

Lessons From Characters In Old Testament
The Judges/Eli and Samuel
Lesson 22

X. ELI (1 Samuel 2:12-17, 22-36)

- A. Eli was both high priest and judge (2:11; 4:18). He judged Israel for 40 years.
- B. He was a very good man but he had two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, who were not even though they were priests.
- C. When sacrifices were brought to the tabernacle, these two sons demanded their portion of meat before God's portion had been offered.
 - 1. When an offering was brought, the meat was to be boiled.
 - 2. The fat belonging to the Lord had been boiled.
 - 3. Then a servant of the priest would bring a 3 pronged fork and dip it into the boiling pot and whatever portion of meat which came up with the fork belonged to the priest.
 - 4. However, Hophni and Phinehas would demand their portion before even the fat was burned.
 - 5. Their servant would approach the one who had brought the sacrifice and demand, "*Give meat for roasting to the priest, for he will not take boiled meat from you, but raw.*" (v. 15)
 - 6. If the person said, "*They should really burn the fat first; then you may take as much as your heart desires,*" (v. 16), the servant would answer, "*No, but you must give it now; and if not, I will take it by force.*" (v. 16)
 - 7. The law of Moses was very specific as to how sacrifices were to be offered, which parts were to be burned, and which parts were to be given to the priests.
 - 8. To violate these in any way would be showing contempt for God's law and for God Himself.
 - 9. God looked upon these sins as "*very great*". (v. 17)
 - 10. What Eli's son's did cause the people to abhor the offering of the Lord.
- D. Eli was very old. (v. 22)
 - 1. He heard of the sins of his sons and also the fornication they committed with the women at the tabernacle.
 - 2. Eli told his sons, "*Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all the people. No, my sons! For it is not a good report that I hear. You make the LORD's people transgress. If one man sins against another, God will judge him. But if a man sins against the LORD, who will intercede for him?*" (vs. 23-25)
 - 3. They did not listen to Eli nor did they change their ways.
 - 4. Be that as it may, Eli did not remove his sons from being priests.
- E. A prophet comes from God to reprove Eli for him allowing his sons to continue as they were. (vs. 27-36)
- F. Israel battles with the Philistines who defeat them, capture the ark of the covenant, and kill both Hophni and Phinehas. (4:11)
- G. Eli dies at the ages of 98 upon hearing of the ark of the covenant being captured by the Philistines. (4:15,18)
- H. **LESSONS FROM ELI:**
 - 1. **Eli Lacked 'Righteousness Indignation' For The Things Of God!**

Lessons From Characters In Old Testament
The Judges/Eli and Samuel
Lesson 22

- a. Jesus showed 'righteous indignation when He cleansed the Temple (John 2:13-17) "*Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up.*"
 - b. Do we have rubber backbones that bend to accept departures from the truth rather than oppose it?
 - 1) It seems we are at the point in time where the only "sin" is to stand against sin.
 - 2) Let's look around us!
 - a) The American people can tolerate the gays and lesbians but will not tolerate those who oppose such.
 - b) In the church, brethren can tolerate men who introduce Calvinism into the church and/or advocate mental divorce but they cannot tolerate those who stand opposed to these false teachers.
 - c. Let's not be like Eli and lack backbone to withstand the advances of sin!
2. **Eli Honored His Children Above The Lord!**
- a. He did not remove his sons as priests; he honored them above God.
 - b. Some parents honor their children above God.
 - 1) There have been instances where the church had to withdraw from ungodly children.
 - 2) The reaction of the parents was to bad-mouthed the elders or quit attending services or place membership at another congregation.
 - c. Parents are willing to defend their children above God-fearing elders even when they admit their children are guilty of sin.
3. **Eli Failed To Restrain His Two Sons!**
- a. Some of us have been convinced by the philosophy of modern psychiatry which teaches children should not be restrained lest they grow up with some sort of complex.
 - b. The results then are children of the world as well as children of Christians who sass their parents or otherwise act anyway they please.
 - c. Parents who so conduct themselves toward their children are guilty of sin before God.
4. **Eli's Love For The Lord!**
- a. As Eli sat on a seat by the wayside to hear news of the battle, the statement is made in 4:13: "*his heart trembled for the ark of God*".
 - b. When the messenger came with the news and Eli heard the ark of the Lord was captured, he fell over backward, broke his neck, and died.
 - c. The Scriptures specifically state that Eli did not die when he heard of the defeat of Israel or when he was told that both of his sons had died.

