

# (1 Samuel) a Prophet Speaks to the Nation

by David Guzik

---

*David Guzik's sermon explores the transition of leadership in Israel and the importance of integrity and self-reflection before God.*

**Duration:** 29:01

**Scripture:** Exodus 3:7

**Topics:** "Faithfulness To God", "Spiritual Renewal"

---

## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of looking at the big picture of our walk with God. He uses the example of Samuel addressing the people of Israel and reminding them of their history with God. The speaker emphasizes that there are two ways to approach our relationship with God: one is to stay close to Him and walk faithfully like Samuel, and the other is to drift away slowly and forget about God, like the cycle Israel went through. The sermon encourages listeners to reflect on their own walk with God and strive to stay close to Him.

---

## Transcript

I think that this is an excellent text before us this morning to help us do something that we all need to do from time to time, and that's really take a close look at ourselves before the Lord. You know, it's been said that each one of us are really three people. There's the person that you think yourself to be, there's the person that others think you to be, and then there's the person that you really are before the Lord.

And what we really want to do is have the same kind of knowledge and understanding about ourselves that the Lord does, and to be able to be in that place. And you're going to see how our text this morning really helps us to enter into that and causes us to reflect on that. I think it's just amazing as we open up the Bible, and it's kind of strange what we're doing here together this morning.

I mean, if you think about it, I don't know where else people gather together and open up a book right now that the text that we're writing, this stuff happened about 3,000 years ago. This was written down about 3,000 years ago, and we're opening up, and we're going to find that it's just as relevant or more relevant to our hearts than anything you can go down and buy in a bookstore today. You read that stuff in the bookstore, and I just scratched my head at it.

You know, what am I talking about? I don't see how this relates, but this really hits our life right where it's at. Let's pick it up here, 1 Samuel chapter 12, beginning at verse 1. Now, Samuel said to all Israel, Indeed,

I have heeded your voice in all that you said to me and have made a king over you. You see, here we're at an important transition part in the history of Israel.

Israel was dissatisfied with how they saw things in front of them, and for very ungodly reasons, they wanted a king to be placed over them. Samuel didn't like it, the Lord didn't like it, but the Lord was going to allow it to do a work in the hearts and in the minds of Israel. And so they sought God, or Samuel sought the Lord on the nation's behalf, and they brought forth this man who would be king over them, and this man was Saul.

Saul was a king who was all about image. We've been calling him on Sunday mornings the king from central casting, because that's what he was about. He was about looking the part, but not really being the part.

And as Samuel appointed Saul to be king, Saul rose to this place of leadership, but he wasn't really accepted by much of the nation. Instead, he had to wait until the Lord really confirmed his leadership through some amazing victories over the Ammonite enemies in 1 Samuel chapter 11. But after the Lord brought that all together and really put Saul in a firm place as king over the nation of Israel, now in chapter 12, verse 1, Samuel is addressing the whole nation, and he's letting the nation know that he's done what they've asked.

He's set a king up over them. But now notice how he continues on in verse 2. He says, And now here is the king walking before you, and I am old and gray-headed. And look, my sons are with you.

I have walked before you from my childhood to this day. Samuel wanted it clearly known that it wasn't his idea to appoint a king over Israel. That idea began in the hearts and in the minds of the people of Israel, not in the heart and mind of God.

But as Samuel comes before the nation, he wants them to know, I'm passing on a torch of leadership here. You see, for hundreds of years, Israel had been led by a group of leaders known as the judges, and these weren't standing leaders that would pass on leadership from father to son, as you would in a monarchy. These were leaders that were raised up from crisis to crisis, from need to need.

But now Israel was going to receive a king, and Samuel wants the whole nation to know, I'm passing on a torch of leadership to Saul. I'm going to decrease from my place, but Saul is going to increase in his place. And that's exactly the kind of heart that Samuel shows here, and it's the heart of a truly godly man.

He's willing to pass from the scene when God raises up another leader. Samuel's heart is much like the heart of John the Baptist in the book of John, chapter three, where John the Baptist said of Jesus, he must increase, but I must decrease. God knows and has worked into the heart of Samuel this knowledge that his day is passing, but the day of Saul is continuing on and will grow stronger and stronger.

