesson is **sin inevitably brings suffering!** and **supplication brings salvation!** Now says Samuel, that's the whole story of the judges: if you sin you will suffer whether you have a king to reign over you or not will make no difference to these principles, but if you seek God and you supplicate Him and

you cry unto Him, God has always been faithful to hear the cries of His servants; He's a God of compassion who will repeatedly respond to the cries of His servants and the nation experienced that over and over again, in the story of the judges and they went round that cycle endlessly, didn't they? for hundreds of years. Now if you can't learn that lesson, says Samuel, then you'll still have distress in life!

Actually, just another aside! verse 11, it says there, 'And Yahweh sent Jerubbaal, and Bedan, and Jephthah and Samuel', so obviously there are 4 men here, 4 deliverers from the epoch of the judges, who are used in a representative sense, we might say: who was Jerubbaal, by the way? he was Gideon, and we're told in Judges 6 verse 33 and Judges 7 verses 22 and 23, that Jerubbaal or Gideon delivered Israel from the hand of the **Midianites**. Does anyone know where the Midianites came from? they came from the **south**, the Midianites came from the south. Then it says, 'and he sent Bedan', now there is no such judge as Bedan but the Septuagint translation, the Syriac Peshitta version and the Arabic translation which are used by the Jerusalem bible, by the Amplified, by the RV, by a number of translations, read the word '**Barak**' for Bedan, and the interesting thing about Barak is that he delivered Israel from the hand of the Canaanites, Judges 4 verses 22 to 24, and where do the Canaanites come from? and the answer is, in the days of the judges the Canaanites dwelt to the **north**, because their capital was Hazor and Hazor was to the very north of Israel and so Barak delivered Israel from the hand of the Canaanite which was their great enemy to the north of the land.

Then it says, 'God sent Jephthah', now what enemy did Jephthah deliver Israel from? and the answer is the Ammonites in Judges 11 verses 32 to 33; Jephthah delivered Israel from the Ammonites. Where did the Ammonites come from? they came from the **east**. And then it says, 'And Yahweh sent Samuel', and we're told in 1 Samuel 7 verse 13, that Samuel delivered Israel from the hand of the Philistines; where did the Philistines come from? the Philistines came from the **west**; and do you see what the rest of the verse goes on to say? 'and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies **on every side**'. There they were, north south, east, west, Yahweh delivered in every possible way, from every geographical point of the compass on every side, 'and ye dwelt safe', says Samuel, and so they would if they had learnt the lesson of the judges that **sin brings suffering, but that seeking God will bring salvation**. So then, the judges here were the divine deliverers that were sent by God.

Then in verses 12 and 13, he says, 'Well, you've asked for a king and in doing so, says Samuel, I want you to know that you've sinned!' When you saw that Nahash the king of the children of Ammon came against you, you said unto me, 'Nay, but a king shall reign over us': when Yahweh your God was your King. Now therefore behold the king whom (and this is how Rotherham's translates it) whom **ye** have chosen and whom **ye** have desired'. As well in Rotherham's translation those two **ye**'s are emphasized in the Hebrew text. So the point has been all along, hasn't it? that although Yahweh chose Saul, he was really the people's choice, Yahweh simply gave the nation what they wanted, 'behold the king, whom ye had chosen and whom ye have set over you', but

the king that they received was the king of their own desires. So Samuel says, 'the great sin of all of that was you asked for that when Yahweh your God was your King'. So he says, you can have a king if you like, God's given you a king, but if you don't understand certain fundamental principles of the truth, then you won't be any better or any happier or any more prosperous under the reign of the kings, than you have been under earlier dispensations.

So now he sets about to counsel the nation from verse 14 onwards to the end of verse 25, on what really are the important issues in life, and because I see that I'm really going to run short on time, I'm going to jump the gun again and go straight to this; I'm just going to give you a summary of the key ideas that come out of these verses, Samuel's counselling of the nation. So here he is, SAMUEL THE COUNSELLOR!