Lessons From Characters In Old Testament
The Judges/Eli and Samuel
Lesson 22

- d. Instead, Eli died when he was told the ark of the covenant had been taken by the Philistines.
- e. I am willing to believe, at this point in his life, Eli had learned to honor God above his sons.
- f. I'm willing to believe Eli's concern for the ark showed his love for the Lord.
- g. Do we fail to show this kind of concern over things pertaining to the Lord and His church?
 - 1) Are we more concerned about a scratch on our new car than problems in the church?
 - 2) Do we stay at home from worship for any trivial thing but then head to work the next day with the same sickness, tiredness, or headache we had that kept us from worshipping?
 - 3) The church is in desperate need for individual Christians who love the Lord enough to shed tears over matters pertaining to His church.
 - 4) The church is in desperate need of men who love the Lord enough to prepare themselves to serve in His church.
 - 5) The church is in desperate need of individual Christians who are concerned for the lost and are willing to work to lead them to salvation.

XI. SAMUEL (1 Samuel 1:1 - 7:17) The meaning of his name: Literally means "name of God".

A. Ancestry and family life:

- 1. His lineage was from the family of Levi, but his father lived in Ephraim (1 Chronicles 6:16-30, 33-37).
- 1. Samuel's father was married to two women. However, Samuel did not grow up with his family for he grew up serving the Lord in the tabernacle in Shiloh.
 - a. His mother had dedicated him to the Lord.
 - b. Eli watched over him and taught him the ways of the Lord.

B. Events surrounding his birth:

- 1. His mother, Hannah, was barren.
- 2. Her husband's other wife, Peninnah, continuously scoffed and tormented her because she bore many children, but Hannah could not.
- 3. Hannah prayed earnestly to the Lord for a child. One of her prayers is recorded in the text. (1:11)
 - a. It shows her sincerity and her strong faith.
 - b. She made a vow to God that if He would give her a son, she would dedicate the child to serving the Lord his entire life.

C. Training:

- 1. As a young boy in the tabernacle, it is likely he would run errands and do variety of things in service to the priests.

Lessons From Characters In Old Testament
The Judges/Eli and Samuel
Lesson 22

2. While just a boy, he was called by the Lord to be a prophet.
3. His first message was to be delivered to Eli as a word of judgment from the Lord. (2:27-36)
4. As he grew older (1 Samuel 3:19-21) it was clear to everyone that Samuel was a prophet, probably because Samuel acted as a messenger of the Lord and because of his upright character and God's blessing him.
5. Samuel is recognized as the last judge of Israel before the appointment of kings.
6. As priest, judge, and prophet he settled disputes and led the nation.
7. He was also God's appointed kingmaker.
 - a. His anointing of Saul and David would have given legitimacy to these kings in the eyes of the people and showed that it was God's doing.

TO BE CONTINUED!
Read 1 Samuel 8:1 - 16:13; 25:1

Lessons From Characters In Old Testament
The Judges/Eli and Samuel
Lesson 22

D. Samuel's Place in history:

1. Samuel was the last judge of Israel and perhaps the most upright.
2. He was very important to Israel's transition from a loosely knit group of tribes to a strong nation.
3. He lived during a very corrupt time for leaders.
 - a. The priests, Eli's two sons, were extremely corrupt and immoral.
 - b. As priests, they were highly influential and foolishly advised Israel to take the ark of the covenant to fight the Philistines which lead to it being captured.
 - c. Throughout all this, Samuel stood out as a man of integrity and uprightness.

E. Weaknesses:

1. He failed to raise his children well. (1 Samuel 8:1-5)
 - a. Sadly, this seems to be the story of many great people in the Bible.
 - 1) It was true of Eli, but Samuel did not learn from Eli.
 - 2) Instead he made the same mistake Eli did.
 - 3) And yes, it's true that it is not necessarily Samuel's fault that his children didn't follow God.
 - a) Even the best of parents can have prodigals.
 - 4) But there is generally a strong connection between parenting and how children turn out.
 - b. Perhaps Samuel...
 - 1) was too busy doing work and didn't make enough time for his family.
 - 2) left the raising of his children to his wife or to hired help.
 - c. We don't know the exact reason but these are both poor excuses.
 - d. The responsibility falls on the head of the family - father/husband.
2. Samuel seemed to have taken it personally when Israel wanted a king.
 - a. Maybe this was due to pride or feeling that he was losing "his" following. (See 1 Samuel 8:1-9.)
 - b. God told Samuel they were rejecting Him and not Samuel.
 - 1) Why did God feel the need to tell Samuel this?
 - 2) It seems to be out of a desire to comfort Samuel and not for Samuel to become discouraged thinking his hard work in leading them was all for naught.
 - 3) It ought not to be hard to imagine how Samuel felt.
 - 4) it's easy to feel a personal stake in someone and then feel unappreciated if those we invest in reject the Lord (and therefore us too). (2 Timothy 4:10)
 - 5) We need to realize the work we do is for God's glory, not our own.
 - a) When people reject it, they reject God not us.

