

Plan and Purpose Bible Lesson #III-30—I Samuel 1-14

We are ready for the book of I Samuel in our study. In our Bibles today we have I and II Samuel, I and II Kings and I and II Chronicles. In the original texts these books were not divided into two parts but each one was one book. The change apparently came about when the Greek translators came up with the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the original Hebrew text. Dr. Bullinger speculates that this division came about probably because writing in Greek took a third more space than the same thing in the Hebrew, so if the translators had scrolls of equal size, they would have filled up the new scroll in which they were writing in Greek before they had finished with the scroll that had the Hebrew text on it.

I suggest that each one reading this, or in our class, read all of I Samuel. For our purposes we are going to summarize a lot of the material as we proceed through the book.

We begin with a man named Elkanah who was of the tribe of Ephraim who lived in Ramah just north of Jerusalem. He had two wives, Hannah and Peninnah. Peninnah had children but Hannah had not been able to have children. We're told that her adversary taunted her continually because she had no children. Because the word translated "adversary" indicates that it was a woman, and the fact that Elkanah appeared to love Hannah more than Peninnah, I assume the "adversary" to be Peninnah. Elkanah obeyed the laws of God and went to Shiloh, where the ark of the covenant was, for the feast days and apparently took his family with him.

After being taunted until her heart was grieved, Hannah, at one of these feasts, went to the tabernacle to pray. Eli was the high priest at this time and he was seated by a post in the tabernacle and saw her come in and pray. However, because her prayer was from the heart, her lips moved, but she did not speak, so Eli, seeing her, thought that she was drunk and he challenged her about drinking. However, in her prayer, she told God that if He would give her a son, she would in turn, when the child was weaned, return him to God. God heard her prayer and when she returned home she conceived and ultimately delivered a son. She named him Samuel, which means "Heard by God" as God had heard her prayer and her vow. When Samuel was weaned, she returned him to the care of Eli.

When Hannah returned Samuel to Eli, she again prayed offering prayer of thanksgiving. (Read I Sam. 2:1-10) Samuel then ministered unto the LORD before Eli, the priest. Hannah continued to bring clothing and his needs to him as Elkanah and his family came to Shiloh for the feasts. Later Hannah conceived again and brought forth more children, 3 sons and 2 daughters.

Eli was an old man and he had two sons who he had given a lot of the priestly duties. However these sons were wicked and knew not the LORD. They robbed from the sacrifices and lay with the women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle. Eli was aware of this and tried to get his sons to stop their wickedness saying to them that if a man sins against another man, the judge will judge him, but if a man sin against God, who would intreat for him? However, this did not stop them from their sinfulness.

In the meantime, Samuel continued to grow and to gain favor with God and with the men that he dealt with. One day a prophet came to Eli and he did not have good news. Because Eli had been unable to restrain his sons, God had pronounced a judgment on Eli. The prophet told him that there would never be old men in his family again, meaning that all of the men that descended from Eli would die at young ages. Then as a sign that this would be the case, he told Eli that both of his sons would die in one day and that God would raise up another priest that would be faithful to Him. Eli had descended

through Ithamar, the younger of Aaron's two surviving sons. The prediction that God would raise up another priest that would be faithful to Him did not fully come to pass until the time of Solomon. When Solomon completed the temple in Jerusalem, He changed the high priesthood from the family of Ithamar, or of Eli, to that of the family of Aaron's other surviving son, Eleazar, by appointing Zadok as the high priest.

The 3rd chapter tells us that while Samuel was still a youth, as he slept one night, God called him by name. Thinking it was Eli calling him he went to Eli and told him he was there. Eli told him to go back to bed as he had not called him. This happened twice more before Eli realized that it was God calling Samuel, so he told Samuel to answer **"Speak LORD; for thy servant heareth."** (1 Sam. 3:9) Samuel did as Eli told him when God called to him the fourth time. God then gave him a prophecy concerning Eli and his house saying that He had told Eli what was going to happen to him and that time was coming. He is going to judge Eli's house and sacrifices or offerings will not purge what He is going to do. Samuel was afraid to tell Eli what God had told him, but Eli insisted that he tell him everything that God had said. Finally Samuel told him what God had told him to which Eli answered, **"It is the LORD: let him do what seemeth him good."**

From that day forward Samuel began to become established as a prophet and the LORD was with him. He became known in all Israel from Dan to Beersheba.

