

# Old Testament History

Lesson #12

1 Samuel 2:12-13:23

## Outline

### I. **Before The Monarchy (1 Samuel 1:1-7:17)**

- A. Samuel's rise and Eli's decline (1:1-4:1).
  - 1. The rejection of Eli's household (2:12-36).
  - 2. Samuel called as a prophet (3:1-4:1).
- B. Israel's struggles with the Philistines (4:2-7:17).
  - 1. The ark captured by the Philistines (4:2-22).
  - 2. The Philistines suffer and return the ark (5:1-7:1).
  - 3. Samuel defeats the Philistines at Mizpah (7:2-17).

### II. **The Institution Of The Monarchy (8:1-12:25)**

- A. The people demand a king (8:1-22).
- B. Saul becomes king over Israel (9:1-11:15).
  - 1. Saul privately anointed by Samuel (9:1-10:16).
  - 2. Saul publicly chosen by lot at Mizpah (10:17-27).
  - 3. Saul establishes himself as king by defeating the Ammonites (11:1-15).
- C. Samuel bids farewell and issues warnings to Israel (12:1-25).

### III. **Saul Rejected As King (13:1-15:35)**

- A. Saul's campaign against the Philistines (13:1-14:52).
  - 1. Saul fails to wait on the Lord (13:1-23).

## Notes

### **1 Samuel 2:12-3:21**

- It is tragic to see such a great servant of the Lord failing to win his own sons to the Lord. The sin of Eli's sons shows their selfishness (cf. Philippians 3:17-19), and it also implies that the religious condition of the people at the time was also very low.
- The only step which the aged high priest took to put an end to his son's actions was mild rebuke. However, this kind of rebuke could produce no effect on men so seared in conscience.
- Eli and his house would endure a special judgment: none of his descendants, so long as they held office, would live to old age (1 Samuel 2:31); in punishment of their own arrogance of office they would experience constant humiliation (vs. 32); another and more faithful line of priests would fill the high office (vs. 35); and, the deposed family would have to in humility scrounge for the barest necessities of life (vs. 36). Furthermore, the swift deaths of Hophni and

Phinehas would be the sign of the beginning of those judgments which would not be finished until the time of Solomon (1 Kings 2:27).

- Eli, although weak and unfaithful, yet in heart a servant of the Lord, received the sentence with humiliation and resignation, though apparently without resolving to change which would have been equivalent to true repentance (1 Samuel 3:17-18). In later years, Saul killed many of Eli's descendants (1 Samuel 22:17-20), and later Solomon replaced Eli's family with the family of Zadok (1 Kings 2:26-27, 35).
- A new period in the history of the kingdom of God had now begun; and all Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, knew that there was a new link between them and God, a living center of guidance and fellowship, and a bond of unity for Israel. Up to now, God had not spoken to the people in frequent or widespread visions; but now everyone knew that Samuel was God's prophet and that the Lord was with him.
- Tradition states that Samuel was about twelve years old at this time. He had grown up in the presence of the Lord and learned to serve in His tabernacle, yet he had not personally spoke with the Lord. The person who listens to the Lord will learn the Lord's will. Samuel loved Eli and had learned much from him, but Samuel knew he must be true to the Lord in spite of his personal desires.

### **1 Samuel 4:1-6:22**

- Israel lost 4,000 men in the first battle, and this should have been evidence to them that God was displeased. They did not repent, and instead resorted to superstition by taking the ark of the covenant to the battlefield. The word of God did not succeed in leading the people to repentance, nor in teaching them the spiritual character of the relationship between them and God. Samuel's ministry restored and strengthened belief in the reality of God's presence among His people, and in His help and power.
- God taught His people the lesson that even the most sacred symbol connected with His immediate presence was only wood and gold, and it was far from being capable of accomplishing miracles. In fact, it could even be taken and carried away.
- A heavy judgment had come upon Israel, but God did not want the Philistines to be victorious. Moreover, in the hour of their victory the Gentiles had to learn that their gods were not only completely powerless before God, but mere idols, the work of men's hands.
- The ark had been brought to Ashdod, and placed in the temple of Dagon as a votive offering in acknowledgment of the victory which they ascribed to the agency of their national god.

- The experience of these seven months during which the ark had been in their land, not only convinced the lords of the Philistines of the necessity of yielding to popular demand, but also made them careful as to the manner of handling the ark when returning it to its place. An appropriate place to bring the ark from Philistia was right in view of Zorah, the birthplace of Samson.
- The tabernacle was moved from Shiloh to Nob, then from Nob to Gibeon. David finally brought it, after the conquest of Jerusalem, into the royal city (2 Samuel 6:2-3, 12). For all this period the sanctuary was empty of its greatest treasure, and the symbol of God's presence removed from the place in which He was worshiped.

