

11736U

NEW ZEALAND SUMMER SCHOOL - 1993

SAMUEL THE SEER

Speaker: Bro. Roger Lewis

Study 1: Samuel was old and made his sons judges

Reading: 1 Samuel 7:15-8:22

Introductory Remarks preceding Study 1

Well, thank you brother chairman, it's wonderful to be at the school, isn't it? I think that it's been one of those years for many of us where we've got to a certain part of the year, and just really look forward to the year coming to an end, that we might gather together at the bible school, to set our minds and our affections again on the things that we love! But which because of circumstance and because of pressures and because of trials in life, we find the time slipping away from us, and I'm sure for many of us, therefore, we come to the school to, as it were, refresh ourselves and to endeavour to strengthen our foundations in the truth again. I know that's how I feel this year, and I'm sure that many of us feel that same spirit. So our objective must be, that we really want to open our hearts and minds to the things of the Word, over the course of these next few days, to seek as much spiritual nourishment as we can, not just from the studies, but by means of discussion and contact with others, who are not only of like precious faith, but who are also suffering from the same circumstances and trials of life as we are!

Now in the course of the second series during the school, we're going to look, as our brother Brian has said, at the life of Samuel the seer. Samuel, of course, was one of those, who we might describe as almost a monumental figure in the history of the nation of Israel. He was one of those trailblazers, one of those ground breakers, one of those preparers of the way that was going to usher in a major epoch in the history of the nation. In fact, it's interesting if we go through the history of Israel, we find that there was almost a series of major epochs marked out down through time, and with each of those epochs there was a great man of whom Samuel was one.

In fact, there was more than a great man, there was for each great epoch, two great men, and so we think of the time of the deliverance of Israel from the land of Egypt and we come, of course, to the example of Moses. A man who was to **redeem** the nation from Egypt, to give them the Law, a man who was meek as he is described and yet lofty in his bearing. A man who was almost stern in some ways because he had to be, because Moses was the trailblazer, the leader of Israel out from the darkness of Egypt. But when they got into the Promised Land, there was another man, wasn't there? a

man who truly was the successor of Moses. Moses having taken them safely to the Land it was Joshua who actually organized the tribes and who settled the nation in the Land and made sure that all the tribes had their appropriate places. Everything was organized once they had arrived there, a man who was faithful and valiant, but whose work wasn't quite the same as Moses. You see, the two men were almost a counter balance to each other, weren't they? Moses the trailblazer and Joshua, the man who took up the labours of his master, as it were, and settled Israel into the Land of Promise.

When we come down through the history of the nation, we come to the life of Samuel and we find that Samuel was going to **redeem** the nation again. But this time, he was going to redeem the nation from the blackness of the judges. A time when there was no spiritual life in Israel, a time of apostasy in the nation; a man who was grand and upright in all his dealings as we're going to see. A man who was absolutely pure in his character, and yet, when Samuel had finished his labours, there was going to be another man who was going to be the true spiritual successor to Samuel, David. David was, as it were, was going to take up where the labours of Samuel left off, and it was David who was going to organize the tabernacle worship; David who was going to write spiritual psalms, David who was going to lift the nation to heights of spirituality that they had never experienced under Samuel, but Samuel had prepared the way. He was the trailblazer, David was the one who then advanced the nation still further in spirituality.

What about the epoch of Elijah? A man who was going to **redeem** the nation from Omri's dynasty and from the Baal worship that had spread like a cancer throughout the nation. A man who was fiery and abrupt in all his dealings; and man who was going to call down fire from heaven; and who was the successor to Elijah? why a bold man, as bold as Elijah was hairy, almost as if to mark the difference between the two men. A man called Elisha, and what was Elisha going to do? Well, he was going to organize the prophets, he was going to run the schools of instruction, he was going to perform miracles of healings, whereas Elijah was going to be fiery and abrupt, Elisha would be gentle, a practical man devoted to the spiritual development of the nation. God brought together again, two men in order that a work might be fulfilled by using both of those men according to the circumstances of the time.

We come, of course, into the New Testament era, and to the life of John. John who, of course, was going to invite the nation down into the waste lands of the Judean desert and there was going to suggest that they ought to be baptized for the repentance of sins towards the remission of their sins. A man who was going to teach them, that all flesh is grass, that was going to **redeem** the nation from Maccabean darkness and from the formalism of the scribes and the Pharisees. A man who was stern and austere as he stood there facing the nation, with his burning eyes and his girdle of skin. Having prepared the way, he was, of course, to be followed by the Lord Himself, who would organize and found His ecclesia and who would set forth the laws for the spiritual growth and development of that people. One was a trailblazer, the other was the developer of the work in a quieter but perhaps in a more lasting and spiritual fashion.

We come to the life of the apostle Paul, and we have a man who **redeemed** the Israel of God from the world of paganism in which he lived; a man as his own epistles say, who was powerful and weighty in his way. Who followed on after Paul? wasn't it really his own son in the faith, Timothy, a man who was going to proceed after the death of the apostle, to organize the ecclesias of living God? To provide quiet advice, a man who was quite shy and retiring in his character. Quite a different man to the apostle was he! and yet equally necessary for the development of that work. Isn't it interesting how God, down through the epochs of the history of the nation, used these men, almost as it were, side by side?

I suppose if we were to complete the story, we would have to see a similar situation in our own day, with brother Thomas, who was to **redeem** the truth from papal and protestant ignorance; a man who was vigorous and yet reserved as brother Roberts described him. So brother Roberts, in a sense, was to be the man who would take on the labours of brother Thomas and would develop them further. Who's the one who's going to organize the ecclesias? Who was going to write the ecclesial guide, the first constitution, to prepare a hymn book, to establish a magazine? It was brother Roberts! generous and warm-hearted Robert Roberts!

