



CAPITOL COMMISSION

Folly vs. Faithfulness (I Samuel 12:1—14:15)

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Capitol Commission state directors are missionaries who teach weekly verse-by-verse Bible studies for legislators, lobbyists, and staff members. These Bible studies are hand-distributed to each legislative office, emailed, and made available throughout the Capitol community. The love and grace of God compels us to proclaim the truth of the Gospel with a heartfelt compassion for the Capitol community, to faithfully teach and apply the Word of God, and it is our desire to build meaningful relationships that bear fruit for an eternity to come.

With the Bible as our foundation and authority, the mission of Capitol Commission is obedience to the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20) within the Capitol communities of the world. We are not a lobbying group attempting to garner votes or reform society. Our mandate is to see the hearts and lives of elected officials transformed with the Word of God. Capitol Commission is a ministry of the church seeking to proclaim the gospel message, and to help believers mature through the verse-by-verse teaching of Scripture. In the Bible, we see God's great love for the world, especially for those who have been placed in authority. This is the foundation for our ministry to you.

The church is instructed to submit and to honor government leaders (Rom 13:1-7), and as a matter of first importance, to pray for their salvation (1 Tim 2:1-4). Our desire is witness God transform the hearts and lives of elected officials, lobbyists, and staff members. We apply this mandate to four major areas of making disciples: (1) *evangelize* those who have not experienced saving faith in Jesus Christ; (2) *establish* those who desire to grow in their faith and knowledge of Scripture; (3) *equip* those called to spiritual leadership; and, (4) *encourage* churches to participate with us in ministry.

Introduction

Although its success is debated, *Contract with America* is historically significant as a bold plan in 1994 by certain House members to enact eight major reforms on the first day of the 104th Congress, and to bring ten major bills to the House Floor within the first hundred days. The ten-point program was announced in late September, and received the support of more than 300 candidates for Congress. Prior to the November 1994 midterm elections, these candidates pledged: "If we break this contract, throw us out."

God's "contract" with His people is called a "covenant" in the Old Testament. God made a covenant with Israel at Mount Sinai, and prepared and appointed leaders over the people of Israel. First Samuel 8 records Israel's demand for a king despite God's warning. First Samuel 9 indicates God's choice of Saul as king. As leader of the nation, Saul was not excluded from obedience to the stipulations of the covenant. Saul broke the covenant, unfortunately, and God therefore removed him from leadership.

LEADERS MUST BE TRANSPARENT

(12:1-25) First Samuel 11:15 records the gathering of all Israel at Gilgal to offer sacrifices to God and to reaffirm Saul's leadership. Samuel seized the opportunity to address Israel in a long and somber farewell speech. *First*, the elderly prophet and judge confirmed that he listened to the people by appointing a king over them (12:1). The statement is profound because it indicated a "turning point" in Israel's history (cf. Josh 24; Judg 2; 1 Kgs 8; 2 Kgs 17). Just as Israel was at a "crossroad of faith," so Americans today must also make crucial decisions, which determine the manner in which we will progress in response to the many challenges we encounter as a nation. The decision will have extensive consequences. Samuel's call to the nation to remember "the LORD their God" indicates the priority of prayer and the Word of God as the means for strength and success. We are all accountable to the Lord God for our actions, attitudes, and motivations.

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Secondly, the speech focused upon an examination of Samuel's conduct as judge (12:2-5). Samuel did not assume that he would be vindicated, but declared if he were guilty of any wrongdoing, he would rectify it. The people commended Samuel by confirming that he had not stolen, cheated, or oppressed the people, or received a bribe (cf. Lev 6:2-4; Deut 16:19). Samuel's actions demonstrate the necessity of leaders to be transparent, that is, genuine and unconcealing. Servant leaders are not exempt from ethical standards; rather, the same precepts are equally applicable to all (12:14-15).

TRANSPARENT LEADERSHIP

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| (1) Accountability to God's people (12:3; cf. Jas 5:16) |
| (2) Accountability to the Lord God (12:5) |
| (3) Accountability to other servant leaders (12:5) |

CAPITOL COMMISSION BIBLE STUDIES ~ GEORGIA

LEGISLATORS AND LOBBYISTS: TUESDAYS @ 7:30AM, 514 CLOB (DURING THE LEGISLATIVE SESSION)

STAFF: TUESDAYS @ NOON, 514 CLOB (CURRENTLY IN FURLOUGH)

Following his examination, Samuel evaluated the relationship of the people to God. Their fear of an earthly king, Nahash the Ammonite, caused the people to forget their heavenly king and to seek an earthly king like all the other nations. The lack of trust in God was sin. God's displeasure was evident in His sending of an unusual event (12:17-18; cf. Exod 19:16). The heavenly display resulted in contrite confession of sin (12:19), and Samuel assured the people that God would forgive them (12:20-23). However, if the people persisted in sin, they and their leader would be destroyed (12:24-25).