Now this is what Samuel says in essence in these verses, just ignoring the ones in between, verses 16 to 19, about the matter of the thunder. Here's the counsel from Samuel: He says the most important thing is **to fear God and to serve Him**. He says, that's what I've learnt, if you want the sum total of my life in the truth, now that I'm old and gray headed, I'll tell you now what the essence of the truth is all about; **you fear God and serve Him**.

Verse 14, and that means that you've got to learn to **obey His voice, and not to rebel** against the commandments of God; you've got to obey the voice of God, that's what it means to serve Him. When God speaks, it should be done, says Samuel! So often in the truth we have issues come before us, where we probably know what the truth requires, and it really is the voice of God speaking to us, **but we don't want to do it!** You can't do that, says Samuel, serving God and fearing Him **means obeying His voice**, and he says, I want you to know this, **your service has got to be absolute!** I want you to service God with **ALL** your heart. There's no point being Sunday morning Christadelphians, either the truth is the truth in which case it demands our lives, or it isn't! But if you believe it's the truth, says Samuel, then we must serve Him with all our heart; the truth is an all encompassing principle that embraces us in entirety, and if we serve Him with all the heart, then the one thing we can never ever do, is to turn aside, after the vain gods of the Gentiles. That forms no part of serving God! To turn aside after the vain things of the Gentiles, says Samuel, forms no part of our service to God, that is not acceptable and what we've got to learn is the good and the right way of the truth. We live in such a desperately wicked age, b&s, that we ought to breathe a sigh of relief when we come to open our bibles, that in here we can at least, learn the good and right way of the truth, which is so wonderfully pure compared to the wickedness of the world. We've got to learn to walk in that way! Finally, he says, you've got to remember the fact that our God is **an all consuming fire**, and that while God is merciful and compassionate and He responds to the cries of His servants, and He'll deliver, time and time again, that if we **insist on walking in stubborn disobedience**, then ultimately **God will move against us**.

Now Samuel says, 'there's the essence of what I've learned in the truth. That's what the

truth's all about. This is the essence of what an old man thinks, who's lived his life, all his life, in the truth. It's worth actually to go back over this story and ponder it a little bit further, because those words, all of those words, need to carry weight with us. If you were an old man and this was your last chance, what would you say? This is what Samuel **chose to say to the nation**, in his farewell speech, these are the burning issues of the truth, to fear Yahweh, to serve Him, to obey His voice, to do it with all our heart, to never turn aside to the things of the world, to learn the good and right way and to remember, that God ultimately will call us to account for what we've done in life. Do you know where all of that comes from? Well, think about it? You see, bible echoes! Paul when he gives his farewell speech, goes back to Samuel's farewell speech! Who would Samuel turn back to, to give a farewell speech? Moses! yes, the great trailblazer of the past! Alright, question, where is Moses' farewell speech? The book of Deuteronomy ! that's where this chapter comes from! every single thing that Samuel said in this chapter comes from Moses out of the book of Deuteronomy. **To fear Yahweh and to serve Him, to not rebel against the commandments of Yahweh, to serve Him with all your heart, to not turn aside and serve other gods, and to do that which is good and right, and to remember that if you do turn away, ye shall surely perish. The whole spirit** and even much of the exact words of Samuel's address come in its entirety from Moses' farewell speech; bible echoes, they're the same principles and these words were spoken by another old man, weren't they? Another old man who saw that as the essence really as what the truth is all about. You can have a look at that later on and copy it down, but otherwise I'm going to move on, because otherwise I'll be running out of time.

You know, there's nothing very complicated, nothing very profound, and there's nothing that none of us could not have found that by simply giving the matter some thought; of course, it would have to be Moses when you think about it, and all I did was, in fact, I probably picked up a marginal reference from somewhere in this particular chapter that went back to Deuteronomy and I thought, 'ah, Deuteronomy, Moses, last month of his life, his farewell speech to the nation, of course, Samuel would quote from that! I wonder what else he might have quoted from? and away I went, and went through the concordance and simply traced out some words. Not hard really, is it? and yet in the words of those two men we have the essence of what the truth is all about. It's really worthwhile going back over this chapter and weighing up what Samuel says! Now, look, we're not going to have time to cover the balance of the chapter in detail, so just a couple of things before we conclude.