So you see, Samuel who we are going to look at in the course of our studies, was one of the great trailblazers! There they are, Moses, Samuel, Elijah, John, Paul, and we're going to see all of those, interestingly enough, we're going to see echoes of all of those other men, they are sort of bound together in the record somehow. Samuel speaks and yet we hear Moses; Samuel speaks again and you'll hear the echoes of Paul's words later on in time, or of Elijah. It's quite strange how these men are **bound together**, the trailblazers, the breakers of the ground, the preparers of the way. We need to understand Samuel in that life, he was a man for his time, and we need to understand the way in which Almighty God, took that man and used him for His purposes in the truth.

I want to show you something interesting, just by way of opening our studies together. If you come to 1 Samuel 8 for a moment, and to the first verse; now this is something that I found intriguing and we're actually going to look at this in the course of our studies. You know, really our studies at the time of this school, really begins from 1 Samuel 8 verse 1, our very first session, God willing, not tomorrow but the next day, is going to look at 1 Samuel 8. In the first verse you'll notice it says this, 'It came to pass, when **Samuel was old**'; now I want you to come back to 1 Samuel 1, now just stop and think about this! there's something unusual here, you see, what's 1 Samuel 1 all about? Well, it's about, remember, Hannah's prayer for a child, it's about the birth of the child, it's about the giving of the child, isn't it? to Eli in the house of God. So Samuel's mentioned obviously in 1 Samuel 1, is he mentioned in chapter 2? is there anything about Samuel in chapter 2? Yes, there is, but just a few verses (we're going to look at this in a bit more detail tomorrow morning) 1 Samuel 2 verses 18 to 21, just a few verses in the second chapter about the growth and development of Samuel as a child. So yes, he's

there in chapter 2. Is he there in chapter 3? Well, yes he is, of course, because chapter 3 is the famous chapter, when the little boy lying in the house, has his name called at night; 'Samuel, Samuel'; so you see, 1 Samuel 1, 2 and 3 are really all about Samuel as a little boy.

Now is he in chapter 4 apart from the very first phrase, 'the word of Samuel came to all Israel'? which by the way, we would suggest more properly belongs to the last verse of the previous chapter, in other words, the first of 1 Samuel 4 should really begin in the first verse with the words, 'now Israel went out against the Philistines to battle'. That early little phrase really more properly belongs to the end of chapter 3. So is Samuel in chapter 4? the answer is No, he's not! Is Samuel in chapter 5? and the answer is, 'no, he's not!' Is Samuel in chapter 6? No, he's not! those are the chapters of the wanderings of the ark. Is Samuel in chapter 7? Yes, he is! he appears again, and remember we have the story of 1 Samuel 7, about the time when Israel, has a marvellous victory against the Philistines, when Samuel offers up a sucking lamb; do you remember that episode? and at the end of that chapter we are told, in 1 Samuel 7 verse 15, 'And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. And he went from year to year in circuit to Beth-el, to Gilgal, to Mizpeh, and judged Israel in all those places'. You know, b&s and young people, the very next verse, chapter 8 verse 1 says, 'And it came to pass when Samuel was **old**', so you see, what we've got here is this, we've got 1 Samuel 1, 2 and 3 which speak of Samuel as a little boy; then he disappears from the record, and we have one chapter on Samuel as a grown man, as a mature adult, 1 Samuel 7. In fact, virtually the whole compass of his life's work, is summed up in 3 verses, 1 Samuel 7 verses 15 to 17, then all of a sudden, the record goes **immediately** to Samuel now **as an old man**, 1 Samuel 8 verse 1.

Now is he in chapter 8? Yes! is he in chapter 9? Yes! is he in chapter 10? Yes! is he in chapter 11? Yes! is he in chapter 12? Yes! is he in chapter 13? Yes! chapter 15? chapter 16? chapter 19? and we have this enormous breadth of information about Samuel as an **old man**. That's what these studies are on! that's were our studies are going to start! The bulk of what we know about this man begins when he is already old, why? There must be some reason why the scripture focusses on the life's experience of this man when he had already grown to oldness of age. There is a reason! I believe there are several reasons, and God willing, in our first study we're going to try and unravel those reasons, as to why it is, that the bible focusses on Samuel in the main, as an old man, and he was!

He trudged around from city to city; from Beth-el, to Gilgal, to Mizpeh, and returning here as we see on the overhead, to his beloved city of Ramah, because there was his home it says, and there he judged Israel and there he built an altar. We're going to come to Lud-ramah, the city of Ramah as we complete our studies, we're going to see a place that was graced by an old man who was full of his own fears and his own worries and his own trials in life, and part of the object of these studies, is to see another man who has experienced pressure, to see another man who's learnt what trial is all about, to see another man who knew what life's difficulties were about and to see

how he coped with them. You know, it is interesting that this is just a brief summary of some of the things that Samuel accomplished, in those years that run from chapter 8 onwards:

1. Here was a man who was going to re-energize the nation in spiritual values. We're going to look at these in a bit more detail in our next study.

2. Here was a man who was going to involve himself with planning all the duties that related to the worship of the tabernacle.

3. A man that was going to insure that there was a system of up-keep for the tabernacle.

4. A man that was responsible personally for revitalizing the celebration of the feasts in the nation.

5. A man who was going to establish the schools of the prophets, who was going to write a history of the times.

6. Who was going to labour as a judge, as a prophet, as a priest, as an intercessor, and all of that, b&s, as an old man.

When you actually contemplate the work load that Samuel accomplished as an old man, it would leave many a younger brother gasping. There was tremendous energy and drive in this old man. What was his secret? What drove him to do all of those things in oldness of age? We're going to look at that! we're going to try and find why it was that Samuel was able to accomplish all of those things; not only why it was, but what it was that Samuel himself had to learn, in those important incidents in his life. So our objective then, is to draw close to the man, as we do with all character studies, to try to draw lessons from his life that will help us to live our own lives better in the truth. God willing, that will be the object of our studies over the course of this school, as we come together and see, that **old man, Samuel the seer!**

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Study 1.

Thank you brother chairman, my dear brethren and sisters in the Lord Jesus Christ, and my dear young people.