### **1 Samuel 7:1-8:22**

- Perhaps the most majestic form presented, even among the heroes of Old Testament history, is of Samuel, who is particularly introduced to us as a man of prayer (Psalm 99:6). Levite, Nazarite, prophet, judge -- each phase of his outward calling seems to have influenced his mind and heart. At Shiloh, the contrast between the life of self-denial of the young Nazarite and the lack of self-control of Eli's sons must have prepared the people for the general acknowledgment of his prophetic office.
- The ark, carried captive into Philistia after having proved to be a "thorn in their side," had been taken back to Israel. However, it was a witness of the past instead of a symbol of present help.
- Twenty years had passed since the return of the ark -- a period, as we gather from the subsequent history, outwardly of political subjection to the Philistine, and spiritually of religious depression. Both of these conditions were caused by the tabernacle being desolate, and the Lord being absent from His people.
- Mizpeh was one of the ancient sanctuaries in the land, where, as in Shechem (Joshua 24:26), Gilgal (Joshua 5:2-12, 15), and Bethel (Judges 20:18, 23, 26; 21:2), the people assembled for important meetings (Judges 11:11; 20:1). But never before, except in the days of Moses, had Israel so humbled itself before the Lord in its confession of sin.
- A hereditary monarchy seemed to be the only means of combining the tribes into one nation, putting an end to their tribal jealousies, and subordinating tribal interests to national interests. The judges, however successful at times and in individuals, had failed as a whole. The system had neither given external security nor effective government to the people.
- Keeping in mind that there was nothing wrong absolutely in Israel's desire for a king (Deuteronomy 17:14; Genesis 17:6, 16; 35:11), nor

yet, so far as we can determine, the time when this demand was made, the explanation of the problem must lie in the motives and the manner rather than in the fact of the "elders" request -- not that they spoke it, but "as they spoke it."

### **1 Samuel 9:1-10:16**

- The new king would represent their national shortcomings and the defectiveness of their religious life. They combined zeal for and outward conformity to the religion of God, with a complete lack of true submission and devotion to the Lord. Saul had everything in his favor: (1) a strong body; (2) a humble mind; (3) a new heart; (4) spiritual power; (5) loyal friends; and, (6) the guidance and prayers of Samuel. Yet in spite of these advantages, he failed miserably because he would not allow God to be the Lord of his life.
- The feast was past, and Saul followed his host to his house. There on the flat roof, a place of social discussion in the East, Samuel "communed" with Saul, no doubt of "all that was in his heart;" not of the office about to be given to him, but of the thoughts which had developed in Saul that day: Israel's need, sin, help, and God.
- In order to assure Saul of the divine agency in all this, Samuel gave him three signs. Each was stranger than the other, and all were significant of what would mark the path of Israel's king. The Spirit of God "seized upon" Saul suddenly and he was "turned into another man."

### **1 Samuel 10:17-12:25**

- The Israelites not only wanted a king, but royalty like the nations around them. This was ultimately for the purpose of delivering them from their enemies. They were forgetting God's help in the past, disclaiming simple trust in Him, and disbelieving the sufficiency of His leadership. In fact, what they really wanted was a king who would reflect and embody their idea of royalty, not the ideal which God had set before them.
- If David was the king "after God's own heart," Saul was the king after the people's own heart. What they had asked, they obtained; and what they obtained, must fail; and what failed would prepare for what God had wanted.
- Would Saul be strong enough to be victorious over the Philistines? The only true answer would have been a spiritual one. Unable to give it, Saul withdrew from the assembly.
- Nahash the Ammonite threatened the men of Jabesh. Saul showed humility and restraint by giving the glory of victory to the Lord. This victory was the occasion for a renewal of the kingdom and a rededication of the nation. Samuel reviewed his own ministry and

reminded the people that he had been faithful to them and to the people to see that they had greatly sinned against the Lord by asking for a king. The people needed to know that their king was not going to save them; it would be their own faithfulness and obedience to the Lord that would assure them of God's blessings.

- Little did Saul know how well the brave men of Jabesh would repay the service when, on that disastrous day on Mount Gilboa, he and his sons would die in battle, and the victorious Philistines would fasten their dead bodies to the walls of Bethshan. These brave men of Jabesh marched all night and rescued the fallen heroes from exposure (1 Samuel 31:8-13). It was ironic that Saul's first march was by night from Bethshan to Jabesh, the same route by which the men of Jabesh carried his dead body at night.
- Although all his life Samuel never ceased to judge Israel, yet his official work in that capacity had now come to an end. In the last solemn account of his administration, the people had terror struck into their hearts, and led to repentance -- at least outwardly.

### **1 Samuel 13:1-23**

- At Gilgal, Saul had been accepted by all of the people as their king, and it was now appropriate to show himself such by immediately starting his greatest work as king: the liberation of Israel from their longtime enemy the Philistines.
- Saul took the credit for his son's victory at Gibeah in order to impress the people and get them to follow him.
- For this purpose, he selected from the armed multitude at Gilgal 3,000 men, of whom 2,000 were under his own command and posted in Michmash and Bethel, while the other 1,000 went with Jonathan to Gibeah of Benjamin.
- The vast host of the Philistines began to assemble, and the longer Saul waited, the more dangerous his position became. If he were to strike immediately, he could defeat the enemy, but his delay only gave them opportunity to become stronger.
- Saul's impatience (and unbelief) led him to go ahead without Samuel, and while Saul was completing the offering, the prophet appeared. Saul essentially said, "I forced myself." This was the beginning of the end: if God could not trust him in this small matter, how could He trust him with the kingdom? Saul's impatience cost him the kingdom.