And so Samuel stands for the nation and says, listen, here's the king. I'm old and gray-headed. My day's passed.

Here's the time for the next leader that the Lord is going to bring before you. By the way, there's a couple of interesting words there in verse two that really struck me where it simply says, and look, my sons are with you. What's so interesting about that? I mean, who cares, right? You know, oftentimes it's the little things in the Bible that if we'll really look at them and understand them, they can give us real insights into somebody's character.

And I feel that I know something better about Samuel by understanding what he means by those words. And look, my sons are with you here. Let me help you understand what Samuel means.

Keep your finger there in 1 Samuel chapter 12, but turn back to 1 Samuel chapter 8. Chapter 8 of this same book, you're going to see how this whole desire to have a king began among the people of Israel. Now, it came to pass when Samuel was old that he made his sons judges over Israel. The name of his firstborn was Joel and the name of the second Abijah.

They were judges in Beersheba, but his sons did not walk in his ways. They turned aside after dishonest gain, took bribes and perverted justice. Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah and said to him, Look, you're old and your sons do not walk in your ways.

Now make for us a king to judge us like all the nations. You see, Samuel had a plan for what would happen in the leadership of Israel after he passed in the scene. He thought that his sons would be raised up and be prominent leaders in Israel.

But the elders of Israel came and said, You know what? Your sons aren't qualified, Samuel. We don't want your sons to rule over us. Now, you know what Samuel did that was very godly? He didn't put his sons in leadership.

I mean, notice this. When he says in 1 Samuel chapter 12, verse 2, My sons are with you. What he means is my sons are just part of the assembly of Israel.

They're just part of the congregation. They're just part of the nation. They're not up in leadership.

My sons are with you. You've told me that they're ungodly. And so here my sons are with you.

But God has raised up a new king, a king over Israel named Saul. And so now as he talks to these people and as he continues on in verse 3 of 1 Samuel chapter 12, Saul is speaking. Samuel speaking to the nation.

And he says, Here I am. Witness against me before the Lord and before his anointed. Whose ox have I taken or whose donkey have I taken? Or whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed? Or from whose hand have I received any bribe with which to blind my eyes? I will restore it to you.

Samuel remembers his humble beginnings before the people and how even as a little baby he was, well, not as a baby. Let's say as a toddler, perhaps he was serving the Lord. If you remember that, some very precious scenes from the beginning chapters of 1 Samuel where Samuel was dedicated under the Lord as a little baby.

And the Lord raised him up and grew him up in the things of God. And there he was serving the nation, even at that little time. And he says, From that very time, you've seen me and you've seen my leadership before you.

And simply put in verse 3, Samuel, this is a challenge. And he speaks to the nation and he says, I haven't defrauded. I haven't oppressed.

I haven't been corrupt in any way. And he says, If I've done it, come forward now and declare it. Now, can you imagine a leader on a national scale? Because Samuel was a leader of Israel, a leader on a national scale standing up before the people and say, Hey, listen, if I've defrauded or oppressed or been corrupt in

any way, lay it out before me right now.

That seems even more unbelievable than ever that a leader of a nation would do that. But here Samuel does it. You know why Samuel can do it? Because he knows where his own heart has been in leadership before the nation.

And he knows that he's walked in integrity. And so he just lays it out before the people there. There's not many people who could give such an invitation.

Go ahead and accuse me. But Samuel does it. Now, we might ask ourselves the question, why does Samuel do what might seem to be such a purely self-justifying and self-glorifying thing? I mean, is Samuel sort of standing for the people, you know, saying, Yeah, look at me.

Aren't I holy? Aren't I godly? You know, look at what a great man I am. No, that's not the point at all. You see, my friends, from what we know of the character of Samuel and other passages, we have to believe that this is much more than Samuel saying, Look at how good I am.

Instead, Samuel wants the nation to know that he's passing on a good legacy of leadership to the new king, Saul. He wants Israel to recognize that if the new king has troubles, it's not because Samuel's left him a mess. Instead, it's because Samuel's done everything he could.