Well then, we come this morning, to the first of our studies on the life of Samuel and you'll remember in our introductory remarks, that we made the comment that the studies on his life that we're going to look at, focus in their entirety on **Samuel as an old man**, as we've had it read together in the reading here in 1 Samuel 8 verse 1. We made the point, you'll remember in our introductory study, that there is something unusual about that matter, that there appears to be a strong focus on the labours of Samuel as an old man, as opposed to the time he spent judging Israel for probably the best part of 40 years. We're going to have a look at that, God willing, this morning to try and see why it is, that we believe the record focusses on those particular years of his

life.

Now we're going to start from verse 15 of chapter 7, because in the last 3 verses of the 7th chapter, we have a summary of the years of Samuel's life, as the judge over Israel in his day. We're told in the 15th verse, 'And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life!' Now that's interesting, **all the days of his life**, you see, really when you think about it, what verse 15 is implying is that even **after Saul became king**, Samuel's influence as a judge, his authority throughout the nation **remained**. He judged Israel **all** the days of his life, says the record. Even though a king was to ascend the throne, the tremendous influence of Samuel throughout that nation was to remain, so **venerable** was his character, and so **respected** were his views. So until his very death, he was going to remain as the father figure of the nation, and what we're going to see in these studies is, that as the king first ascended the throne, looming behind him was this great man who was their counsellor and their guide; a man who would set their feet upon the path which was right. So Samuel's influence wasn't going to diminish, even though the kings were now to come upon the scene.

So we're told in the 16th verse, 'He went from year to year in circuit to Beth-el and Gilgal and Mizpeh, and judged Israel in all those places. And his return was to Ramah'. You know, if you know anything about the geography of the land, how long would you think that circuit was? any thoughts on that? how wide do you think that circuit was? can anyone tell me where all of those cities are? and how far away they are from each other? well, let's just go and look at a map just to see where the circuit was! Now what map should we look at? well, I suppose we should look at the one which is map 3 which is, **Israel in Canaan From Joshua to Samuel**, now what we've got then, is Beth-el and Mizpeh and Ramah and Gilgal; can another find those on their maps? can someone give the co-ordinates to me? say 4.75X if there is such a thing! Now do you see the noticeable thing about those cities then, they were all really quite close together, weren't they? Gilgal was the furthest away down in the Jordan valley, but the others were actually quite close together, in fact, they were all in the land of Benjamin. They were actually in a very small restricted part of the land, so when we're told here back in 1 Samuel 7 and verse 16 that was his circuit, one might imagine that we're being told here, that really Samuel had only a very limited influence, in fact, some commentators have suggested that, 'look, he was just a little judge in the area of Benjamin; his influence didn't really extend beyond that and we can show that by the cities that were shown here in the circuit.

When we actually look at other references in the record (and we won't turn them up, but you might like to take a note of chapter 10 verse 20, chapter 12 verse 1, chapter 25 verse 1, it's absolutely clear that Samuel's influence was **throughout all Israel**, in fact, that's the key phrase that's used in his life). He spoke to **all Israel**, he gathered **all Israel**, he dismissed **all Israel**, we're told that when he died that **all Israel** lamented, almost as if the record stresses that, so although he may have been travelling in circuit just on these few little cities in Benjamin, it's clear that **all Israel** came to him! actually he's really what we might call, a circuit judge. But although he had a limited number of

cities, just within Benjamin that he travelled around, obviously the matters that came under his jurisdiction flowed from the whole nation. If you had a problem in whatever part of the land it was, you went to whatever the next city was that Samuel was going to arrive in on his circuit as a judge, and there he would judge in that particular matter and administrate the affairs of the nation. So he might have only had a small geographical area, but there's no doubt according to the record, that his influence extended throughout the nation as a whole.

So we're told in verse 17, 'His return was to Ramah: for there was his house, and there he judged Israel; and there he built an altar unto Yahweh'. Actually, you'll notice that we're told that he judged Israel in verse 15, verse 16, verse 17, did you notice that? it's really stressed, isn't it? he **judged** Israel, he **judged** Israel, he **judged** Israel, did you notice that emphasis? now here's a question for you - so we're told 3 times that he was the judge of Israel, and that probably covers as we said, something like the best part of 40 years or more of his life's work is summed up in those 3 verses; there's **40 years** of Samuel's life in those three verses, and yet you know this, from the moment that Samuel dies, he is only ever once referred to again as a judge, and that almost by way of incidental allusion (we'll come to it later on in our study this morning. But on countless occasions after his death, he's referred to as a **prophet** and in the New Testament, Samuel is **exclusively referred to as a prophet**. He's never ever counted as a judge, why? Well, it's clear that the record says that he spent probably the best part of his life performing that role; he judged Israel for 40 years, he's virtually **never referred to** as a judge thereafter, always as a **prophet**, why? there must be a reason? Good bible study, remember, starts with asking good questions and we're going to expand that in one of our evening themes a little later on. There is an answer to that, by the way, and by the time we get to it, interestingly enough the answer really only comes in the very last study, so that will really keep you on the edge of your seats till we get there!

Moving on then to chapter 8 verse 1, we come then to this important phrase really in the record, 'it came to pass, when Samuel was old'. Now I mentioned it the other night but let's just summarize it, so we can see it a little more clearly. So here's the history then of Samuel throughout his life:

1. We have the whole of the first chapter verses 1 to 28, speaking about the birth and the presentation of Samuel to the house of God.
2. We have a few verses in the 2nd chapter, verses 18 to 21, that speak about his early growth and development; he grew as a child, says the record, before Yahweh.
3. Then, of course, in chapter 3 we have that famous episode where he's called to be a prophet in the middle of the night, God Almighty calls to him, 'Samuel, Samuel' and his work as a prophet begins; as a little boy, and that very next morning, he tells Eli of the doom which has been pronounced upon his household.
4. Now there's 53 verses of information that look at the life of Samuel as a young child. There's quite a lot of information about that period of his life.
5. When we come to Samuel as a grown man, as a mature leader, we only have this one chapter that we've just looked at, chapter 7. There's only one episode in 40

years that's commented on and that is the matter of his delivering Israel from the Philistines at Mizpeh when he offers a sucking lamb. That's the only incident that's referred to out of 40 years of labour.

