

By Mrs. Bessie Wilbon

# Sunday School Lesson

## LESSON BACKGROUND

For many years the Hebrew people had lived under a system of judges. These judges helped deliver the Israelites from various surrounding peoples who troubled them periodically. A cycle developed at this time. When the judge died, the people soon slipped into sin and rebellion. Bondage by the foreign people followed. When in the depths of their misery, the people cried out to God. He raised up another judge, and the cycle was repeated.

Samuel had judged the people for many years. In his old age he appointed his two sons judges over the people. When the two proved themselves unworthy of that position, the people asked Samuel to appoint a king over them instead. God was displeased for He knew that their request was a rejection of His rule over them. In effect, He was their invisible King, with judges serving as His human agents.

Following God's direction, Samuel pointed out the great expense of royal establishment would entail and warned that military conscription and other unfavorable actions were certain to ensue. This is detailed in 1 Samuel 8. In spite of Samuel's warnings, the people insisted that they wanted a king. Finally the Lord told Samuel to accede to their request and give them a king (8:22).

(1 Samuel 12:14, 15) All will go well with you if you honor the Lord your God, serve Him, listen to Him, obey His commands and if you and your king follow Him. But if you do not listen to the Lord but disobey His commands, He will be against you and your king.

Fear the Lord - serve - obey - don't rebel. These are words admonishing the Israelites to respect God's command and to do His will. God had overlooked the fact that they had rejected His direct rule over them. They wanted an earthly, visible king, and God granted their wish. Yet, this "giving-in" to their desires was not a license for them to reject the way of life and devotion God had established for them.

Conformity to God's will would be essential to the people's well-being, and nothing that a royal family could add to their lives would diminish their need to follow the Lord. This was essential for them and their king. It was not unthinkable that they would turn against God's way as, indeed, they did in later years. Samuel warned of what the consequences would be if this happened.

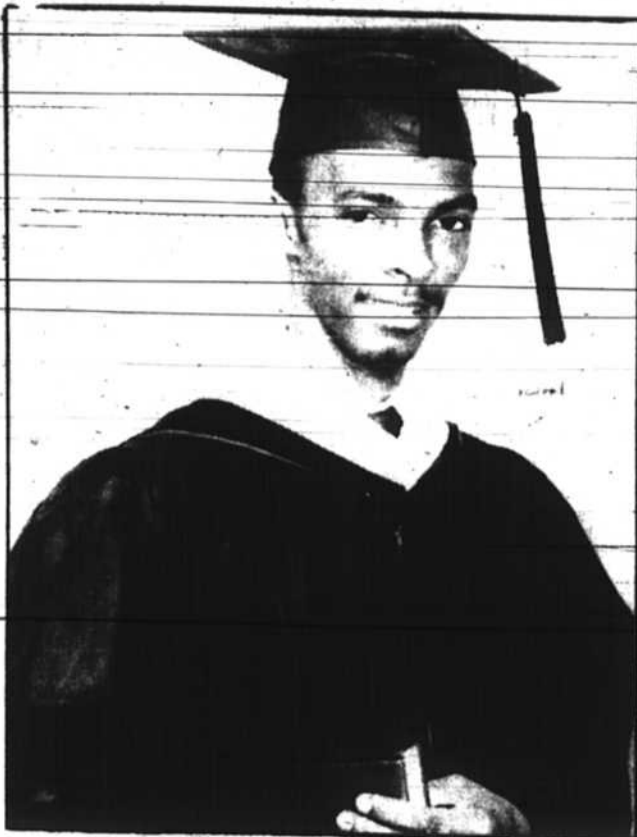
Yes, they were God's people, and He was "for" them. But He would not be on their side if they refused to do His will. His blessing and His benefits were conditioned by their continued obedience to His will. If they rebelled against God, His hand, His mighty creative, sustaining, empowering help - would no longer be theirs, but this same energy would be turned against them.

Through God's mercy, a way back into fellowship and partnership with Him was provided for the people who had shown a rebellious spirit. Samuel had given the assurance that "the Lord will not forsake His people," (v. 22). However, the warning had to be sounded that to follow a course of disobedience and wickedness would bring destruction, in spite of Samuel's prayers on their behalf. The king whom they wanted to fight their battles would be unable to forestall their destruction - both king and people would be swept away.

This lesson brings to our attention the question of how God's will relates to ours. He gives us freedom to use our wills - even to rebel against His purpose for our lives. Yet, in the end, He will achieve His purposes. This is not done by overriding our wills or by keeping us from the consequences of the wrong choices we are permitted to make. However, even in the midst of the problems these errors bring opportunities emerge by which previous wrong decisions can be rectified, or, by which the effects of these choices can be corrected.

It was not God's will that Israel have a king. Yet, when they asked for one, God granted their request and He promised guidance and help in whatever lay ahead. So it always seems to be. Even in the beginning, though Adam and Eve sinned and were excluded from the garden, the promise of a future deliverer who should bruise the serpent's head was also given. Even during the later exile, God found persons whose hearts turned to Him and whom He could use in works of return and restoration.

Well, did Samuel warn the people about the devastating results of turning from God? Yes. True, God often can bring to pass good out of evil, but it is also true that sinners themselves face destruction or desolation.



Randy McClure  
.....Morehouse graduate

## McClure: True Success Is Maintaining Faith In God

By Teresa Simmons  
Post Managing Editor  
...True success is maintaining faith in God, always aspiring to be the best you can be and praying. These contentions have guided Randy McClure through the four year maze of studies at Morehouse College in Atlanta, GA.

Now that graduation is behind him, McClure plans to do more with his Biology degree than simply make "big" money. "I've always wanted to be a role model to tell others that 'You can do it, too. All you have to do is buckle down. To lose sight of God is the beginning of failure.'"

McClure plans to attend the summer program entitled MED at the University of Chapel Hill. After the summer program, he would like to enter the Medical School of Chapel Hill if accepted. Georgia State University's Medical School is his second alternative.

He plans to be a doctor in Family Practice and was inspired to go to Morehouse because of its positive reputation.

Morehouse has graduated more black Ph.D.s and physicians. After researching the school, I found Morehouse to be the best shot. I also found that religious training was influential within the university. Strong faith in God in order to be successful in any field was taught to us. These were revelations that my grandmother has always instilled in me also.

McClure's guardian is his grandmother, Mrs. K.

B. Walker. His father was the late Willie Henderson. Thelma Gonslaves is his mother, and his stepfather is Joseph Gonslaves.

His ambition to become a doctor was sparked by the profession of his mother: nurse's aid. "Medicine and working with people have always interested me," McClure commented. Acquiring an M.D. degree will give me some say and authority to really help people."

Returning home to Charlotte after medical school is not clear to McClure. But he does know that his faith and belief in God will be coupled with his ambition to succeed. "For me, God, school and becoming a doctor easily go hand in hand. It would be impossible for me to attempt to study without spiritual direction."

McClure participated in several extra-curricular activities at Morehouse. He was Residential Advisor for three years; was involved in the Chapel Assistant Program; played the tuba in the Marching Band; and was president of both the North Carolina Club and the Dormitory Council (freshman year).

During his undergraduate collegiate tenure, he worked sometimes one and at other times two jobs. He was inducted into Who's Who Among College and University Students; honored as an outstanding Young Man of America; and was nominated for the B. R. Brazil Award (a scholarship).

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