

## I Samuel 1-7: From Eli to Samuel

### INTRODUCTION.

- A. After a period of 12 judges, the Israelites found themselves under the leadership of Eli. However, due to Eli's lack of leadership towards his sons, the Lord rejected Eli and his sons and chose Samuel to be the next judge. This is the beginning of the book of I Samuel.
- B. The book of I Samuel covers three important segments in the history of the nation of Israel. 1) Chapters 1-7 covers the judgeship of Samuel, 2) chapters 8-15 covers the kingship of Saul and 3) chapters 16-31 covers the kingship of David before he officially took the throne.
- C. With this lesson, we will examine the first seven chapters of I Samuel, looking at the judgeship of Samuel. It is the purpose of this lesson to see what lessons can be gleaned from the events of this study.

### I. GOD ANSWERED HANNAH'S PRAYERS FOR A CHILD. (1:1 - 2:11)

- A. A man named Elkanah had two wives, Hannah and Peninnah. Hannah was barren. Each year Elkanah would travel to Shiloh to worship the Lord. Each year Peninnah would drive Hannah to tears by tormenting Hannah because of her being barren. (1:1-7)
- B. On one such visit to Shiloh, Hannah went to the tabernacle and prayed to the Lord. Hannah vowed that if the Lord would grant her a male child, then she would give the child to the Lord. (1:8-11)
- C. Eli saw Hannah praying, but not hearing any words, assumed she was drunk. Hannah explained to Eli that she was pouring out her soul before the Lord. Eli told Hannah to go in peace, and that the Lord would grant her petition. (1:12-18)
- D. Just as Eli had said, the Lord granted Hannah her petition. Hannah gave birth to a son and she called his name Samuel. After the child was weaned, Hannah took Samuel with an offering to Eli and gave Samuel to the service of the Lord. (1:19-28)
- E. Hannah prayed to the Lord a prayer which praised the Lord, acknowledging His greatness. (2:1-11)

### II. THE LORD REJECTED ELI AND HIS SONS. (2:12-36)

- A. Eli's sons were corrupt. They were selfish in their dealings with the sacrifices brought to the Lord. (2:12-17)
- B. Samuel continued to serve the Lord. His mother and father would visit him yearly. Because of her lending Samuel to the service of the Lord, the Lord blessed Hannah

with three sons and two daughters. (2:18-21)

- C. In addition to dealing selfishly with the sacrifices brought before them, Eli's sons also had sexual relations with women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle. Although Eli challenged his sons for their actions, they did not change because the Lord desired to kill them. (2:22-26)
- D. A man of God goes to Eli and prophecies against Eli and his family because of their sins. The man of God promised that God would raise up for Himself a faithful priest. (2:27-36)

### **III. THE LORD SPOKE THROUGH SAMUEL. (3:1-21)**

- A. After a period of time, the Lord, having spoken little to the people, called for Samuel one night. Samuel, thinking it was Eli, went to Eli. After three times, Eli perceived that it was the Lord calling to Samuel. Eli instructed Samuel to answer, "Speak, Lord, for Your servant hears" when the Lord called again for Samuel. (3:1-9)
- B. When the Lord called Samuel the fourth time, Samuel answered the Lord. The Lord told Samuel that He would judge the house of Eli for their iniquity. The next morning, Samuel told Eli everything that the Lord had spoken. (3:10-18)
- C. "So Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. . . Then the Lord appeared again in Shiloh. . ." (3:19-21, NKJV)

### **IV. ELI AND HIS SONS DIE. (4:1-22)**

- A. As time progressed, the Philistines battled against the Israelites. Israel was defeated and four thousand men of Israel died in the battle. The people, perplexed by their great loss, decided to bring the ark of the covenant from Shiloh, thinking it would bring them victory. (4:1-4)
- B. At first, the Philistines were frightened by the knowledge that the Israelites had brought out the ark of the covenant. Despite their fear, the Philistines were strong and they fought against Israel. Again, Israel was defeated, thirty thousand foot soldiers died, including the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas. Also, the ark of the covenant was captured by the Philistines. (4:5-11)
- C. A man of Benjamin ran from the battle, carrying news of the great defeat to Eli. He told Eli about the great slaughter and the death of Eli's two sons. When the man of Benjamin told Eli that the ark of the covenant was captured, Eli fell backwards off of his seat, breaking his neck. (4:12-18)
- D. Eli's daughter-in-law, Phinehas' wife, upon hearing the tragic news went into labor. After giving birth, and just before dying, she named the child Ichabod saying, "The glory has departed from Israel, for the ark of God has been captured." (4:19-22)

