

— THE — Sunday School Lesson

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March 24, 1946

A PEOPLE GAINS NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Lesson: 1 Samuel 7:1-8, 13-15

Golden Text: Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well with you. Jeremiah 7:23.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

The chapter preceding our lesson tells of the birth and growth of Samuel. With him a new hope dawns for Israel. It is hope deferred for the ark is taken and the Philistines are victorious. God's judgments follow on the enemy (V-VI) and the ark is returned in the lesson today.

I. **ARK RESTORED:** 1 Samuel 7:1 **The men of Kirjathjearim came, and fetched up the ark of the Lord**—The unique way in which the Philistines chose to return the ark is described in the preceding chapter. When the men of Kirjathjearim received the message regarding the return of the ark, they no doubt consulted Samuel and he had encouraged them to bring it up to the house of Abinadab.

II. **REPENTANCE:** 2 **The time was long: for it was twenty years, and all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD**—The time referred to was without national worship. Samuel was laboring to the end that Israel would return to God. Lamented means (1) sorrow for sin (2) returning to Jehovah.

3. **If ye do return unto the Lord with all your heart then put away strange gods**—They could not worship God and have idols at the same time.

4. **Baalim**—"The plural of Baal, the chief god of the Canaanites. There were supposed to be various Baalim, the worship of whom was grossly immoral." **Ashtaroth**—"The plural of Ashtaroth, the name of the goddess associated with Baal" Bible dictionary.

5. **Gather all Israel to Mizpeh. and I will pray for you**—Mizpeh means "watch tower." It was a little north of Jerusalem. Moses and Samuel were outstanding men of prayer.

6. **Drew water and poured it out before the LORD, and fasted that day**—The pouring of water upon the ground was a symbolical ceremony signifying (1) the binding, irrevocable nature of their vows and promises. They were "as water spilt upon the ground which cannot be gathered up again" (2) "a symbol of pouring out before God confessions of sin drawn from the depths of the heart." (3) They thoroughly renounced idolatry that nothing of it should remain. Condensed from Peloubets notes.

7. **The lords of the Philistines went up against Israel**—A revival of religion generates a revival of opposition.

III. **INTERCESSION:** 8 **Cease not to cry unto the LORD our God for us**—From a child Samuel was recognized as a prophet whose messages emanated from God. This gave him great prestige with the people. The Israelites do not underestimate the strength of their enemies, but seek to do for them what they could not do for themselves.

IV. **VICTORY:** I. Samuel 17:13: **So the Philistines were subdued**—The four verses preceding this tell of the battle and how God intervened for Israel with a great thunderstorm which terrified the Philistines. **The hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel**—It was through the godly life and work of Samuel that Israel regained consciousness. He was the second Moses in Israel.

QUESTIONS AND THEMES FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why did the Philistines return the ark of God?
2. Give meaning of "lamented;" what is the real test of repentance?
3. What is the significance of pouring out water before the Lord?
4. What does a revival of religion often generate?
5. Why did Samuel have great prestige with the people? Tell what you know of his work in establishing the monarchy in Israel.

March 31, 1946

A NATION DEMANDS A KING

Lesson: I. Samuel 8:10-22

Golden Text: Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord. Psalm 33:12.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

We close this quarter with a lesson that describes the establishment of the Hebrew monarchy. This was one of the notable events in Israel's long history. Israel wanted a king because (1) Samuel's sons whom he appointed judges were unlike their father. They took bribes and were dishonest. At Samuel's death the people naturally would not want these men to rule over them. (2) Israel wanted to be like other nations which had kings to rule over them. (3) They were no doubt tired of having their prosperity depend upon their good behaviour. The leader which God gave them succeeded when they were obedient.

I. **A KING DEMANDED:** I. Samuel 8:10: **Samuel told all the words of the LORD unto the people,—that asked of him a king**—The people gathered at Samuel's home at Ramah to voice their demand for a king. In demanding a king the people evidently were rejecting theocracy or the direct rule of God over them.

II. **A KING DESCRIBED:** II: **This will be the manner of the king**—The description of the king as given here does not denote his constitutional prerogatives, but rather the way in which he will abuse his sovereign power. **He will take your sons and appoint them for himself**—The king will take some of your sons as his own servants.

