

Faithful God— Unfaithful People

Key Verse: “I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in mine heart and in my mind: and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever.”

—I Samuel 2:35

***Selected Scripture:
I Samuel 2:27-36***

to the instructions to live off all things in the Garden of Eden except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. (Gen. 2:16,17) God was faithful to this covenant and justly delivered the punishment of death when Adam broke its terms through disobedience.—chap. 3:11-19

Many centuries later, in what we know as the Abrahamic Covenant, God promised to bless all the families of the earth. (Gen. 22:15-18) As an addition to that promise God made a separate covenant with the nation of Israel, which is the basis of today’s lesson. (Gal. 3:19) Through this Law Covenant arrangement, God promised

ONE OF THE IMPORTANT

principles set forth in the Bible concerning God is the fact that he is faithful and true in all things. We are told that it is “impossible for God to lie.” (Heb. 6:18) Through this principle we are also assured that he is “the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”—James 1:17

This standard of God’s character is made evident by his dealings with mankind through covenants. To Adam he promised life as long as he was obedient

to make Israel a “peculiar treasure . . . above all people” if they would be obedient to its stipulations. When Moses delivered the terms of the covenant to the people, they promised to faithfully keep its requirements.—Exod. 19:5-8

Israel quickly broke their promise to obey the conditions of the Law Covenant. Some have concluded that, as a result, they forever lost their relationship with God. However, the Scriptures say differently. Paul stated, “All Israel shall be saved,” and their “ungodliness” will be removed. (Rom. 11:26) Israel’s failure to keep the Law Covenant has been used by God to teach the lesson of sin to all mankind, Jew and Gentile alike. A realization of their imperfection through inherited sin is the only way for mankind to understand that any hope of recovery cannot come through the efforts of fallen humanity.

While mankind has been unfaithful, God remains faithful. His promise to Abraham to bless all the families of the earth is to be accomplished through the free gift of his own son, Jesus, as the ransom price for Adam. (John 3:16; I Tim. 2:3-6; Rom. 5:12-17) Israel’s experiences under the Law Covenant were necessary to teach this principle of redemption through the death and resurrection of Jesus. As Paul said, the Law was a “schoolmaster” to lead us to Christ.—Gal. 3:24

Today’s Key Verse brings this principle of faith in the ransom paid by Jesus into focus. Samuel was the last of Israel’s judges and demonstrated faithfulness to God which had been sorely missing. Through his teaching and leadership, the people put away their strange gods and served Jehovah only. God defeated Israel’s enemies, the Philistines, and Samuel memorialized the victory by placing a stone in the place, calling it Ebenezer, meaning “stone of help.” (I Sam. 7:5-12) God is also a “stone of help” to mankind, by providing redemption through his Son, Christ Jesus, and establishing his promised kingdom, in which all the world “will learn righteousness.”—Isa. 26:9 ■