First of all, verses 16 to 19 perhaps! just the matter of the thunder. So what he says here in order to impress upon the nation that they had sinned in asking for a king, he says verse 16, 'Now therefore stand and see this great thing which Yahweh will do before your eyes. Is it not wheat harvest today, I will call unto Yahweh and He shall send thunder and rain, that ye may perceive and see that your wickedness is great'. Come and have a look at Proverbs 26 verse 1, 'As snow in summer, and as rain in harvest, so honour is not seemly for a fool', so how likely is it for a fool to receive honour? the answer is, 'well, you just don't do that, do you? In fact, it's virtually

impossible for a fool to have honour, if he does, it's completely out of place. It's so unusual, it would be so incongruous; well, says the proverb, that's what it's like to have rain in harvest, because you see, in Israel that's what it's like in the harvest period. In the month of Zif or around about that period, perhaps April, May of our time, there is literally week after week after week of blue skies and endless sun beating down upon the earth. For day after day and week after week there is endless, hot searing sun beating down upon the land of Israel, and to have rain in harvest, says Proverbs 26 verse 1, is virtually impossible. So the **impossible was going to happen** in this chapter.

So when we come back to 1 Samuel 12 verse 16 it says, 'Now therefore, stand and see this great thing that Yahweh will do; is it not wheat harvest today, and yet, he says, I will call unto Yahweh and He shall send thunder and rain, that you may perceive and see that your wickedness is great which ye have done in the sight of Yahweh, in asking you a king'. I think one of the reasons, by the way, why he prayed for thunder and rain, is because the immediacy of the response would **impress the people with the truth of his words**. You see, if a man stands up and prays for thunder, and along comes the thunder immediately, well, there's a great impression that what he's spoken is obviously true! You see, what happened here was that this sign, of course, was a **warning**; did they now think that because they had a king that it would be impossible to fall; then God could bring to pass the impossible! and so He would upon them, if they did not learn **the lesson of hearing Him, of fearing Him and obeying His voice**, verses 14 and 15. By the way, the word 'obey' in verses 14 and 15 is Samuel's name, 'shama' 'to hear God's voice' (8085+410), 'if you will not 'shama' His voice'.

So now the prophet stretches out his hands before God and calls unto God in order that Yahweh might send thunder and rain at an impossible time in the midst of harvest. We're told that Yahweh **sent thunder and rain**, and one can imagine the spectacle as a black cloud **suddenly loomed up** over the horizon of a blue sky, and then came moving across and then all of a sudden there was a spatter of rain, and then an unmighty thunder clap as the thunder roared through the vault of heaven and all the people shrank and trembled' by this evidence; and do you know what really happened? You see, what Samuel had said in verses 14 and 15 was, that the real issue of life in the truth is **learning to hear God's voice, to hear God's voice**. Do you know what the word for 'thunder' is in verse 17? it's the same word translated 'voice' in verses 14 and 15; and for the first time in some people's eyes as the thunder clap rolled over the area of Gilgal, some of Israel **finally heard God's voice**. Actually we're reminded of a remarkably similar passage in the New Testament record (you don't need to turn it up) but take a note of John 12 verses 28 to 30 where Jesus said, 'Father, glorify thy name, and there came a voice from heaven saying 'I have; and the people that stood by heard it and said, 'It thundered, but Jesus said, 'This voice came not because of Me, but for your sakes'. What really rang out that day, over the host of Israel was the voice of God from the heavens above.

You know, some people only ever do hear God's voice when it **thunders**; but Samuel

heard it all his life as a gentle **whisper** in his ear. The voice of God was always **real** to Samuel, as the Guide of his life; he didn't need the thunder in order to hear the voice of God. Some people only ever hear the voice of God at fraternal meetings or at a bible school, when for a brief moment the fervour and passion of minds and hearts united together around the things of the truth, finally opens an ear that hears the voice of God!

(The tape ended here, although the speaker was still speaking!)