Then three short verses at the end of the chapter that explain the fact:
'Oh, yes, he judged the nation'.

Now there's something interesting here, isn't there, b&s, that a man's life, do you think Samuel was a good man during those 40 years? Yes! do you think he was a dedicated man? Yes! did he labour faithfully in the nation? was his work fruitful? yes! and yet as far as the divine record is concerned, a curtain comes down over 40 years; you say, 'that's very interesting, fine, good, right-oh!' now we'd like to talk about him as an old man. And now that will begin from chapter 8 verse 1, as an old man; we have chapters, 8, 9 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 19, his death in chapter 25; a 147 verses about an old man. That's more than double everything else that's recorded about him! In fact, the word 'Samuel' the very name Samuel occurs 35 times up to the end of chapter 7, and from chapter 8 verse 1 onwards the name Samuel, up to the point of his death occurs 88 times; again, more than double. There's obviously some reason why the record deliberately focusses on Samuel's work as an old man. I think there is a reason, and it all begins with the story of this particular chapter, 1 Samuel 8.

I think this is part of the reason! You see, what we've really got here in the life's work of Samuel is a very important moment in the history of the nation. You see, up to now, there's been two great people, as it were, who have been influential in the guidance of the nation. There's been the priest and there's been the judge. The one has been responsible for, if you like, spiritual matters, certain religious matters, the other's been responsible for the civil administration of the nation. Above the two of those, of course, has been God Himself, who during that time, has been as it were, the real Ruler of the nation of Israel. Now we're going to come to the life of Samuel, and he's going to be the **bridge** that's going to lead now to an new epoch in the history of the nation. There's going to be a remarkable change here! Whereas before the life of Samuel, there were going to be priests and judges, by the time we leave the life of Samuel behind, we find that that's grown to now 3 different groups in the history of the nation; the priests are still there, but the judges have now become kings, and there's a third force in the land, that's really not been seen before, in a properly organized way, and that's **the prophet**. If you were to ask yourself what was the greatest work of Samuel? the answer is this, that he ushered in the era of the kings, but he also established the prophetic order; Samuel is going to be responsible for the bringing in of two mighty influences, that from now on are going to guide the nation. So we've summarized that with the comment at the bottom here by saying;

Two great movements sprang from Samuel's work as an **old man**:

1. He ended the black era of the judges, and he established the **royal office**, so

ushering in the new era of the **kings**; and he was going to be the **bridge**, he was going to be the link from the one epoch to the next.

2. But he would also begin, that grand institution that would stand alongside the monarchy throughout successive generations, as the voice and conscience of God, the prophetic **order**, and he the first illustration of that great work. That really was going to be Samuel's greatest work, wasn't it? to usher in those two great movements in the history of the nation, **the royal office and the prophetic order**. All of this was going to be done when he was an old man! That's what's interesting as far as the divine record is concerned.

You see, the divine record is interested in the unfolding of the purpose of God, not just in the lives of people. The divine record is here to unfold for us what's important in the developing purpose of God. What really was important in Samuel's work were these two things, and neither of them happened until he was an old man. So that's what the scripture focusses on, the scripture focusses therefore on his work as an old man, because that really was the greatest work that he ever did achieve. It all begins here from 1 Samuel 8 verse 1 onwards. So let's pick up the record then in this chapter and see just exactly how these circumstances came about that lead to the establishment of the monarchy and for that matter, of the prophetic order in the Land.

We're told in 1 Samuel 8 verse 1, 'It came to pass , when Samuel was old', now in the Hebrew the word 'old' (2204), is a very interesting word; if you look it up in Strong's it says, 'to be old', it's one of those helpful words that really advances our understanding. I suppose that's a good illustration of why it's helpful to also have Englishmen's as well as a Strong's concordance, because when we go to Englishmen's it's helpful because it tells us, of course, the other occasions that that word is used. I think that when we actually look at some of the other places where the word is actually used, it tells just how old is old. Now here's some of the other times; it's the same word used of Abraham in Genesis 18 verse 11, when he was so old according to Romans, that he could no longer father children, same word. It's the word used of Isaac in Genesis 27 verse 1 when it says that he was so old that his eyes began to dim, he couldn't see properly anymore; it's the same word used of David in 1 Kings 1 verse 1, when David was so old, it says, that he gat him no heat, remember that? his circulation was failing and he was cold, because he was old. It's the same word used of Jehoiada in 2 Chronicles 24 verse 15, when it says of him that he waxed old and was full of years when he died, being 135 years old. You see, I think, that when you actually look at the ways in which that word is used, it seems to be used of a man that can no longer father children, it's used of a man whose eyesight is beginning to fail, it's used of a man who has circulation problems and of a man who's had his life miraculously prolonged; I believe the force of the word really is **that the bodily functions are beginning to deteriorate!** It's Ecclesiastes 12, isn't it? that's how old he was! I think that what we're being told here, you see, is that Samuel was really beginning to feel the deterioration of his powers. He was old, and he felt that increasing age coming upon him.

So you see what verse 1 says, 'It came to pass when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges', and that's obviously the reason, wasn't it? he obviously felt the burden of

his office because of his advancing age. He didn't feel that he could cope with it anymore, he really was old, he needed to have someone to share the responsibility with him. He's an old man, you see, it doesn't matter how old he is in years, it's how you feel! this word is all about how you feel! You might feel this at fifty or 40 as well as 60 or 70, it's the fading of the powers, so he made his sons judges. If you come back to Exodus 18, he did so on the basis, I believe, of the previous example of Moses, one of the other great trailblazers, by the way, I think Samuel knew the life of Moses very well (we're going to come across that later on) he quotes Moses, he's read Moses, he understands Moses, he felt a kinship with Moses and I think he acted on this occasion on the basis of the words of Moses in Exodus 18, in fact, it wasn't the words of Moses but the suggestion of Moses' father-in-law, wasn't it? Verse 21, 'Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens: And let them judge the people at all seasons: and it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge: so shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear the burden with thee. If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so, then thou shalt be able to **endure** and all this people shall also go to their place in peace'. So Moses had had the same experience of a time when he needed to share the burden to make it easier for himself, so he might endure. I think that's exactly what Samuel does on this occasion; but did you notice what the requirements of the men that were to be appointed? Verse 21, '**men of truth, hating covetousness**', and that's where Samuel's sons are going to let him down.