He's entrusted to Saul, and now Saul's on his own. If Saul turned out to be a poor leader, no one could say that it was because he had a bad example set by Samuel. You see, the whole point of it is Samuel is very conscious that he's passing on the torch of leadership to Saul, and he wants everybody to know that this torch is burning brightly when he hands it over to Saul.

There's also a couple other words in verse three that just get little words that strike me. Look at the very end of it. He says, Have I oppressed, or from whose hand I have received any bribe, with which to blind my eyes? He goes, I will restore it to you.

In other words, hey, maybe I have done something wrong without knowing it. That's the case. He says, state it now, and I want to make it right.

I will restore it. And so here's Samuel, very boldly, very confident, lays out this challenge before the nation. Okay, who have I wronged? Who have I defrauded? Who have I oppressed? And look at what the nation responds.

Verse four. And they said, You have not defrauded us or oppressed us, nor have you taken anything from any man's hand. And he said to them, The Lord is witness against you and his anointed is witness this day that you have not found anything in my hand.

And they answered, He is witness. In other words, Israel knew that Samuel had been a good and a godly leader. What a priceless testimony for Samuel to have in his heart.

And how precious it was for him to be able to stand before his own people and to hear them affirm the integrity of his leadership. And Samuel could only make that challenge because he knew the answer ahead of time. He stood up there and he made it.

And so he says, Listen, the matter is settled. The Lord is witness. The Lord is witness.

His anointed is witness. That's a reference to King Saul, who was right beside him. Again, he's very consciously passing on the torch of leadership to Saul.

And he says, Here it is. My friends, I just want you to think of that kind of legacy that Samuel was passing on. To be able to say that before the people was really a gift that he was giving to the people of his own leadership.

He goes, Here it is. Now it's time for God to raise up somebody else. But as they do that, Samuel knows that their hearts need to be prepared.

And so he's going to talk to them beginning at verse six with what they can do to prepare their hearts. Notice what he says here. Verse six.

And Samuel said to the people, It is the Lord who raised up Moses and Aaron and who brought your fathers up from the land of Egypt. Now, therefore, stand still that I may reason with you before the Lord concerning all the righteous acts of the Lord, which he did to you and your fathers. Now, Samuel is going to sit down.

If you just imagine the scene here, here he is speaking before this great assembly of the nation. The new king is there. He's passing on the torch of leadership.

And as Samuel's there before the whole nation, he says, Let's have a history lesson. Let me tell you some things about our history. But if you notice where he's focusing on his history, he's not focusing on what the people of Israel did.

He's focusing on, he says it there in verse seven, all the righteous acts of the Lord, which he did to you and your fathers. Now, there's two ways you can approach history, right? You can take a look at what the Lord's done. You can take a look at what you've done in your life or you can take a look at what the Lord's done in your life.

Once a lot more pleasant picture to look at than the other, isn't it? And so Samuel says, Let's take a look at the righteous acts of the Lord among the people of Israel. And he begins here at verse eight, where he says, When Jacob had gone into Egypt and your fathers cried out to the Lord, then the Lord sent Moses and Aaron, who brought your fathers out of Egypt and made them dwell in this place. This is the first righteous act of the Lord that Samuel is going to talk about to the people when the Lord delivered them from the slavery in Egypt and brought them into the promised land.

Now, everybody, that's a righteous act of the Lord. Thank you, Lord, for doing that again. He's starting back hundreds of years before and he's saying, Look at this righteous act of the Lord that he did in the life of our nation.

OK, that's the first one, the deliverance from Egypt. Secondly, look at verse nine. And when they forgot the Lord, their God, he sold them into the hand of Sisera, commander of the army of Hazor into the hand of the Philistines and into the hand of the king of Moab.

And they fought against them. Israel should also remember how God allowed a disobedient Israel to be under the domination of their enemies. What did God do when they turned away from him? He sold them into the hand of Sisera, into a man who is against them.

