

# Monday - Week Seventeen

## Lesson Forty-eight: Samuel trained to be a prophet

Read: 1 Samuel 1-3

**Summary:** This account begins a new era in Old Testament history. We begin the march toward the man after God's own heart: David.

### Background and Comments

- The books of 1 and 2 Samuel contain the record of the greatest king of Israel: David. Why does Samuel receive so much attention? Samuel was the prophet whom God worked through to bring the nation to the point of having David as king. David's kingdom was dependent on God; Samuel was a key figure in God's plans.
- Hannah is yet another woman who had been unable to have children for a time (we also think of Sarah, Rebekah, and Rachel). God was showing these families that their special children were gifts from God.
- When Samuel went to Eli at night he said, "Here I am." Literally he said, "At your service, sir." Samuel respected Eli enough to jump out of bed and politely ask Eli what how he could help.

### Lessons for Today

- In 1 Samuel 1:19 we read that the Lord "remembered" Hannah. Of course God had never forgotten Hannah. This phrase simply means that God was about to undertake some new action that would show His grace. What are the times in your life that God "remembered" you?
- Eli's sons shock us with their wicked deeds. Eli had failed to discipline them when their actions grew more and more ungodly. Sometimes parents are afraid to discipline their children because they don't want to "hurt" them. Here we see just how hurtful a lack of discipline can be.
- When Samuel said, "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening" he really meant it. Chapter 3:19 says, *The LORD was with Samuel as he grew up, and he let none of his words fall to the ground.* Samuel respected everything that God said to him (didn't let any words "fall to the ground"). Pray that God will continue to give you this same attitude.

**Read:** Psalm 81; 2 Corinthians 6.

**Prayer:** Dear Heavenly Father, cause me to imitate Samuel's humility and wisdom. In Jesus' name I pray; Amen.

# Tuesday - Week Seventeen

## Lesson Forty-seven: God's Judgment upon Eli and his Sons

Read: 1 Samuel 4-7

**Summary:** God used the Philistines to teach the Israelites a lesson and to execute divine justice (the death of Eli's sons).

### Background and Comments

- After they were initially defeated the Israelite troops asked, "Why did the Lord bring defeat upon us today before the Philistines?" That was an excellent question. Unfortunately their answer showed the shallow spirituality that these people had. They treated the ark of the covenant like a magic charm.
- When the messenger came from the battlefield Eli fell off his chair and died. The news that especially upset him was that the ark had fallen into the hands of the Philistines; Eli's heart was in the right place. We can say much the same thing for Eli's daughter-in-law. As she died she named her son Ichabod which means "the glory has departed from Israel". She too was especially upset that the ark had been captured. [Editor's note: can you imagine going through your life with a name that means "the glory has departed from Israel"? Poor kid.]
- The best military men from Israel had been defeated by the Philistines. God used Samuel (a prophet!) to lead the Israelites in a victory (complete with a thunderstorm that threw the Philistines into confusion). God works in His own ways.

### Lessons for Today

- God taught the Philistines that they hadn't defeated the Israelites because their gods were stronger than He was. Imagine the Philistines' horror when they couldn't stop the plagues and accidents associated with the ark. God still cannot be mocked. We need to remember that those who ridicule God will one day see their error of their ways.
- What qualities of Samuel impress you the most? How can you emulate those qualities in your own life?

**Read:** Psalm 82; 2 Corinthians 7.

**Prayer:** Dear Heavenly Father, You brought judgment upon the wickedness of Eli's sons. I pray that You would bring justice against those who defame Your name today. Use that judgment to warn others about flaunting You and Your commandments. May Your will be done! In Jesus' name; Amen.

# Wednesday - Week Seventeen

## Catechism Review

Read Questions 117-125

1. A simple definition of coveting is wanting something so much that you can't get it out of your mind. When a material possession begins to dominate our thoughts then we need to examine our heart. When is the last time this happened to you?