A time came when the Philistines were pitched in battle against the Israelites and the Israelites were losing badly. Then someone got the idea to go to Shiloh and bring the Ark of the Covenant to the battlefield thinking that this would save them. When they engaged the Philistines the next day after bringing the Ark to the battle, not only did the Philistines win the battle, but they captured the Ark as well. Also both the sons of Eli were slain. When a man from the army came to Shiloh to tell Eli what had happened, Eli was a very heavy man and was sitting on his seat, and when he heard that the Israelites were fleeing from the Philistines, that the Philistines had captured the Ark and that both his sons had been slain, he fell off his seat backward and broke his neck and died.

His daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, was near the time of giving birth and when she heard the news, she travailed and gave birth to a son whom she named Ichabod which means Inglorious because she said **"The glory is departed from Israel: for the ark of God is taken."** Though, as we will see, the Israelites eventually recovered the Ark, it was never returned to Shiloh and God will refer to Shiloh as Him having removed His Spirit from Shiloh never to return.

(Read 1 Sam. 5:1-5) This wasn't the end of their troubles. God caused the people of Ashdod to have boils, or emerods, which destroyed the people. The men of Ashdod gathered all of the lords of the Philistines together to decide what to do with the Ark. It was decided to move it to Gath. But in every city that the Ark was moved to, the men of the city got emerods in their secret parts. So they kept moving it until it had been in the hands of the Philistines for seven months. Finally they decided to send it back to the Israelites. However, they decided they needed to send it back with a trespass offering. It was decided to send with it five golden emerods and five golden mice, one of each for the five Philistines cities belonging to the five lords of the Philistines. The mice puzzled me, so I looked it up in my New Bible Dictionary. Following is the explanation: "The symptoms described (the emerods in their secret parts) fit bubonic plague precisely and it is therefore likely that the 'mice' were black rats, whose fleas are the carriers of plague." Once they had the gold emerods and mice ready that built a new cart and hitched two milk cows to it who had just given birth to calves and penned up their calves and put the

Ark on the cart. It turned out that the cows totally disregarded their calves and pulled the cart straight way to the way of Bethshemesh. The Philistine thought was that if the cows did as they did, this would prove that God was the one who had caused the great evil that had come upon them, but if not then it would be a coincidence that the evil came upon them.

When the cows got to Bethshemesh, the men of the city broke the cart down and used it for firewood and offered the two cows as a burnt offering to God. However, they looked into the Ark and because they did, God smote of the people 50,070. The men of the city then sent word to the inhabitants of Kirjathjearim asking them to come and take the Ark home with them. The men of Kirjathjearim did as requested and brought it into the house of Abinadab and sanctified Eleazar his son to keep the Ark and it was left there for the next 20 years.

All the house of Israel lamented after the LORD and Samuel spoke to them and told them that if they would put away their idols and return to God, God would deliver them out of the hands of the Philistines. He called for Israel to gather at Mizpeh and said he would pray for them. However, the Philistines found out that they were gathering and thought this would be a good time to go up against Israel. When Israel heard they were coming, they were very much afraid and appealed to Samuel to pray for them. He offered a sacrifice and prayed unto God and as he was making the offering, the Philistines drew near. But God thundered a great thunder and confused the Philistines and they fell before the Israelites and did not return to cause problems to Israel.