And so this was a chastisement intending to bring them to repentance. Again, this was one of the righteous acts of the Lord. And we might just want to pause right here and consider on our mind something.

It's very easy for us to see how the deliverance from Egypt was a righteous act of the Lord. Yeah, yeah. Way to go, Lord.

Yeah, yeah. Deliver from Egypt. Then he says, You know what? The chastisement that he brought in the days of the judgment, that was also a righteous act of the Lord.

So the first one was Egypt. The second one was the chastisement in the days of the judges. Now look at the third righteous act of the Lord.

Verse 10. Then they cried out to the Lord and said, We have sinned because we've forsaken the Lord and served the Baals and Asherah. But now deliver us from the hand of our enemies and we will serve you.

And the Lord sent Jeroboam, Badan, Jephthah and Samuel and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side. And you dwelt in safety again as the third righteous act of the Lord. They should remember how when they cried out to the Lord, he would deliver them.

Israel should remember that when they cried out to God, confess their sin and humble themselves in repentance before him, that he delivered them. This is one of the righteous acts of the Lord. I think there's a few interesting things about this.

First of all, I'm just struck by the different names that are mentioned there. Look at verse 11. Jeroboam, Badan, Jephthah and Samuel.

Well, who are these guys? We all know who Samuel is, right? He's the guy speaking right now. Well, who's Jeroboam? Jeroboam? Well, Jeroboam is another name for Gideon. If you take notes in your Bible, you might want to write down next to there, Judges chapter 6, verse 32, because that's the passage where it lets us know that Gideon was also known by the name of Jeroboam.

So when it says Jeroboam, it's talking about Gideon in the book of Judges. Well, there's also another judgment in there. Jephthah.

Who's that guy? Well, Jephthah, he's another man mentioned in the book of Judges. So we have Jeroboam, Badan, Jephthah and Samuel. Who's this Badan guy? Again, I just kind of find this interesting.

Again, one of the little things of the Bible. But you take a look and say, well, who's Badan? Where was he in the book of Judges? And the answer is, we don't know. There's no mention of him.

And obviously, this drives the Bible scholars and commentators wild. They just can't let it well enough alone. They have to say he's somebody.

So some people say, well, he's Barak, the man who was there with Deborah in defeating the enemies of God and delivering the people of Israel. It must be Barak because some ancient translations, instead of saying Badan, they have Barak there. That's it.

Others say, well, no, in some other ancient translations, it's another judge named Jair. It must be this guy because it's there. And other people say, well, no, actually, it's referring to Samson because the name

Badan can be translated Ben Dan, son of Dan.

And Samson was from the tribe of Dan. You can see how further these things get out and out and out. And it's just trying to grasp for any kind of explanation.

Can I just say, who cares? Does it really make any difference? I mean, honestly, God did more works of deliverance for Israel than are recorded in the scriptures. Maybe there was a guy that he rose up to deliver the nation that's not even mentioned in the book of Judges. And his name was Badan.

But I think what's more important than who these specific men were or what they specifically done, I think it's interesting that Samuel makes a list of them. Now, when you have several different deliverers, there's two things that it tells you. The first thing it tells you when there's several different deliverers is that you need a lot of deliverance.

It means you're in trouble a lot. You need help a lot. And so God had to send many.

Was Jephthah good enough? Did he do the whole job himself? No. Was Jeroboam good enough? Did he? No. They kept getting into trouble.

They kept needing deliverers. Now, friends, this was the whole story of Israel's history during this cycle that Samson, excuse me, that Samuel is talking about. In this whole cycle that Samuel relates to them, Israel kind of had a story that followed their relationship with God.

And you know what? You might be able to relate it to your own relationship with God. Here it is. It starts out like this.

They're walking with the Lord and God is blessing them. Oh, it's so great. God's blessing is everywhere.

It's so great. They're just being blessed and they're comfortable and they're prosperous. God is blessing.

Next point over, point number two. Because of their prosperity and comfort and blessing, they start forgetting about God. And they start just doing their own thing and they just lose sight of the Lord.

You know, it's easy to do sometimes when things are going so well. You're just losing sight of the Lord. And so that's point number two.