So when we come back to the 8th chapter, we find that although he did so on the basis of Moses' teaching that it's not going to work out well, because his sons were not, in fact, going to be men of truth, hating covetousness! So we're told in 1 Samuel 8 verse 2, 'Now the name of his firstborn was Joel; and the name of the second Abiah: they were judges in Beer-sheba'. Now it's an interesting thing about the names of people in the bible, we often say well they're symbolic, they're important! Well, yes, I think they are, not only because they may give an insight of the work or the character of the person, but I think particularly when it talks about the naming of children that the meaning of names are important because they also give us an insight into the attitude of the parents. Not just how the child may grow up because there's many a child that's grown up, in fact, to be a disgrace to their bible name, but it is an indication of what the parents wanted, isn't it? So what do you think Samuel had in mind for his boys? Does anyone know what Joel or Abiah means? Joel - Yah El, it actually means perhaps in two different forms but I've got it down here as 'the power of Yah', Joel (3100) the power of Yah and Abiah (29) is Yahweh is Father, so they are two quite lofty names, aren't they? the power of Yah and Yahweh is the Father, these were the names given to his boys by Samuel. It's obvious what his intentions were for his sons, he wanted them to grow up loving the truth, and especially he wanted them to grow up being dedicated to the God of heaven.

We're told in verse 2 that they were judges in Beer-sheba; you know Beer-sheba had

always been an area that was near to the land of the Philistines. From the days of Abraham in Genesis 21 verses 32 and 34, where he made covenant with the Philistines in Beer-sheba, and obviously I think what had happened, if you go back to chapter 7 verse 14, you'll notice it says that 'In the days of Samuel the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, even from Ekron unto Gath, and the coasts thereof did Israel deliver out of the hands of the Philistines. I think what had happened here was that there had been territory recovered to the south here, adjacent to the area of the Philistines, and there was some administration of that territory now needed. So his sons were sent to be judges in Beer-sheba, as the result of the victories of Samuel in recovering that territory.

Well, we're told in verse 3, 'His sons walked not in his ways', do you think that Samuel would ever have appointed his sons as judges, if he had known that they were covetous? No, he wouldn't have done that, would he? especially not in view of the fact that Samuel would never have forgotten the judgment against Eli! which as a little boy in the temple, he was asked to give to Eli personally, that Eli would be overthrown and that his house would be overthrown and destroyed, it would never be purged of its iniquity because (and remember the judgment in chapter 3 verses 12 to 14,' because his sons made themselves vile, says the record, and he restrained them not'. Samuel would never have forgotten that! That Eli had been condemned because he didn't do anything about his evil sons! I don't think for a moment that Samuel would have appointed his sons to office, if he knew they were going to show this sort of weakness.

Of course, they were a long way away from him because he was up in Ramah and they were down in Beer-sheba, and so they were a long way away from dad. They were removed, you see, from his influence, but they didn't have his **integrity of character**, so we're told in the 3rd verse, 'that they turned aside after lucre and took bribes and perverted judgment'. If you come back to Deuteronomy 16, we have a comment, of course, in the Law on that particular matter. Verses 18 to 20, it says, 'Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates, which Yahweh thy God giveth thee, throughout thy tribes: and they shall judge the people with just judgment. Thou shalt not **wrest judgment**; thou shalt not **respect persons**, neither **take a gift**: for a gift **doth blind the eyes of the wise, and perverts the words of the righteous**. That which is altogether just shalt thou follow, that thou mayest live, and inherit the Land'. So there was specific warning in the Law that judges were to be above matters of covetousness, because it would pervert their sense of that which was right. They would be no longer able to act impartially if they accepted bribes; and that's exactly what these two boys failed in, in this particular matter and so they rendered themselves **unfit** for the office of judgment because they lacked **integrity** of character.

I want you to come back to 1 Samuel 8 verse 3, and let's just think about that again! because I think there's another useful lesson that comes out of that verse. Verse 3, 'His sons walked not in his ways', so you see, what 1 Samuel 8 verse 3 tells us, is that hereditary background isn't everything in life, is it? 'Ah, you know, they come from a good family, of course, they're going to grow up well in the truth!' It's not just all in the

genes, is it, b&s? there's obviously a sustained spiritual environment that's also necessary for the development of children. I think what we're being told here in this particular verse is, that somewhere down the line, these boys didn't get enough contact with dad. He was a great man, he was a righteous man, but he was away from home a little too often; because we're told that back in verse 16 of the previous chapter that he went from year to year in circuit to Beth-el, to Gilgal, to Mizpeh, he was often away from home, was dad. I'm sure that when Samuel was home, he was an outstanding father, but maybe, just because of the degree of absence from the house, when those sons needed him there was something lacking, and when they grew up they were Samuel's sons alright, but they didn't have Samuel's integrity of character; there was a **flaw!** and there's a lesson there for fathers, isn't there? and a degree of contact that's needed with family. Particularly young boys as they grow up, they need that contact, don't they? I believe, it's one of the tragedies of the divine record, that 3 generations of fine men here lost their sons, Eli followed by Samuel followed by David. Three of the greatest men that ever graced the pages of scripture, all lost their sons; it's a dreadful thing! for different reasons but one of them was that they were so heavily involved in the work of the truth, in other things, that maybe the family suffered as a result, and perhaps this is one of the problems that emerges in this record.