Samuel judged Israel all of his life going from his home in Ramah to Bethel to Gilgal to Mizpeh and back to Ramah. When he became old he made his sons judges over Israel, but they did not walk in his ways, but took bribes and perverted judgment. Because of this the elders of Israel gathered themselves together and came to Samuel and told him that they wanted him to make them a king like all the other nations had. They had the closest thing to real liberty that any nation has ever had, yet due to greed and corruption plus a desire to have someone else take some of their responsibility, they were willing to give it up to have a monarchal form of government. This upset Samuel as he felt that he was to blame, probably because of the fact that his own sons were so corrupt. However, God told him that it was He who they were rejecting. (Read I Sam. 8:6-9)

Even though God told Samuel to do as the people demanded, He told him to warn them as to what was going to happen if they got their demand. (Read I Sam. 8:10-18) The people still would not hear to what Samuel wanted them to do, so after telling God what all they said, God told him to hearken to them and do as they asked. Samuel sent the people home as he set out to do as they had asked.

Chapter 9 gives us the beginning of how King Saul became king. (Read I Sam. 9:1-4) Reminds me of my cows sometimes. Saul was ready to give up and return home, but his servant talked him into going to a nearby city where Samuel happened to be and to ask him which way that they should go. The servant even offered to pay Samuel for the information. The Scripture makes the point that prophets were called seers at that time, so Samuel was considered a seer and the servant thought he could know where the donkeys were. God had warned Samuel the day before that the next day He was going to send a man of the tribe of Benjamin that Samuel was to anoint to be captain, or ruler, over Israel. So when Samuel saw Saul, God told him that Saul was the man. (Read I Sam. 9:18-27) Chapter 10 continues with the same story and thought. (Read I Sam. 10:1-13) Samuel told Saul what all was going to happen as he traveled home including that he would come upon a band of prophets and would himself prophesy with them. All of this happened as he traveled home.

Samuel called all of Israel together and went through an exercise in which God first selected the tribe of Benjamin, then the family of Matri and finally Saul himself was selected, however he hid when the process got close to choosing him. The people found him and Samuel announced that this was the man that God had chosen to be their king. Saul was the kind of man that men like to have as a leader. He was very handsome and stood a head taller than anyone else. We all know today that many people vote for certain candidates based solely on their appearance. Saul was the kind of man that drew that kind of response. He was also very strong and was a good soldier. Nothing much happened at first. We're told that Saul went home to herd his livestock.

(Read I Sam. 11:1-15) Saul, after this military victory was crowned king officially here at Gilgal. Samuel then wants it made clear that he had done nothing wrong to the people to make them want a king to rule over them. (Read I Sam. 12) This was basically Samuel's farewell address to the people. Though we will read some about Samuel, there is no more record of him speaking to all the people again.

In chapter 13 we have the record of the beginning of Saul's reign. It was not a smooth beginning. Saul had some very bitter lessons to learn that he learned too late. The Philistines were a continual problem and after only two years of Saul's reign, the Philistines came up against Saul and Israel. They outnumbered the Israelites by great numbers, which distressed the Israelites greatly. Saul was having trouble keeping his small army together. Samuel had apparently told Saul to wait 7 days for Samuel to come to Saul before they did anything about the Philistines. At the end of 7 days, Samuel had not come and Saul's army was falling apart big time. So Saul had an offering brought and he offered it himself. No sooner had he done this than Samuel showed up. Samuel strongly condemned Saul for not having the patience to wait on him and told Saul that because he had done this, **"Behold now thy kingdom shall not continue: The LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee."** (vs. 14) Saul and his son Jonathan had started out with 3000 men and they were now down to 600 and they were facing many thousands of the Philistines. The raiders that were part of the Philistine army began to raid the country. The Philistines had taken all of the smiths out of the country so that there was no one to make swords or to sharpen them. The only tools the Israelites had were shares, coulter, axes and mattocks, tools that they farmed with. Even with these they had to take them to the Philistines to get them sharpened and they were charged quite heavily to get this done. When it came the day of battle, only Saul and Jonathan had swords.

However, Jonathan realized where Israel's real strength in battle was. (Read I Sam. 14) We will end out lesson this week with this chapter. Saul continued to either not listen, or at least to not obey, as we will see in the next chapter, which totally disqualified him to be king of Israel. JRL