LEADERS MUST BE WISE

(13:1-15) Chapter 13 records the foolish impatience of Saul. The most persistent and threatening enemy during these times was the Philistines. Saul sought to repel them from the territory of Benjamin by assembling a capable military force (13:1-4). The army under the command of Saul's son was successful. However, the Philistines responded with even greater numbers than Israel (13:5-7). Saul's soldiers panicked in response to the threat, and abandoned the army.

Saul remained at Gilgal for seven days waiting for Samuel to arrive and offer the prebattle sacrificial rites. Only Samuel was qualified to offer the ritual sacrifice. On the seventh day, Samuel had not arrived and the people were scattering (13:8). "So Saul said, 'Bring to me the burnt offering and the peace offerings.' And he offered the burnt offering. As soon as he finished offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came" (13:9-10a). God tested Saul's willingness to trust Him under pressure. Saul did not wait for God to prove Him right, but took the "path of least resistance," which often leads to disaster. Samuel was furious with such insubordination to the divinely inspired orders (13:13). Saul failed to submit to God's Word through His prophet. He also failed to be responsible for his actions and impulses (13:11-12; cf. Gen 3:12-13).

LEADERS MUST BE WISE TO SEEK BIBLICAL COUNSEL TO DETERMINE THE PRECEPTS OF GOD, AND THEN TRUST GOD TO PROVE THEM RIGHT.

Saul's dynasty could have endured forever, but would now be brought to an end (13:14). Saul's disobedience not only affected him, but also his children. One of the most sinister aspects of sin is that it rarely affects only one person. Our actions, attitudes, and motivations do affect the lives of others. Obedience to God's Word not only enriches our lives but also those close to us, just as disobedience ensnares us and prevents others from being recipients of God's blessings.

The purpose of the offerings was for Samuel to seek guidance from the Lord and to relay instructions for the battle (cf. 10:8). Saul's actions demonstrated that he did not believe it was necessary to seek the Lord nor wait for His provision. Saul disregarded the covenant with the Lord by acting on his own. Leaders must be wise to seek biblical counsel to determine the precepts of God, and then trust God to prove them right. To "prove what the will of God is" (Rom 12:2), one must "have the mind of Christ," which means knowing the power and wisdom of God through the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor 1:18—2:16). You must be "born again" (John 3:1-21).

LEADERS MUST BE FAITHFUL

(13:16—14:15) "Now Saul and his son Jonathan and the people who were present with them" redeployed to Geba, which was near Saul's capital city of Gibeah. The Philistines made camp nearby at Michmash, and divided their troops into three divisions to prevent Saul's camp from receiving reinforcements. They also controlled the metal trade, and left Israel with technologically inferior weapons (13:16-23). Saul's disobedience left the nation with little hope.

We have often heard, "the apple does not fall far from the tree," which means children are often like their parents. Jonathan is an exception to that popular idiom. Saul was not faithful or obedient to God's covenant, but Jonathan was courageous and faithful despite overwhelming opposition. Jonathan and his armor bearer left the Israelite camp without anyone's knowledge to scout the Philistine camps. Jonathan did not presume that God would grant him victory, but first sought the will of the Lord. Jonathan knew the Lord could work on their behalf because He "is not restrained to save by many or by few" (14:6). "The LORD shall cause your enemies who rise up against you to be defeated before you; they will come out against you one way and will flee before you seven ways" (Deut 28:7).

When they arrived at the Philistine garrison, God gave them a sign indicating His will (14:10). Jonathan was victorious over the Philistines because He had the resolve to determine the will of God and to be obedient to it. Jonathan's victory stunned the entire Philistine army. God even sent an earthquake to confirm that He caused the panic (14:15). Saul's disobedience affected him and the lives of those close to him. Jonathan's obedience was a catalyst for a tremendous deliverance. The things we do in life will always impact the lives of others. My prayers are for you to be a godly example in your conduct to those who trust you to forsake personal ambition (and even your political career, if necessary) to serve the best interests of our nation. Would you resolve this day to demonstrate faithful leadership by relying upon prayer and the Word of God as the means of your strength and success?