

[R1882 : page 244]

SAMUEL THE JUDGE.

– *NOV. 3. – 1 SAM. 7:5-15. –*

**Golden Text – "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us."
– 1 Sam. 7:12.**

SAMUEL succeeded Eli as Judge in Israel, and was the last of the judges, the office of Judge being superseded by that of king. Chapter 12 contains his farewell address as judge, after he had anointed Saul to be king. But nevertheless it is written that "Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life." (Verse 15.) In a sense – in the estimation of the people – the office of judge was superseded by that of king, and Samuel's term of office ended with Saul's elevation to the throne. But in God's reckoning he was a judge over and above the king to the end of his life; and in this capacity, under God's direction, he anointed Saul as king, and later he anointed David to be Saul's successor.

Prior to the events of this lesson Samuel had spent some years in endeavoring gradually to influence the public sentiment toward repentance and reformation; and finally he gathered them together at Mizpeh that there he might intercede with God on their behalf, and that they might there make a solemn confession of their sins to God and covenant afresh to walk in his ways. This solemn return of the nation to God was, in answer to the prayer of his faithful servant Samuel, followed by an immediate manifestation [R1883 : page 244] of the Lord's acceptance and favor toward them in delivering them from the yoke of the Philistines.

In observing these remarkable providences on behalf of the nation of Israel, we should never lose sight of the fact that these special dealings with that nation were peculiar to them only; and that because they had come into covenant relationship with God. God's care and favor were over that nation only, of all the nations of the earth. Even their national penalties for sin were marks of the divine favor; for God wisely disciplined them for their good – to purge them from sin, to

correct them and keep them near himself. And this divine favor was never taken from them until, as a nation, they rejected and crucified the Son of God. Since that time they have had no favor. Nor will God's favor return to them until, as Paul states, the fulness of the Gentiles shall have come into possession of the chief blessing, which time is now at hand.

In the interim the special favor of God has been shown to the spiritual seed of Abraham, the faithful overcoming saints of the Gospel age. As God led and disciplined and delivered and cared for his ancient people, so now he bestows the same attentions upon his faithful church, both collectively and individually. And how often we are similarly impelled by a sense of his care and love to sing –

"Here I'll raise my Ebenezer, hither by thy help I'm come!"

We now are God's covenant people: let us be faithful followers; "for, as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the Sons of God."
