

## **LYDIA AND SAMUEL BANDS**

### **ABOUT LYDIA**

Lydia in the Bible is the name of a woman and a geographical region:

- a) A prosperous business woman from the city of THYATIRA who became a convert to Christianity after hearing the Apostle Paul speak (Acts. 16:12-15,40). Thyatira was noted for its "Purple" beautifully dyed cloth. Lydia, who lived in Phillipi, sold dyes or dyed goods from as far as Thyatira. Already a worshipper of God, the usual designation for a PROSELYTE to Judaism, Lydia believed the gospel when Paul preached in Philippi. She became the first convert to Christianity in Macedonia and, in fact, in all of Europe.

Lydia is a good example for Christians in the business world today. A devout Christian and a conscientious business woman, she used her work to help further God's purpose.

- b) A large territory in western Asia Minor (modern Turkey) rich in natural resources. Its fertile land produced figs, grapes and olives. The Lydians are mentioned by the Prophet Ezekiel as "Men of War" or mercenaries, who fought to defend Tyre (Ezekiel 27:10) and who made an alliance with Egypt (Ezek. 30:5)

## **SAMUEL BAND**

### **ABOUT SAMUEL**

(Name of God)

Samuel was the earlier of the great Hebrew prophets (after Moses) and the last judge of Israel. Samuel led his people against their Philistine oppressors. When he was an old man, Samuel anointed Saul as the first King of Israel and later anointed David as Saul's successor. Samuel is recognized as one of the greatest leaders of Israel (Jer. 15:1; Heb. 11:32).

Samuel's birth reveals the great faith of his mother, HANNAH (1 Sam. 1:2-22; 2:1). Unable to bear children, she prayed earnestly for the Lord to give her a child. She vowed that if the Lord would give her a son she would raise him as a NAZIRITE (I Sam. 1:11) and dedicate him to the Lord's service. Eventually, Samuel was born as an answer to Hannah's prayer.

Hannah made good her promise to dedicate her son to the Lord's service. At a very tender age, Samuel went to live with Eli the priest, who taught the boy the various duties of the priesthood. Here, Samuel heard the voice of God calling him to special service as a priest and prophet in Israel (I Sam. 3:1-20). After Eli's death, Samuel became the judge of Israel in a ceremony at Mizpah (I Sam. 7). This event was almost turned to disaster by an attack from the Philistines, but the Lord intervened with a storm that routed the enemies and established Samuel as God's man. The godly Samuel erected a memorial stone, which he called "Ebenezer", meaning "Stone of Help". "Thus far the LORD has helped us", he declared (I Sam. 7:12).

In the early part of his ministry, Samuel served as a travelling judge. With his home in Ramah, he made a yearly Circuit to Bethel, Gilgal and Mizpah.

In the person of Samuel, judges became more than military leaders called upon for dramatic leadership in times of national crises. Samuel became a judge with a permanent leadership office, an office approaching that of a king.

When the people clamored for a king like those of the surrounding nations (I Sam. 8:5), Samuel was reluctant to grant their request. He understood the evil intentions of the people. He also was aware of the evils that went along with the establishment of a royal house. But the Lord helped Samuel to see the real issue: "Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them" (I Sam. 8:7).

The person whom Samuel anointed as first king of Israel turned out to be a poor choice. Saul was handsome, likeable, and all. But he had a tragic flaw that led ultimately to his own ruin. He disobeyed God by taking spoils in a battle rather than wiping out all living things, as God has commanded (I Sam. 15:18-26). Saul's false pride and extreme jealousy toward David also led him into some serious errors of judgement.

When God rejected Saul as King, He used Samuel to announce the prophetic words (I Sam. 15:10-35). Samuel was faithful in presenting the stern words of rejection. Although he had no further dealings with Saul, Samuel mourned for him and for the death of the dream (I Sam. 15:35).

Samuel was then sent by the Lord to Bethlehem, to the house of Jesse, where he anointed the young man David as the rightful King over His people (I Sam. 16:1-13).

In addition to his work as Judge, prophet and priest, Samuel is also known as the traditional author of the Books of First and Second Samuel. He may have written much of the material contained in I Samuel during the early years of Saul's reign. After Samuel's death (I Sam. 25:1), these books were completed by an unknown writer, perhaps Abiathar, the priest who served during David's administration.

When Samuel died, he was buried in his hometown of Ramah and was mourned by the Nation (I Sam. 25:1:28-3). But he had one more message to give. After Samuel's death, Saul visited a fortune teller at En-Dor (I Sam. 28). This fortune teller gave Saul a message that came from the spirit of Samuel. "The LORD has departed from you and has become your enemy" (I Sam. 28:16). Even from the grave Samuel still spoke the Word of God!

In many ways Samuel points forward to the person of the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. In the story of Samuel's birth, the direct hand of the Lord can be seen. In his ministry as judge, prophet, and priest, Samuel anticipates the Ministry of the Lord as well as the work of his forerunner, John the Baptist. As Samuel marked out David as God's man, so John the Baptist pointed out Jesus as the Saviour.