The Judges/Eli and Samuel

Lesson 22

- b) When people accept it, they are accepting God and all the glory and credit is to God, not us.
- c. Why was their wanting a king such a bad idea?
 - 1) Their motivation for wanting a king was to be like all of the other nations.
 - 2) That was the wrong motivation.
 - 3) Israel, as a nation, was supposed to be different.
 - 4) They should have had God as their Ruler and the prophets/ judges as His representatives.
 - 5) But the influence around them was very strong and they wanted to fit in.
 - 6) Fitting in or conforming ourselves to the world should never be our motivation.
 - a) We should do things out of a desire to serve God, not be popular.
- 4. Fear of Saul. (1 Samuel 16:1-3)
 - a. Instead of rejoicing that God was going to choose a new king, Samuel responded to this news in fear for his life, knowing that if Saul found out he might try to have him killed.
 - b. This was certainly a natural reaction, which shows us Samuel is indeed human like all of us.
 - c. But at the same time, his reaction shows at that moment his faith was a little bit weak.
- 5. Samuel looked at the outside of man instead of the heart. (1 Samuel 16:6).
 - a. Again, this is a very natural thing, but Samuel should have known better.
 - 1) He was a prophet for decades (likely 5-6 decades at this point).
 - 2) He knew how God worked.
 - 3) Yet his first impulse was to judge who would make a good king based on outward appearance.
 - 4) However, to his credit, he listened to God and anointed the one God chose.

F. **Strengths:**

- 1. He was obedient to Eli. (1 Samuel 3:1-9)
 - a. Even in the middle of the night, Samuel got up and went immediately to Eli three times when he thought he called.
 - 1) This is very different from most children nowadays who, more often than not, ignore their elders and parents.
 - b. He then followed Eli's instructions when God called him again.
 - c. Finally he obeyed Eli by telling him the contents of what God had spoken to him, even though Eli could have reacted angrily to Samuel.

Lessons From Characters In Old Testament

The Judges/Eli and Samuel

Lesson 22

2. He constantly exhorted Israel to follow the Lord. (1 Samuel 7:3-12:14-16, 12:20-25)
 - a. Samuel was very faithful in doing what God gave Him to do.
 - b. Many people start off in being a Christian and then get burned out or give up after a while.
 - c. But not Samuel. Samuel preached, judged, prayed, and guided Israel for probably well over sixty years.
 - d. He was faithful to God from childhood through death.
 - 1) Not many people can say that.
 - e. Samuel was a major influence for good to Israel and made a huge impact.
 - f. Not only did he preach God's Word, he kept people accountable to obey it.
 - 1) Whatever ability/gift God has given us, we need to do as faithfully as Samuel carried out his service to God.
 - 2) Like Samuel, we will face trials and be tempted to give up.
 - 3) At other times we will be discouraged by the response of the people we are trying to help teach.
 - a) But don't give up!
 - b) Many start well, but few finish. Be sure we ourselves finish the race!
3. Proclaimed the Word of God. (1 Samuel 9:27)
 - a. This was Samuel's main focus. Whatever God told him, he passed on to the people.
 - b. He didn't do it for personal gain like Balaam nor did he run from the responsibility like Jonah did originally.
 - c. He didn't mince words. He didn't sugarcoat things (1 Samuel 3:18, 9:10-18, 10:17-19, 15:10-31, 13:12-14). He faithfully spoke the truth to the people, even when it hurt and even when it might be considered dangerous. (like when he told Eli what would happen to his sons, when he told Israel what the king would do to them and when he rebuked King Saul for disobeying God.)
 - d. The world wants their ears tickled and they usually get what they want.
 - 1) The mega churches get to be mega churches because their preachers say only what people want to hear.
 - 2) They don't rebuke nor is repentance ever mentioned. Why? It makes the preacher and the people uncomfortable.
 - 3) It makes the preachers know he won't be as popular and he won't have near that many to take up a collection from when the sermon is over.
 - e. Let us Samuel's example to share the gospel and teach the word of God truthfully without sugar coating it and without regard to how we will be perceived or how our audience will react.