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2. The ninth and tenth commandments teach us that God is concerned with our thoughts. He knows that if we dwell on sinful thoughts then sinful actions will not be too far behind. How can you flee from sinful thoughts? (Be practical)

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3. Can you see the humorous thought in the meaning of the tenth commandment?

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4. How would you respond: "I can't believe you think that lusting after someone is a sin. After all, absolutely no one is being hurt."

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5. Jesus never broke any of the commandments ... including the ninth and tenth commandments. That means that Jesus never thought a sinful thought! Why was this kind of perfection needed?

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**Read:** Psalm 83; 2 Corinthians 8.

**Prayer:** Dear Heavenly Father, guide me to have thoughts that please You. Amen.

## Thursday - Week Seventeen

### Lesson Fifty: Saul in His early God-pleasing reign

Read: 1 Samuel 8-12

**Summary:** King Saul got off to an excellent start as a the leader of the Israelites. He humbly put his trust in the Lord.

#### Background and Comments

- Samuel's sons did not follow in their father's spiritual footsteps. They perverted justice to seek their own ends. The Bible does not tell us what went wrong in their development. Needless to say, we once again come face to face with the fact that being a child of a spiritual "giant" does not guarantee that you will follow the Lord.
- Samuel and God were not happy with the request from the Israelites for a king. We might wonder why ... especially because this had been God's plan all along (Genesis 17:6; Deuteronomy 17:14-20). The request was not bad in and of itself; the problem was with the people's motivation. They wanted to be like all the other nations instead of being under the direct rule of the Lord. God even said that their request for a king was a rejection of His rule. Yet God granted their request because He knew that David would be a great king (as would his descendant the Messiah).
- Anointing set someone apart for a special task. Kings and prophets were usually anointed before they took office.

#### Lessons for Today

- There are a lot of chance events in this story that seem to fall into place at just the right time. Of course there are no chance events in God's kingdom. He uses everything for our good. Do you look at life's little annoyances and setbacks as events to be used by God for your good? [Note: keeping this in mind will change your whole day!]
- Saul was a good military general. He attacked the Ammonites from three directions ("three divisions"). He captured the people's hearts with his ability and looks. Perhaps it was this success that started to plant the seeds of sinful pride in his heart.

**Read:** Psalm 84; 2 Corinthians 9.

**Prayer:** Dear Heavenly Father, bless the leaders of our congregation today. Help them to make good decisions and to serve faithfully. In Jesus' name; Amen.

# Friday - Week seventeen

## Life Questions

Topic/Question: What should our attitude toward the government leaders be?  
What happens if our leaders engage in sinful activities?

### Bible References and Considerations

- In Romans 13:1 Paul wrote: *Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.* The governing authorities at the time were pagan Romans who wanted to exterminate Christians. Yet Paul said that God had established them! The Bible is quite clear that we are to respect the government He has placed over us. Other passages to look up would be 1 Peter 2:13-14 and the whole first part of Romans 13.
- Of course the only time it would be right to disobey the government is if it would command us to sin.
- The Bible tells us to pray for our leaders. Have you been faithful in your prayers for the president, your governor and mayor?

### Practically Speaking

- Applying God's commands about obeying the government is a bit tricky because the whole form of government has changed. In a sense, a democracy is rule by the people. In this form of government God has given us the right (and responsibility) to vote for new leaders, keep an eye on the current leaders and if necessary remove them from office by legal means. At the same time we must remember that our elected officials are our God-given leaders and should be respected and obeyed.
- Leaders set an example to the people they rule. The notion that the private life of an official has nothing to do with his or her job as a leader is nonsense ... and clearly not Biblical.
- Sometimes it's tough to figure out if the government is commanding you to sin. As leaders, government officials bear a huge amount of responsibility regarding the decisions they make.

**Read:** Psalm 85; 2 Corinthians 10.

**Prayer:** Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for the leaders that You have given to us. They provide police protection, fire departments, food safety and other "basic" blessings. Give our leaders wisdom and courage. Amen.