**V. THE MOVEMENTS OF THE ARK OF THE COVENANT. (5:1 - 7:2)**

- A. The Philistines took the ark of God to the city of Ashdod where they put the ark in the temple of Dagon. While in the temple of Dagon, the ark of God wreaked havoc by causing the idol of Dagon to fall to the ground and break apart. (5:1-5)
- B. Not only did the ark of God wreak havoc in the temple, but the hand of the Lord was also heavy against the people of Ashdod. The Lord struck Ashdod and its territory with tumors. Realizing that the disease was caused by the ark of the Lord, the Philistines decided to move the ark to the city of Gath. Again, the people of the city, in this case Gath, were struck with tumors. (5:6-9)
- C. After the city of Gath, the ark was moved to Ekron. Again, the ark of the Lord brought about death and sickness. The men of Ekron called lords of the Philistines to take the ark away. (5:10-12)
- D. After seven months, the Philistines decided to send the ark of God back to Israel. They sent with the ark trespass offerings of five golden tumors and five golden rats. The ark was sent back on a new cart with two milk cows which had never been yoked. The priests ordered that the cows pulling the new cart be let loose. If the cows headed back to Israel, then they would know that God had struck the Philistines. The cows headed towards Beth Shemesh. (6:1-12)
- E. When the people of Beth Shemesh saw the ark being returned, they rejoiced. The priests used the wood from the cart and the two milk cows in offering a burnt offering to the Lord. (6:13-18)
- F. Sadly, the men of Beth Shemesh looked into the ark of the Lord. As a result, the Lord struck down 50,075 men of the people of Beth Shemesh. The people lamented because of the great slaughter. (6:19)
- G. The men of Beth Shemesh sent a message to inhabitants of Kirjath Jearim telling them to come and get the ark. The men of Kirjath Jearim went to Beth Shemesh and took the ark of the Lord to the house of Abinadab where it was put under the watch of Eleazar. The ark stayed in Kirjath Jearim for twenty years. (6:20 - 7:2)

**VI. SAMUEL JUDGED ISRAEL. (7:3-17)**

- A. Samuel told Israel that they were to return to God and to put away their foreign gods. If Israel would serve God, then He would deliver them from the Philistines. Israel heeded the words of Samuel and put away their foreign gods and served only the Lord. (7:3-4)
- B. Samuel instructed Israel to gather at Mizpah where he would pray to the Lord for them. Israel gathered at Mizpah, fasted, and pronounced their sins before the Lord. (7:5-6)

- C. When the Philistines heard that Israel had gathered at Mizpah, the Philistines went up against Israel. This caused fear in the heart of Israel. They appealed to Samuel to continue crying out to the Lord. Samuel cried out to the Lord and offered up a burnt offering. The Lord stepped in and confused the Philistines. This enabled the Israelites to defeat and drive back the Philistines. (7:7-12)
- D. The Lord protected the Israelites from the Philistines all the days of Samuel. All the cities taken by the Philistines were restored to Israel. Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. His home was in Ramah where he built an altar to the Lord. (7:13-17)

## VII. LESSONS LEARNED:

- A. Yes, prayer does avail much.
  - 1. Hannah went to God in prayer. God heard and answered her prayer. (I Samuel 1:9-18)
  - 2. We have the same privilege. We too can go to God in prayer with our requests. There are, however, certain “requirements”:
    - a. Our prayers must be in harmony with God’s will. (I John 5:14,15)
    - b. Our prayers must come from a faithful heart. (James 1:5-8; Matthew 21:22 - “And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.” NKJV)
    - c. Our prayers must come from a humble heart. (Luke 18:9-14)
    - d. We must abide in Christ. (John 15:7 - “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.” NKJV)
    - e. We must be living righteously. (I Peter 3:12 - “For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their prayers; But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.” NKJV)
    - f. We must pray fervently and earnestly. (James 5:16 - “Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.” NKJV)
- B. Let us dedicate our children to the service of the Lord.
  - 1. Hannah dedicated Samuel to the service of the Lord. (I Samuel 1:11,22-28)
  - 2. A Christian parent’s goal should be to rear their children in the service of the Lord. This was part of Paul’s meaning when he wrote, “And you, fathers, do