They begin to lose sight of the Lord. Point three, God brings a chastisement to Israel. He allows some kind of oppression or chastisement to come upon Israel and they have to face that.

They have to deal with it. Now, as we relate this to our own lives, let me relate something that's very important for us to understand. When God allows that kind of thing to arise in our life, it's not punishment.

We need to understand that we're in a different place than Israel in the Old Testament was. Israel in the Old Testament lived on that side of the cross. We live on this side of the cross.

We live after the finished, completed work of Jesus Christ. So, friends, it's very important for us to understand that all of the punishment that our sin deserved was put on Jesus. Do you believe that? If you're trusting in Jesus, if you're trusting in what he did on the cross to save you and not trusting in what you can do to save yourself, if you're trusting in what Jesus did on the cross, then the complete payment for the penalty that your and my sin deserved, it was put on Jesus.

So the answer is, how much is left over for you to pay yourself? None. How much is left over for you to pay for through the trials and sufferings you go through? None. How much is left for you to pay for through purgatory, some so-called purgatory in the world beyond? None.

Jesus took the punishment that our sin deserved, period. You say, well, listen, if Jesus took all the punishment that my sin deserved, then why do I feel that God has his whooping stick out on me and it still hurts? Well, because, friends, there's a difference between punishment and discipline. You might say, well, they both hurt.

Well, yeah, they both hurt. But there's a complete different purpose between the two. Punishment is trying to make you pay for your wrong, to pay for your sin.

Discipline is simply trying to train you in the right way. I mean, think of a kid on a high school athletic team, and there he is, and the coach is making him run wind sprints and wind sprints and wind sprints. And you know what? You need to run 50 more wind sprints, and the kid's just dying out there.

And he goes, my coach must hate me. My coach must want to punish me because he's making me do all this stuff. I can't take any more of this.

And if you would ask the coach, the coach would say, I don't hate that kid. I'm not trying to punish him. He just needs to be trained.

He needs to be made in the kind of athlete that he needs to be. And this kid came to me flabby. This kid came to me out of shape.

He needs to be trained. He needs to be disciplined. And sure, the kid's hurting, but it's not out of punishment.

It's out of discipline. So, friends, that's the third point in our little cycle here. The first one is God is blessing.

The second one is kind of complacency and disobedience. The third place is this place of correction that God brings you to. And then what's the fourth place? The fourth place is crying out to God in repentance, right? God brings out the whooping stick, and we feel it.

Oh, Lord, I'm so sorry, God. We repent, and we get right before God, and we pour out our hearts before Him. And the Lord takes that, and the Lord takes it to heart, and God receives it all.

And it's just a beautiful thing. And our hearts are right with God. And then what happens next? God starts blessing.

And so you're back on that cycle again, and cycle, cycle. I don't know what some of you think. You're thinking, the pastor can follow me around and see what my Christian life is like.

That's not, he shouldn't, what, is God telling him? No, that's how it is for a lot of us in our Christian life. Our Christian life is like the spin cycle on the washing machine. You know, it just goes around and around.

It's just this cycle here. Friends, that's why Israel was in the place where they needed so many deliverers, because they were always back in that same place where they needed deliverance. It was just cycle, after cycle, after cycle.

They were just trapped in this. And God didn't want it to be like that, but that's where Israel was at. So when there's so many deliverers, it first shows us that they need a lot of deliverance.

The second thing that it shows us is that God didn't need any one deliverer. So Rehoboam's day is done, then bring up Badon. Badon's day is done, bring up Jephthah.

Samuel's day is done, then bring up King Saul. The torch of leadership gets passed on, and there it goes from place to place. Even if Samuel is old and gray-headed, God can now raise up Saul.

Samuel's pouring out his heart before the nation, telling them about this, exposing to them in this history lesson the cycle that they've been going through. Now, look at how he states it here in verse 12. And this is the verse that we'll conclude with here this morning.