12. **To ear his ground**—"To plow his ground." R. V.

13. **He will take your fields**—The very best of them, not only for himself, which would be bad enough, but for his nobles and officials as well.

15. **He will take the tenth of your seed**—The king will cost them as much as all the ordinances of religion and in addition will have all the ills of despotism.

16. **He will take your menservants**—This is pure forced labor.

17. **He will take the tenth of your sheep**—The king had no right to do thus according to law, but it was the practise of surrounding kings. See Deut. 17:14-20.

18. **Ye shall cry out in that day**—Because of the injustice of your king.

19. **Nay but we will have a king over us**—Suggests their determination to have a king regardless of their own best interests or the will of God.

20. **We also may be like all the nations**—An unworthy motive.

21. **Samuel heard all the words of the people**—The representatives of the people told Samuel all that the people had said at the assembly.

III. **A KING GRANTED:** 22 **Make them a king**—It seems that a king at this time was in the permissive will of God but not in His highest will. "A kingly government was by no means evil in itself, and indeed it had been provided for in Deut. 17:14. But for the nation to be immediately under the command of God, and to be, by his special interposition, in answer to fervent prayer, rescued from peril and trouble, was far better. Instead, however, of seeking the restoration of national prosperity by sincere repentance, the Israelites chose

to give up the peculiar privileges of theocracy and to resort to the principles and policies of other nations." Irwin's Bible Commentary.

QUESTIONS AND THEMES FOR DISCUSSION

1. Give reasons why Israel wanted a king.
2. What are some ways in which the king would exercise lordship?
3. Is man doomed to be unfit for theocratic government? See Judges 21:24-25; Gen. 8:21; Rom. 3:10-12. 13:3.
4. Shew that good things in life are often enemies of the best.
5. When is it wrong and when is it right to follow the example of other people or nations?

April 7, 1946

FRIENDS OF JESUS

Lesson: Mark 10:13-14; Luke 6:13-16; Luke 8:1-3; Luke 15:1-2; John 3:1-2

Golden Text: Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. John 15:14.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

This lesson is comprised of a miscellaneous group of Scriptures all dealing with the friends of Jesus.

I. **CHILDREN BROUGHT TO JESUS:** Mark 10:13 **They brought young children to him,—that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them**—Jesus was very busy and the disciples felt his time could be used to better advantage. Their attitude was contrary to the best interest of the children and parents. They thought they were helping Jesus but actually they were hindering him. Children should be brought to Jesus at the very earliest age possible and made to know his saving and sanctifying grace.

14. **Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God**—"The kingdom is made up of children, either children who die in their childhood or adults who become like little children in simple faith and trust." Higgley's Commentary. We must be careful however to distinguish between being child-like and childish.

II. **APOSTLES CHOSEN:** Luke 6:13 **He called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles**—This was so important that he spent the preceding night in prayer. The disciples included more than twelve. Apostle means "a messenger" or "one sent forth with orders."

14. **Simon (whom he also named Peter)**—Peter was a diamond in the rough. He was generally named first as he was the spokesman of the twelve and Judas, the traitor, was named last. **Andrew his brother**—He is known as the contact man. He brought his brother Peter to Jesus. John 1:41. He saw the lad with the fish and loaves, which when they were blessed, were used to feed the multitude. John 6:8-9. **James and John**—These men with Peter were the most active men in the church. **Philip**—A matter of fact, solid, fellow who when questioned said: "Come and see." Not Philip the evangelist in Acts. **Bartholomew**—His full name was probably "Nathaniel Bartholomew."

15. **Matthew**—A publican or tax gatherer. **Thomas**—One who asked questions and sometimes doubted. **James the son of Alphaeus**—Not of the former trio, Peter, James and John. **Simon called Zelotes**—Not the former Simon Peter.

16. **Judas the brother of James**—Not Judas Iscariot. **Judas Iscariot which was also the traitor**—What a sad climax to one who was once a converted man and an apostle. What a warning to preachers in particular, and Christians in general. "There is a road to Hell at the very gate of Heaven." Selfishness was the peculiar sin of his disposition and he was unwilling to be purged from it.

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