Verse 4 tells us, 'Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together and came to Samuel unto Ramah', so do you see here that Samuel still commands the respect of the nation? They want to appoint a king but there's no doubt as to whom they're going to come; they will come to present their petition to him as the highest authority in the Land. So they did and they came in verse 5 and they said, 'Behold, thou art **old**, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like **all the nations**'. You know, that really must have hurt Samuel, mustn't it? that the principle reason that's advanced here as why the nation here needed a king was, **your sons are not like you!** That's a dreadful thing! Samuel would feel keenly that that was the reason advanced by the nation. Do you see the end of that phrase, the last part of the verse, 'now **make us a king to judge us** like all the nations.' Now where does that come from? does anyone remember? there's a reference in the book of Deuteronomy about making kings? Deuteronomy 17:14 it's in the margin, let's just have a look at that, because this phrase in Samuel is actually drawn, we believe, directly from the passage in Deuteronomy 17. You'll notice that Deuteronomy 17 verse 14 says, 'When thou art come unto the Land which Yahweh thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, (now I want you to notice this) **I will set a king**'. Now do you see that word 'set' that's the same word in 1 Samuel 8 verse 5 where it says, '**now make us a king**', it's actually almost the same phrase in the Hebrew; **now set us a king**, the identical phrase. What was the reason given in Samuel? to judge us like all the nations' says Samuel and Deuteronomy says at the end of verse 14, '**like as all the nations**', you see, I think there is more to this statement of the elders in Samuel than meets the eye, I think they were quoting Deuteronomy to Samuel. When they came and said, 'look, we'd like a king!' they quoted the very words out of Deuteronomy, now set us a king like all the nations. Now what the elders were saying was, 'now look, Samuel, you're old, you're not going to be here forever; your sons don't behave themselves, and soon the nation

will be bereft of its leadership, now what are we going to do? and really we believe, that we should have a king; and Samuel you do remember, that the scripture makes provision for such an appointment, remember the words of Deuteronomy, 'set us a king like the nations'? So they deliberately quote the very terms of Deuteronomy to Samuel to remind him that this was provided for in the Law.

But I wonder if they really read the terms of Deuteronomy? because the one thing that's clear from this record, is that they really hadn't read the next verse of Deuteronomy which says, verse 15, 'Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, **whom Yahweh thy God shall choose**'; the one thing that's going to become very clear in this appointment of the king, the very first king to Israel, was that it wasn't really the one whom Yahweh chose at all, he was going to come later. The first king that was going to be appointed was really a king that the nation chose for themselves, they hadn't really understood the spirit of Deuteronomy at all. That's what Deuteronomy said, if you're going to appoint a king then you make sure that it's the one that **whom God shall choose** but I believe that when they came before Samuel they already had in mind, the man they wanted, and I think that there were already whispers about the nation, that Saul would make an excellent notice! before they came and made their request to Samuel on this occasion.

How did Samuel feel about all this? Well come back to 1 Samuel 8 verse 6, and we're told how he felt. This is what it says in the record, 'But the thing **displeased** Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto Yahweh'. The thing **displeased** Samuel; Josephus tells us that Samuel could not eat or sleep but he agitated all night on that matter, he was so deeply upset by their request. He stayed awake all night because he couldn't sleep, he couldn't eat, says Josephus. Now do you think that Samuel took it personally? Why do you think Samuel was so upset? do you think he took it personally? Yes, he did! can anyone prove it? God said so! whereabouts? in the next verse. That's right, when we read the next verse, 'And Yahweh said unto Samuel, Harken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee'. That really was what was on Samuel's mind, wasn't it? see how verse 7 tells us that? Good bible study is all based on good bible reading. We can tell what really upset Samuel in verse 6 by simply reading on a bit further! God says, 'you do it Samuel, they haven't really rejected you, you know!' But that's what obviously was upsetting Samuel and I think what this was, was the feelings of an old man, remember, his powers are already fading, so he took this as an ungrateful rebellion at the end of his days and he found it very difficult to cope with that! He was badly hurt by this.

Now it's not easy in the truth, in the midst of our labours when something like that happens, and you can imagine Samuel as an old man feeling this, '**well after all I've given for the nation**', how bitterly he felt that request. But he did one thing that was absolutely right, in verse 6, it says, 'he **prayed unto Yahweh**', now there's a terrific lesson in that, isn't there? because one of the funny things about life in the truth, especially when we're under pressure and under crisis, some people whenever they

have a problem in life, they **stop praying!** That's the first thing they do! they stop praying. That's the worst thing we can do, isn't it? Samuel as an old man had habits ingrained into him, and one of the habits in Samuel's life was that whenever he was in trouble, whenever he felt depressed, whenever he was upset, he always took it to God and prayed to the Father. That's a wonderful habit for us to develop, isn't it? he's an old man and he just reacted that way, he didn't have to be told, he took the matter to Yahweh in prayer!

So verse 7 is therefore the response of God to that poured out, grief stricken prayer of an old man. Yahweh said unto Samuel, 'Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, **but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them.** According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken Me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee. Now therefore hearken unto their voice: howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them, and show them the manner of the king that shall reign over them'. Now we're going to skip through the rest of the chapter reasonably quickly so that we can just look at some of the matters that we referred to in our opening study, in a little more detail at the end of this chapter. You'll notice in verse 9 that God says, '**Show them the manner of the king** that shall reign over them'. I don't think that means, by the way, particularly the manner of Saul, but the manner of kings; the word 'manner' here really means 'the actions or the rights of kings' (4941) in other words, it's not just a reference to the character of Saul, but what it will be like to have a king, any king, what it's like to be under a king. 'You show them, says God, the rights of the king that shall reign over them'.

So from verses 10 to 18, Samuel is now going to go through with the nation and explain what it just will be like, to be under a monarchy; he says, if you appoint a king, that king is going to have certain rights and he's going to **demand** his rights. You'll find that life is not as simple as you thought under the jurisdiction of a king; so look at what he does say! We'll just go through it briefly:

Verses 10, 'Samuel told all the words of Yahweh unto the people that asked of him a king. And he said, this will be the rights of the kings that will reign over you: He will ...and then away we go with the things that the king will do: let's just summarize them!

Verse 11, he would require their sons for military service.

Verse 12, he would use forced labour on crown lands and in the royal arsenals.

Verse 13, he would require their daughters for service in the royal kitchens.

Verse 14, he would confiscate lands to reward his ministers.

Verse 15, he would increase personal taxation.