It says, And when you saw that Nahash, king of the Ammonites, came against you, you said to me, No, but a king shall reign over us when the Lord your God was your king. Now, you know what I like about this is, Samuel begins this history lesson way back in the days of the Exodus, way back when Israel was enslaved in Egypt. And he brings it up right to the present time, because the events that he was talking about, the deliverance from Nahash the Ammonite, that had just happened in Israel's history.

That had just happened. And here it is at the great convocation or celebration or confirmation of Saul's kingship immediately after that event. And do you see what Samuel's trying to do for the people of Israel? He's trying to give them the big picture of their walk with God.

He's saying, Here's the big picture. All the way back from the time of the Exodus, all the way to the present time, here's the big picture. I want to put it before you and I want you to look at it.

Now, starting with next week, we're going to see in the second part of the chapter, how he applies some of that. But I just want you to think for a minute how Samuel puts before the people of Israel this big picture of what God has been doing in their lives. How would it look for you if you did the same thing? You know, there's two different ways you can do photography.

Some people are into the really up close photography and they get the super zoom lenses and they want to come in really close and they do those head shots so you can see every pore on the person's face. It's like, wow, that's really up close. You know, there's a value in doing that kind of pinpoint look at our Christian life.

Then there's another kind of photography you can do, right? Where you take that panoramic view. You take the camera way back and you're looking for the big picture. I think a lot of times we're very aware of how God is shining his spotlight on different things in our life, right? You give me a spotlight here, spotlight here.

God's doing that. But why don't you pull the camera back right now this morning and take a look at what the Lord is doing in your life in the big picture. I don't know how long you all have been walking with the Lord, but let's just say, you know, it's been for a number of years.

Well, how does the big picture from your walk with the Lord from five years ago look right now? You know, take that span five years ago to now. How does that picture look? Say, wow, it looks, you know, like a stock market chart, you know, up, down, up, down, up, down. That's what it looks like.

Oh, you know, I don't know about that. Others of you would look at that and go, you know what? Praise God. I look at my life before the Lord and I look at where I was five years ago and I see that, you know, I've grown.

I'm just in a much better place with the Lord. I want to thank the Lord for that. And you think, in the Holy Spirit, just giving assurance to your heart.

Yeah, way to go. There's others of you take a look at that five year picture or whatever amount of time you want to sign to it. You take a look at that bigger picture and you know what? It's convicting to you.

You say, you know what? I used to be just a lot more on fire. There hasn't been any dramatic departure. It's not like you woke up one day and said, you know what? I'm just going to kind of set back.

But it's just been a slow drift. But you couldn't see it until right now as you take a look at that big picture, at the panorama. And you look at it now and you say, hey, you know what? That's not exactly what I wanted to see.

Right now, you feel convicted about that. Friends, think of the two pictures of a walk with God that we've seen this morning in the big picture. You can have a walk with God like Samuel's, where he says, look at my day since childhood.

This is how I walked before you. And we go, yeah, Samuel, that's where we want to be. Or you can be like Israel and have the spin cycle thing going then around, around, around, where there's a lot of movement, perhaps, but not much progress because all you're doing is going in a circle.

Lord would speak to your heart this morning and say, I want you to pull the camera back and take a look at that big picture. And I want to speak to your heart about where I've got you going from a long time ago to now and where I'm going to head you on in the future. Now, Samuel will be talking to the people about that in the end part of this chapter.

And that's what we'll be taking a look at next week. And you shouldn't read it. Well, no, you can read ahead.

That's OK. It's not going to spoil anything if you read ahead. That's fine.

But you see, the important thing that I think we should take from this morning is say, Lord, give us a vision for what you're doing in that big picture. And I would tell you that God would want you to do something in response to that. Whether the big picture looks positive, whether it just makes you kind of say, Lord, I don't know what you're doing.

Maybe I need to get things right with you in a way that they haven't been. You might not have seen that looking at the pinpoint, but at the big picture, it raises another perspective in your life. Well, you know, I think we need to pray and ask the Holy Spirit just to speak to our hearts and give us the kind of perspective that Samuel was trying to give to the people of Israel and help us to walk on further with him.

Let's pray together.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/david-guzik/1-samuel-a-prophet-speaks-to-the-nation/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**