*not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.*” (Ephesians 6:4, NKJV) If this is not our goal, then we are cheating our child out of what they are rightfully due. For instance:

- a. Show your children how to live a godly life.
- b. Teach your children how to live a godly life.
- c. Teach your children the word of God and show them how to apply the teachings in their lives.
- d. Take your children to worship services. Show them the extreme importance of worshipping God. Show your children that you do not “play church,” where you go only when it is convenient within your life plans.

C. How to corrupt your children.

1. It is apparent that Eli did not dedicate his sons to the service of the Lord. While they went through the motions of some type of physical service, they were truly corrupt and disobedient. (I Samuel 2:12-17)
2. When we do not raise our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, we are no better than Eli.
  - a. When you behave in an ungodly fashion around your children, they will, in all likelihood, behave in an ungodly fashion.
    - (1) If you curse and swear, then your children will do the same.
    - (2) If you forsake the assembly of the saints, then so shall your children.
    - (3) If you engage in immoral behavior, your children will likely learn of it and follow suit.
    - (4) If you do not study you Bible, then do not expect your children to study their Bible.
  - b. If you do not teach your children God’s holy word, then do not be surprised when they live their lives making decisions that are contrary to God’ word.
  - c. If you “play church,” only going when it is convenient, then you will raise children who will do no different.

D. Young people can serve the Lord.

1. As a young man, Samuel served the Lord. (I Samuel 2:18;3:2-21)

2. Young people, here is what you can do:
  - a. Become a Christian by turning your life to Jesus Christ and obeying His words.
  - b. Serve the Lord in worship.
  - c. Serve the Lord in daily study.
  - d. Serve the Lord by overcoming temptations.
  - e. Serve the Lord by letting your light shine.
  - f. Serve the Lord by obeying the words of God.
  - g. Serve the Lord in both heart and mind, desiring to always be a servant of the Lord.
- E. Walking without the Lord means that you walk alone.
  1. When Israel faced the Philistine the first time, they faced the Philistines without God and they lost the battle. (I Samuel 4:1-11)
  2. When we walk without the Lord in our lives, then we will face the challenges of life alone. We will be defeated.
- F. Walking with the Lord, however, means that you will be delivered.
  1. When Israel repented of their sins and turned to the Lord, the Lord delivered them in a victorious battle against the Philistines. (I Samuel 7:3-17)
  2. When we walk with the Lord, the Lord will deliver us from sin and death. We can face the trials and temptations of life knowing that we will be victorious.
    - a. Ephesians 6:13 - *“Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”* (NKJV)
    - b. I Corinthians 15:56-58
    - c. James 1:2-4,12

## CONCLUSION.

- A. As we close this lesson, remember the lessons learned from the first seven chapters of I Samuel.
  1. Pray fervently, pray earnestly and pray often.
  2. Parents, decided today to dedicate your children to the service of the Lord by

showing them how to serve the Lord.

3. It is possible to corrupt your children. Knowing this, you should work even harder to dedicate your children to the service of the Lord.
  4. Young people, you can serve the Lord. Begin serving Him today.
  5. When you walk without the Lord, you walk alone. You will face the trials and temptations of life all by yourself and you will surely fall.
  6. However, when you walk with the Lord, serving Him daily, then He will deliver you through this life. You will spend eternity with Him in heaven.
- B. If you are not a Christian, then dedicate yourself today to the service of the Lord by obeying the Lord's call to salvation.
- C. If you are a Christian and maybe you are following in the disobedient footsteps of Israel, then it is high time that you return to the Lord, repenting of your sins, and putting away everything that is hindering your service to the Lord.

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