Lessons From Characters In Old Testament

The Judges/Eli and Samuel

Lesson 22

4. Upright, just, righteous, and fair. (1 Samuel 12:1-5)
 - a. Not like Eli's sons and even his own sons, Samuel didn't take bribes when handing down judgments and verdicts.
 - b. His hands and his heart were clean.
 - c. Everything he had done, he did for God and the people.
 - d. Samuel's pure motives had to be one of the main reasons why God chose to use him.
 - 1) He even chose Samuel to anoint the kings, David and Saul.
 5. Samuel was compassionate. – He did not proclaim God's word because he had to or it was his responsibility; he truly cared about the people and their sins greatly affected him.
- G. **How He Died:**
1. 1 Samuel 25:1 – He apparently died of old age, the last of the judges.
 2. His influence was so far spread that all of Israel gathered together to lament his death.
- H. **LESSONS:**
1. Children don't automatically follow in the footsteps of their parents.
 - a. We see the story repeated over and over again in the Scriptures where the father or one generation follows God and his/their children don't.
 - b. Why is this so often the case?
 - c. For whatever reason, raising the children to follow God isn't the priority of the parents.
 - 1) The father tends to be focused on the business of being the provider for the family but this is a grave mistake.
 - 2) Family responsibilities are second only to God.
 - 3) We cannot neglect our family to make money.
 - 4) The father, who is a Christian, represents the best chance to raise up children who become faithful Christians and make the difference in the next generation for Christ.
 - 5) Parents cannot guarantee the salvation of their children, but they can train them up well and from a young age teach them the truths of the gospel so that they have every opportunity to be obedient to the faith.
 - 6) Let parents not Do not submit the raising of their children to anyone including grandparents, caretakers, or the government. (Ephesians 6:4, Deuteronomy 6:7.)
 2. God can accomplish great things through a person who is totally committed to serving Him.
 - a. Notice the influences of Samuel's life with Eli's sons and even with Eli himself.
 - 1) During the days of Eli, Israel fell deeper into idolatry.

The Judges/Eli and Samuel

Lesson 22

- 2) They were repeatedly beaten by the Philistines; even the ark of the covenant was stolen.
- 3) Through Samuel's influence, the nation was changed and Samuel was not always in the front and center.
- 4) Saul and later David were the visible leaders and Samuel was the one in the background bringing God message to them and to the people.
- b. What's the application?
 - 1) Every person in the body of Christ/church has a gift that's been given to them of God. (Romans 12:5-8; 1 Cor. 12:12-26)
 - 2) Let us not do with that gift what the one talent man did in Matthew 25:24-28.
3. A person is never too young to serve God.
 - a. Even when Samuel was only a boy, he began serving the Lord.
 - b. He began to be God's prophet even as a boy.
 - c. Don't let your youth keep you from serving God.
 - d. No age is too young to start. (Ecclesiastes 12:1)
4. God's people are not always appreciated.
 - a. We must learn that we have to live with this and accept it.
 - b. We shouldn't be doing it for the appreciation of people in the first place. (Colossians 3:23-26.)
5. We should listen to God and accept our duties and responsibilities without making excuses.
 - a. Samuel could have made many excuses.
 - 1) He could have said, "I am too young." (1 Timothy 4:12.)
 - 2) He could have said, "Eli might beat me."
 - 3) He could have said, "I don't know enough."
 - b. But unlike other Biblical characters like Moses, there is not one occasion where Samuel made excuses.
6. Samuel survived the evil influences around him and didn't allow those influences to overcome him.
 - a. There were lots of evil things going on, even in the temple with Eli's sons.
 - b. From the world's standpoint because of peer pressure it would have been very likely Samuel would have grown up to be like them.
 - c. We must never give in to peer pressure or temptation.
 - d. We can be different and set apart, not because we are much better than others (as is often the accusation), but because of God's grace and the power of His word in our lives.
 - e. Because God has given us everything we need through His word, we can have the victory, even in the worst environments.