

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

Lesson 8 w/answers

I Samuel Chapters 1-8

This week we'll begin our look at the books from tribal rule (individual tribes united in worship of a single God) to kingdom rule (where all tribes will be governed by a single ruler -- a king). Samuel will also continue to wage the war begun by Samson against the Philistines, through which he'll recapture the Ark lost in battle during the time of Eli the High Priest.



There is much that we can learn from studying Samuel closely, but for purposes of our survey of the Old Testament, we will not do this now, but instead focus on hitting the highlights.

For this week, read I Samuel Chapters 1 through Chapter 8 then answer the following:

1. Summarize the faith of Hannah. What spiritual principle(s) can we draw from her life?
 - a. ANSWER 1: Hannah, a barren woman because the Lord had closed her womb, demonstrated that she was a woman of faith. During a time when childless women were seen as murderers in Far Eastern culture she constantly prayed for a son and made promises about the unborn child to God. She would give him to the Lord all the days of his life, and she promised a Nazirite vow, which meant that he wouldn't shave, would have a restricted diet, and so on. In spite of all the name calling, the way in which the community looked down on a childless woman, and the passing of time, she continued to pray. We read that even the High Priest would ridicule her. In verse 14, Eli the High Priest calls her drunk, because she is praying while her lips move but no sound is coming forth. Even this does not dissuade her faith, and she continues to pray for a son.
 - b. ANSWER 2: When the Lord does answer her prayer and opens her womb to provide her a son, she makes a trip to the tabernacle at Shiloh to give her son to the Lord. She does this in spite of the fact that she knows that the High Priest and his sons are not righteous people, and in spite of the fact that the Philistines occupy the land -- because her vow was with the Lord, and she was trusting in His righteousness and not the righteousness of others. This occurred in 1095 B.C., when her son was five years old. While she could have used the unrighteousness of the High Priest and his sons, or the terror of the Philistine occupation, as excuses not to comply with the vow she had made with the Lord, she remained true to her word and to the Lord.
2. During the time of Samuel's birth, much is happening between God and Eli the High Priest. Read Chapter 2:17-36 and describe the situation and the resulting prophecy God gives Eli.
 - a. ANSWER: We can see, beginning in verse 2:17, that the High Priest and his sons despised the offering of the Lord and abused it for their own personal gain. Then in verse 2:21, we can also see that his sons brought Baal cultism into the Tabernacle. They perverted the worship of God, and Eli the High Priest did nothing but pay lip service to their behavior. In verse 25, the Lord desires to put them to death, and an unnamed prophet rebukes the High Priest for his behavior and his sons' behavior. This reverses the role of the prophet who is supposed to be rebuking the king. In verses 31-34, God issues a warning, and a judgment is pronounced to Eli that his two sons would both die on the same day, and that a new High Priest would rise up.
3. Sketch out a character profile of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas below:
 - a. ANSWER: We can see from our study of Chapter 2 that Eli was a self-centered High Priest who was only interested in satisfying himself and not in worshipping God. We see that he raised two sons with similar attitudes who had no respect for the worship of God and instead practiced idol worship and prostitution in public in defiance of God.

4. Describe the battle of Aphek. Since the Ark was taken, did God lose? What prophecies were fulfilled?
 - a. ANSWER: It is 1075 B.C. and the people of God have been acting in an ungodly way. The Philistines draw up to battle at Aphek, and Israel is defeated there. But the people of Israel decide to take the Ark from its place in Shiloh and carry it into battle like a lucky charm, as though just its presence would ensure victory. Interestingly enough, when they take the Ark to confront the Philistines, they scare the Philistines who still remember the power of the Ark some 475 years before at Jericho. However, the battle does eventually take place and 30,000 foot soldiers are killed, and the Ark of God is taken, fulfilling the prophecy found in Chapter 2, when God told them that this would occur. During the battle, Eli's two sons are killed, as also foretold in verse 2:34. Even though the Ark was taken, God was not defeated. We know that in fact God made the decision to turn the Ark over to Philistines and to allow Israel to be defeated as His judgment against them (see Psalm 78:56-63). In effect then, God is victorious through this battle -- as His will is carried out and not man's will.
 5. What did the Philistines discover about the Ark of the Covenant?
 - a. ANSWER: The Philistines housed the Ark in the territory of Ashdod. While there, in the same place where the Philistines had placed one of their idols, Dagon, they find one morning that the head and hands of the idol have been cut off. Following this, the Lord then smote the territories of Ashdod and eventually the Philistines realized that the Ark had to be returned to the people of Israel.
 6. Describe the battle of Mizpeh:
 - a. ANSWER: Twenty years have passed, and Samuel now has the people ready once again to fight the Philistines in order to bring to an end to the occupation by the Philistines. This time they were victorious, because they admitted their sins to God and asked Him to lead them in this battle. While Samuel was preparing a sacrifice of lamb, the Philistines tried a surprise attack; but God "thundered against them" and Israel won a great victory that day.
 7. Define the word Henotheism, what is it?
 - a. ANSWER: The practice of worshipping one god while not denying the existence of other gods. The Philistines would take the gods from the countries they defeated and incorporate them, or use them, as a part of their polytheistic worship practices.
 8. Describe the circumstances surrounding the request for a king.
 - a. ANSWER: As Samuel grew old, he appointed his sons as judges over Israel. Unfortunately they were ungodly sons which then caused the elders of Israel to look around at other countries to see how they were led, and this eventually leads them to come to Samuel and to ask for a king. Samuel is heartbroken and goes to the Lord in prayer over the matter. God tells him that they are not rejecting Samuel, but that rather they are rejecting God; and that Samuel should do as they ask.
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From the books of Samuel through the books of the Kings we'll learn much about man -- that which is honorable and that which is dishonorable. This week our study contrasts Samuel's mother and Samuel, who walk in faith and upright in God's eyes, with Eli and his two sons who do not. We can learn much from the faith and persistence of Hannah and the commitment of Samuel that we can apply in our own lives.

Let's pray that God will find us faithful as we live our lives each day, strong in our faith that God is watching over us and providing all of our needs. Find someone this week to share the Gospel of Christ with -- the Good News, that God is alive and His Son has died and rose for us that we may have eternal life!

Have a great week everyone.

In Christ,

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