

Lesson 10 – 1 Samuel 1-3

Text: 1 Samuel 1-3

Main Characters: God, Elkanah, Hannah, Samuel, Hophni, Phinehas

Key Passages:

- 1 Samuel 1:11 – Hannah promised that if God gave her a son, she would give him to God.
- 1 Samuel 2:12 – Eli’s sons were corrupt; they disobeyed God and defied His laws.

Main Storyline:

There was a man named Elkanah who lived in Ephraim. Elkanah was a Levite (see 1 Chronicles 6:16ff), but apparently decided (like many other Levites) to live in Ephraim. Elkanah had two wives, Peninnah (who had children) and Hannah (who was barren). Every year, when they went up to Shiloh to make sacrifices, he would give gifts to both Peninnah and Hannah. He gave extra to Hannah, however, because he loved her in spite of the fact that she could not have children. Sadly, Peninnah taunted Hannah relentlessly to make her miserable. Elkanah would then have to reassure and comfort Hannah.

One year, while at Shiloh for the sacrifices, Hannah decided to go pray at the tabernacle. She asked God to give her a son, and in return, she promised to make him a Nazarite and give him to the Lord’s service for life. She was praying so fervently that the high priest, Eli, thought that she was drunk. Eli rebuked her for being “drunk,” but then blessed her after realizing that she just had been praying to the Lord. When Hannah returned home, she became pregnant, and later she gave birth to a son, who she named Samuel. When he grew old enough, Elkanah and Hannah took him to live with Eli in Shiloh, offered sacrifices, and worshipped the Lord. Hannah later went on to have five more children.

Though Samuel grew in “favor with both God and men,” Eli’s sons were extremely corrupt. When someone made a meat sacrifice, typically he would boil it until all of the fat boiled off (the fat belonged to the Lord). Then the priest would come and take some meat for himself. However, Eli’s sons would not wait for the fat to boil away and would demand raw meat. If anyone protested, they would threaten to take it by force. They also fornicated with the women who were tabernacle servants. Eli, an old man, heard about all that his adult sons were doing and tried to rebuke them, but they ignored him.

One day, a man of God came to Eli and rebuked him, not only for letting his sons get out of control and being irreverent, but also taking part in their sin and getting fat off of Israel’s best offerings. In doing so, Eli was showing more honor to his sons than to God. Because of all of his sin, God promised that Eli’s house would be cut off from the priesthood. In addition, He promised that his two sons would be killed on the same day. In their place, God planned to raise a faithful priest to do His will.

In those days, God did not speak often through prophets. However, one night, while Samuel was lying down to sleep, God called out to him. Samuel, not recognizing what was happening, thought Eli was calling him. When he went to Eli, Eli told him that he had not called for him. After two more callings, Eli recognized that God was calling Samuel, so he told Samuel to answer God. When God called the fourth time, Samuel answered. God revealed that something terrible was about to happen in Israel. Also, the punishment against Eli’s house would take place on the same day. In the morning, at Eli’s request, Samuel revealed all of these things to him. From that day, Samuel became the Lord’s prophet.

Lessons/Applications:

- 1.) Prayer is powerful; when we pray to God, we should trust that He will do what is best for us.
- 2.) When one uses God’s blessings for His glory, he often bestows even more blessings on them.
- 3.) The path that one takes as a child often dictates what he does later in life (Proverbs 22:6).
- 4.) Irreverence toward God and His commandments will be punished (Romans 1:20-21).