

Hebrews 12 & Samuel's Example

Scripture Reading: I Samuel 8:1-10; 12:13-25

We have studied the warnings in Hebrews chapter twelve. The lesson we now consider will help us take time to let it soak into our souls. What we are learning is so basic and so consistent with the rest of Scripture that it is not difficult to find numerous examples to illustrate God's heart and mind in the matter of how He thinks of us and deals with our sinfulness.

Samuel is one of those servants of God who gives us a lot of positive insight. Of course he was a sinner like all of us, but Scripture presents his Christ-like qualities without emphasizing his faults.

Our background story begins in I Samuel chapter eight.

Samuel had served Israel well, but as his sons grew up and began to serve as judges, it became a concern to the elders of Israel that Samuel's sons were not fit to take his place (**I Samuel 8:1-3**). Instead of consulting Samuel and seeking the Lord about it. The people of Israel created their own plan. They wanted to be like all other nations and have a king, instead of having a judge / prophet for a leader (**I Samuel 8:4-5**). It was this notion of being like other nations that offended God and wounded Samuel's heart (**I Samuel 8:5 cp. Deuteronomy 7:6-9; 14:2**). God gave comforting counsel to Samuel (**I Samuel 8:6-8**). God reasoned with the people and warned them. He would give them their wish, but there would be consequences (**I Samuel 8:9-18**). Nevertheless, the people of Israel chose their own way instead of God's way (**I Samuel 8:19-22**).

In **I Samuel chapters nine and ten**, Samuel was led of God to choose Saul to be Israel's first king. In **I Samuel chapter eleven**, there was an Ammonite threat made against Israel and Saul rose up and led the people to victory. After that Saul was officially coronated as their king. In **I Samuel chapter 12**, Samuel reasoned with the people of Israel so that they might see the big picture. They just experienced a big victory, and they were feeling good about having Saul as king. But God could have delivered them and cared for them without a king. Samuel rehearsed God's faithfulness to Israel and gave them solemn thoughts to ponder about the way they had not been faithful to God. God would still bless the nation. But they must be careful not to forsake the Lord. We will now give some detail about Samuel's discussion in **the second half of I Samuel chapter twelve**. We will be drawing **parallels from Hebrews chapter twelve** and with Samuel's response to the people of Israel.

I Samuel 12:16-19 – “*Twas grace that taught my heart to fear...*”

Using a tremendous thunderstorm, Samuel revealed the displeasure of the Lord to the people of Israel, they became terrified and regretted their decision. No one was harmed in this demonstration. Consider the taste of Mount Sinai that is given in **Hebrews 12:18-21**.

I Samuel 12:20-22 – “... And grace my fears relieved.”

- **I Samuel 12:20** – Do not dwell in fear and dread. Go forward with God. See how **Hebrews 12:5-11** encourages us to receive God’s correction. Also, **Hebrews 12:12-14** encourages us to participate in God’s correction so that we can follow and serve the Lord.
- **I Samuel 12:21** – If we do not go forward with the Lord, we will go backwards into bad and unprofitable things. **Hebrews 12:15-17** warns us that if we are not diligent we can fail the grace that God has given us (II Corinthians 6:1). We can become bitter, disillusioned, troubled, defiled, unfaithful, worldly, losing many blessings (Isaiah 40:28-31).
- **I Samuel 12:22** – Consider God’s gracious motives and intentions. See the love / the tough-love of God as a Father in **Hebrews 12:5-8**. We need to focus and dwell in the loving and gracious environment that God has for us. See **Hebrews 12:22-24** cp. Deuteronomy 32:1-12; 33:1-3; Jeremiah 29:11; Psalm 103:1-14; 118:17-18; 130:3-6; 30:5 cp. Ephesians 3:14-19; I John 4:14-19; I Timothy 2:5-6.

I Samuel 12:23 – Samuel is a Christ-like example.

Samuel’s love for God kept him from transferring negative feelings to the people over which God had made him a leader and guide. It might have seemed easy to stop caring for them, but God had not stopped caring, and God’s man needed to stay in step with Him. Prayer and the ministry of the word are a priority (Acts 6:4). God values shepherds / pastors, because God loves His sheep / people so much (Psalm 100:1-5; 23:1-6; Isaiah 40:10-11; Acts 20:17-26; Philippians 1:3-8; I Peter 5:1-5). See Christ in **Hebrews 12:2-4, 24** cp. Hebrews 2:16-18; 4:14-16; 7:24-25; 13:20-21.

I Samuel 12:24 – A call to consider God’s gracious work.

God deserves our love, loyalty, and service. God has demonstrated His worthiness of our trust and devotion. See **Hebrews 12:1-4, 22-24** cp. Hebrews 1:1-3; 2:6 – 3:1; 9:27-28; 10:5-10, 19-25. See also Psalm 78:1-7; 105:1-3; 107:1-2, 8,15,21,31,43; 116:1-19; 145:1-21 cp. Romans 5:8-11; 8:28-39; 12:1-2; II Corinthians 5:14-21; 8:9; I John 3:16-18; Revelation 1:5-6; 4:8-11; 5:1-14.

I Samuel 12:25 – A warning to not turn back.

Unchanged ungodly attitudes and behaviors will result in disaster. “... *You shall be consumed / swept away / you shall perish.*” **Hebrews 12:25-29** warns people that if they refuse / reject the Lord’s counsel they shall, “*not escape,*” they shall face Him who is “*a consuming fire*” (cp. Deuteronomy 4:23-24). We are to maintain a receptiveness to the things that belong to the kingdom of God (Matthew 6:33). We are to live our lives before the Lord with grace-filled gratitude and a submissive servant’s heart that embraces God’s will with reverence / godly fear / awe. See **Hebrews 10:30-39**; Psalm 37:23-24; 85:8-9; Proverbs 1:7; 9:10 (cp. Psalm 111:10); Proverbs 3:5-8, 11-12; 4:18-27; 8:1-36; 9:1-18; Lamentations 3:1-41; Hosea 5:14-6:7; Romans 13:11-14; I Timothy 4:16.

Two Greek words in Hebrews 12:28 look redundant in the English. The first one, translated “*reverence,*” means “*humble, modest respect; to feel shame in the presence of God.*” The second word, translated “*godly fear / awe,*” means “*caution, holy fear (mingled fear and love), piety.*”