Verses 16 and 17, he would appropriate their servants and their goods for his own purposes; **the rights of a king.**

I'll just run through those again! As above! and at the end of that choice description of the wonderful rights of the king, and how privileged the nation would be, to serve under this sort of regime, he says in verse 18, and this pretty well tells us how Samuel thought

about the matter, 'and ye shall cry out in that day because of **your king** which **ye** shall have chosen **you**', do you see the difference between that and Deuteronomy 17? If you're going to have a king, says Deuteronomy, let it be **whom Yahweh thy God shall chose**; Samuel knew what these people were all about, he says, 'you'll call out because of your king which you have chosen for yourself, and he says, 'Yahweh won't hear you!' Samuel understood that whereas they might have quoted Deuteronomy to him, that the intention of the nation at this time, was to establish a king in **their own image and after their own likeness**; their own feelings of what constituted the ideal sort of king. So he outlines therefore, the rights that a king would exercise upon them in those verses.

Verse 19, 'Nevertheless, the people **refused to obey the voice of Samuel**; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us; That we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles. And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he rehearsed them in the ears of Yahweh. And Yahweh said to Samuel, Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king. And Samuel said unto the men of Israel, Go ye every man into his city.' You know, it's interesting when you actually look at what goes on in this chapter, we actually have a very good illustration of how a proper theocracy should function, as to the monarchy. Well, let's just read a few verses together and just see what goes on in this chapter. Verse 6 at the end of verse, 'And Samuel prayed unto Yahweh; verse 7, 'Yahweh said to Samuel, hearken to their voice'; verse 10, 'Samuel told all the words of Yahweh unto the people'; verse 19, 'nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel'; verse 21, 'Samuel heard all the words of the people and he rehearsed them in the ears of Yahweh'; verse 22, 'Yahweh said to Samuel, and Samuel said to the men'. Now do you see what goes on in this chapter? this is really how a theocracy ought to operate, and Samuel's the **link**, isn't he? He's the **link between the people and their true King**. Everything is done here by means of direct communication with God; the people make their request, Samuel takes their request to God, God says to Samuel what is the divine intention, and Samuel passes it on to the nation. I believe, Samuel thought that was a much better way of government. He was **opposed to the monarchy**, he saw the monarchy as a distinctly inferior form of governing the nation, compared to this theocracy under which they already operated. This chapter is a superb example of it, everything was done by direct communication with God, and Samuel was the channel between the people and their God.

I want to just focus on the attitude of Samuel then, as we come to the end of this chapter.

Verse 22 says, 'And Yahweh said to Samuel, Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king. And Samuel said unto the men of Israel, Go ye every man to his city', you know there's a tremendous lesson that comes out of this chapter, I believe, about the attitude of Samuel in this particular matter. What do we know?

We know first of all, that he was **personally upset** at the suggestion, verses 6 and 7. We know he believed **the monarchy to be an inferior form of government** to the divine theocracy which had operated till now. We know that in chapter 12, it's going to

say that!

We also know he also believes, verse 18, that the king they were going to appoint was going to be **the people's choice and not God's choice**; and in this chapter he's going to have to be told 3 times, to do that which the people asked; where's that by the way? verse 7, 'Hearken unto the voice of the people'; verse 9, 'Now therefore, hearken unto their voice'; verse 22, 'Yahweh said to Samuel, hearken unto their voice'. You know, b&s, he had to be told 3 times to do that; he moves about as quickly as a snail on this matter to start with, he shows all the reluctance of an old man, resistant to change. But I'll tell you this, once he's convinced that this is truly Yahweh's will, you can't stop him.

Once Samuel has understood that God really intends for this to happen, he supports it absolutely. As he dismisses that assembly at the end of that 22nd verse, really the most important part of his life was about to begin. He's already an old man feeling the failing of his powers, and yet his most important work is just about to begin. Here is going to be his real work as a trailblazer, his greatest work, and therefore, the record is going to devote much, much more time to this part of his life onwards.

You know, it's almost frightening the way that Samuel goes about this; you know I said that once he decided that was God's will, he supported it. He supports it almost to the point of obsession! I want to show you what he did! it's remarkable really! For a man that wasn't enthusiastic about the idea, this is what he did, he was **Samuel the Preparer**: this was truly going to be his great work to usher in this new order of things!

1. He was going to anoint to office the first two kings and to counsel them on their responsibilities.
2. He was going to write a national constitution for the administration of Israel while under the monarchy.
3. He was going to plan and appoint the orders of duties relating to worship in the house of God.
4. He was going to organize the dedication of war spoils for the maintenance of the house.
5. He was going to revitalize the celebrations of the feasts.
6. He was going to establish the prophetic order.
7. He was going to write a history of the times.

Now you couldn't do any more than what Samuel did. When Samuel finally understood that God says 'I really do want to go ahead with this Samuel, he threw himself absolutely into that work. It's almost scary the way he goes about it! Now we're just going to have a look at one or two of those, by way of conclusion in the few minutes that are left to us. We won't look at all of these because we probably don't have time! Let's look at this one here! He wrote an national constitution , come and look at chapter 10 verse 25, by the way, I believe with all these things, they were done as an old man; this was his work as an old man. In chapter 10 verse 25 it says, 'Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before Yahweh. The word **'manner'** here is 'mishpat' (4941), 'the law or the ordinance', but the Jerusalem bible translates it this way, 'Then Samuel explained the royal constitution to the people and inscribed it in a book'. He wrote a charter for the nation, it's been suggested by the

way, and I think there's a measure of truth in this as well, that part of what he wrote here was the book of the Law. Do you know why? because remember what the requirements of that passage in Deuteronomy about kings was, what were kings required to do? they were required, it says, to write out their own copy of the Law, but in this appointment of the first king, that rule is already changed, and Saul doesn't write his own copy, Samuel writes it for him. Already as it were, there's an indication as to the fact, that Saul was unfit for this office. That Samuel has to perform for Saul, that which the Law required that Saul complete for himself. I believe, it was more that just the book of the Law, I believe that it was a charter for the administration of the nation under the era of the king. Now that in itself must have been an enormous task for Samuel (we're going to come to that later on)

You see what it says here, it says, 'He laid it up before Yahweh' what do you think that means, by the way? what do you think he did with it, if it says 'he laid it up before Yahweh'?

