

**Lessons From Characters In Old Testament**  
**The Judges/Eli and Samuel**  
**Lesson 22 (Continued)**

**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.
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. (3:10-18)
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.

**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.

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- 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 solely 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 too 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.
      - b) When people accept it, they are accepting God and all the glory and credit is to God, not us.
  - c. Why was wanting a king such a bad thing?
    - 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.

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- 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 to be popular.
- 3. Fear of Saul. (1 Samuel 16:1-3)
  - a. Instead of rejoicing that God was going to choose a new king, Samuel responded to the 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.
- 4. Samuel looked at the outside of a person. (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 parents and elders.
  - 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.
- 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 out 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!

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- 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. He 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.
  - 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 just 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 preacher 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 imitate 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 people will react.
4. He was 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 rendering 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.

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**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 mourn 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/to provide.
    - 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.
    - 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.

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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 appreciative.
  - 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 punishment 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.

**Lesson 23**  
**JOB**  
**Read the book of Job**