

I Samuel 7:1-12

SAMUEL AS INTERCESSOR FOR MERCY

- I. The preparation for mercy.
 - A. First, Israel must lose the old: Eli's family and Israel's attitude toward the ark of the covenant (chapters 4-6).
 1. After receiving his call (3) and noting that "the word of Samuel continued to come to all Israel" (4:1a), nothing more till 7:3.
 2. Suddenly we see Samuel preaching to Israel (7:3) – a record of what he had been doing for many years.
 - B. "All the house of Israel lamented after Jehovah" (2).
 - C. Samuel addressed Israel in her longing and remorse (3).
 1. This summarizes Samuel's preaching in various places within the nation for some period of time
 2. Now the time is ripe for Israel to go public officially and corporately by renewing covenant relations with Jehovah.
 - D. Only genuine repentance is the proper preparation for God's mercy.
- II. The experience of Jehovah's mercy.
 - A. Samuel called Israel together at Mizpeh (5).
 1. He desired to lead them altogether in public confession and repentance.
 2. The Philistines judged the gathering as a revolt rather than an expression of repentance.
 - B. In her severe trouble Israel only pleads with Samuel to intercede for them (8).
 1. Israel sees her helplessness and resorts only to desperate prayer.
 2. Walking by faith they rest only on Jehovah's mercy, knowing that they do not deserve it.
 - C. Such desperation is never in trouble when it rests on the Omnipotent One, Who blasts the Philistines with His thunder (10b).
 1. This is just what God had promised to do (Lev. 26:8; Deut. 28:7), and is what Hannah knew (2:10a).
 2. At the heart of the experience of mercy is the confession of helplessness without any help, except to pray.
- III. After Israel routed the Philistines, Samuel sets up a monument of God's mercy and explains its significance (12).
 - A. "Hitherto" means that up to this point Jehovah has helped.
 1. Samuel does commemorate the present help from Jehovah, but He sees the present help as an extension of prior help.
 2. Samuel also includes the 20 years of Philistine oppression, the deaths of the 30,000, the capture and return of the ark.
 - B. It is memory of past and present help which keep gratitude fresh, and gratitude keeps us exercising faith (cf. Isa. 63:9).