Actually I'll give you a clue on that one, if you come back to Deuteronomy 31, (this is just a suggestion here) Deuteronomy 31 verse 24, 'It came to pass that when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this Law in a book, until they were finished, Moses commanded the Levites which bare the ark of the covenant of Yahweh saying, Take this book of the Law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of Yahweh your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee'. He put the book of the Law in the side of the ark, would that not be 'to lay it up before Yahweh'? and this national constitution that he writes on the occasion of 1 Samuel 10, 'he lays it up before God'. By the way, I believe later on that he took the book out and he gave it to someone, that book, and we're going to come to that in our studies later on; he actually gave that book to someone else and it wasn't Saul.

Come and have a look at 1 Chronicles 9 verse 22, 'All these that were chosen to be porters in the gates were two hundred and twelve. These were reckoned by their genealogy in their villages, whom David and **Samuel the seer** did ordain in their set office'. So one of the things that Samuel was involved with, I believe, in the writing of this charter, was he planned and appointed the orders of duties, relating to worship in the house of God. He got it all planned out before the kings even came, he say, 'now I'm going to tell you how it's going to be; you want to have a king, well this is how the nation ought to be governed', and he planned out the affairs of worship that they should be properly organized. He oversaw the appointment of these people. In fact, do you see at the end of verse 22, it says 'whom Samuel the seer did ordain **in their set office**', actually the word 'set office' is not a good translation for that word, the word really means either 'faithfully or faithfulness' (530) and that's how it ought to be translated here; the Hebrew word is 'emuwnah' from 'aman' it means here literally 'faithfulness', whom Samuel the seer did ordain in their faithfulness', in other words, not only did he organize the office but he insured that those that were appointed to it, would discharge their responsibilities faithfully. Here's something interesting just by way of a side, you'd never guess actually which family in Israel that Samuel came from? or does anyone know? can you trace Samuel's lineage back for me? and how far can you take it? back

to the house of Korah! and remember the sons of Korah who stood aside from the tents of their father and were not swallowed up in the earthquake that swallowed up their father. Do you remember the words of the psalm that says, 'I'd rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness', which psalm is that, by the way? Psalm 84, I think, it's a psalm of the one of the sons of Korah, I'd rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, and Samuel who's of that very family, as a little boy opened the doors of the temple, and now as an old man, do you see the thing that he particularly wanted to appoint? He wanted to appoint the porters, verse 22; verse 23, 'So they and their children had the oversight of the gates of the house of Yahweh', and this chapter is all about the appointment of the doorkeepers; Samuel said, 'I want to do that!' and it had always been his personal families' responsibility down through time; the sons of Korah had been the **guardians of the house of God**. Samuel was intimately involved in all of that!

Look at this one here in 1 Chronicles 26 verse 26, 'Which Shelomith and his brethren were over all the treasures of the dedicated things, which David the king, and the chief fathers, the captains over thousands and hundreds, and the captains of the host, had dedicated. Out of the spoils won in battles did they dedicate **to maintain the house of Yahweh**. And all that Samuel the seer, and Saul the son of Kish, and Abner the son of Ner, and Joab the son of Zeruiah, had dedicated; and whosoever had dedicated any thing, it was under the hand of Shelomith and of his brethren'. So here is a chapter that tell us, that the spoils of war were used for the upkeep and for the maintenance of the house of God. In fact, the word, 'maintain' in verse 27 means to '**strengthen, to fortify, to establish the house of God**' (2388); you see, when you read those verses carefully, do you see what they're saying? You see, there were actually a whole lot of people that dedicated things, weren't there? but who started it off? It wasn't Joab, it wasn't Abner, it wasn't Saul and it wasn't David! it was, well, Samuel's the first chronologically of all the people named in this chapter. He's the one that begins this idea! Samuel's the trailblazer, he's the one that establishes the idea and other people come along and say, 'Oh, that's a good idea! I think we'll do that!' but it's Samuel that began that, the dedication of the spoils in order that the house of God might be maintained; not only that the system of worship might be organized but that the whole house itself might be maintained into the future.

We're told that he revitalized the standard of the feasts. Let's just have a look at that one while we're in Chronicles. 2 Chronicles 35 verses 17 and 18, 'And the children of Israel that were present kept the Passover at that time, and the feast of unleavened bread seven days. And there was no Passover like to that kept in Israel from the days of Samuel the prophet; neither did all the kings of Israel keep such a Passover as Josiah kept', so it's almost as if what the record is saying here is that there was no Passover kept down through the reign of the kings, in fact, if you go back in time, says the record, you'd have to go back to the days of, why! Samuel to find a feast quite like this one, like Josiah organized. Almost as if the feasts that were there in the days of Samuel became the **benchmark**, the measuring stick by which the quality and the fervour of later celebrations were to be measured, so he was obviously a man in his

own day, who revitalized the affairs of the nations wonderfully in that way.

Now, I don't know what you think, b&s, but that's an awful lot of work for an old man; at the end there, just to round things off, he wrote a history of the times! There's a tremendous lesson in that, isn't there? You see, this is a man's work for something he personally didn't agree with. That's what Samuel gave for something he didn't really agree with, and he didn't simple do it because he'd been told to hearken to the people, he did it because he believed that's what God wanted! If that's what God wanted then that's what Samuel would do. We call that dedication today, you know, **dedication** is almost something that's becoming old fashioned, isn't it? You don't do those sort of things today, do you know what we'd say about that today? **that's going over the top!** It's not how Samuel saw it; if Yahweh wants it, it shall be done! to the best, the very best, the absolute best of my ability! Even as an old man, he gave himself to the preparing of the nation, in every possible thing that he could think of, so that the reign of the kings might be fruitful. For that reason, and because of the wonderful character and example of that man, we believe, that we have all of these wonderful chapters that are now set forth before us, as we consider **his true work as a trailblazer in ushering in the monarchy, and in establishing the prophetic order; the days of Samuel, when as an old man, he made his sons judges.**