

I MUST RETURN

T'was such a little step I took
The day I left the Lord,
It wasn't but a moment
That I turned me from His Word.
But while I turned, a cloud of sin
Obscured His blessed face,
And robbed me of my confidence
In Him—and in His grace.

I thought, "It's such a tiny step,
Return will not be hard.
Just ONE step out means ONE step back."
But now, soul deeply scarred,
I realize how wrong I was.
Just one step from His track
Means miles and miles I'll have to go
In order to get back.

I know that where I left Him
I shall find Him once again.
I doubt that He has even moved,
So deep His hurt—His pain.
But if it takes eternity,
I'll seek once more His face,
Admit, as did the Prodigal
My sin—my low disgrace.

For HIS are all the paths I know
Where I can be at rest;
And earth can have her multitude
Of all that's LESS than BEST!

(kk)

THE BOOK OF FIRST SAMUEL

"Rejected"—

1 Samuel 8:1-8

Introduction

1. Rejection is an emotional starvation of genuine affection. Both young and old require affection for normal integrated development.

2. The text for this study reveals the inroads of the matter of rejection in the life of Samuel. He was deeply touched (v. 6). Only those who feel the pangs of rejection know what is involved here! Who hasn't some knowledge of this?

3. But every experience of those who know the Lord has a purpose designed by Him. Mark some of the lessons one may learn from this story from the life of Samuel.

1. SITUATION OF SAMUEL

a. Personally.

Three important statements are made about him:

- 1) His age. He is stated to be old, but in fact he probably was not more than a mid 50 year old man. Strange how folk feel about a man who does not fit into their plans!
- 2) His feelings. The original text notes that this action of the people and elders was in fact "evil in the sight of Samuel." His righteous indignation was stirred.
- 3) His prayers. The verb suggests the idea of supplication. There was no one else to whom Samuel might turn. Those who would have been his counsellors had turned away from him; he was shut up to the Lord!

b. Paternally.

Apparently, due to his heavy responsibilities and traveling efforts, Samuel seconded to his sons some of the judgment performed in the south (Beersheba). Joel means "Jehovah is God" and Abiah means "Jehovah is father". The lads had fine names, but one wonders whether they were suited for the task given them (cf. Judges 8:23; Num. 27:16-22). God has His men and the successors for His work. When left to Him, He provides without any question!

2. CONSTERNATION OF ELDERS.

a. With Samuel.

Heaped upon Samuel was the problem of his own progeny. They did not walk in his ways. Was it that he did not keep his own vineyard? Was he really responsible for what had happened? Had the venom of unbelief spread throughout the nation? The elders were concerned!

b. With service.

There is no question that the elders were beside themselves about the behaviour of Samuel's sons. The basic problem was money. Hence, the son took bribes and wrested the right from those who deserved it. How their office brought out the unholy areas of their lives!

c. With nations.

One's spiritual senses are moved to read "like all the nations." Here is a denial in one breath of their entire history. The spirit of the people had led them to turn from all that God had sought to make them. Unfortunately it had been provoked by a sinning leadership!

3. EVALUATION OF GOD.

a. Nationally.

Succinctly, God indicated that what treatment He received from people would be that which His servants would receive (cf. John 15:18). The Lord seeks to lessen the force of rejection by associating Himself therewith.

b. Historically.

Any kind of run down on Israel's history would indicate the fearful treatment God had received. It would be thus with His servants from His people. Not a very happy ministry into which to invite a young, vigorous man--but that is God's service!

c. Prophetically.

The verb "protest solemnly" means to arraign in a court. Hence, like an attorney setting up a case, Samuel is charged with the responsibility of telling the elders and the nation what their decision will yield.

Conclusion:

Psalms 116:15 notes that God gave Israel what she wanted but along with this came leanness. How different had they hearkened unto the Lord (Psa. 81:1-16). What will your response be to the Lord today? God grant you will submit to Him and accept His plan and purpose for your life!

NOTES: