1 SAMUEL 1-15
THE KINGDOM AGE BEGINS

Samuel
The Last Judge

- The age of the Judges was chaotic.
- The Lord raised judges to deliver Israel.
- But the judges themselves did not follow the Lord with their whole heart.
- Judges 21:25 …*everyone did what was right in his own eyes*
- And then the oppression resumed
- And the cycle started again.

Samuel
The Last Judge

- The time had come to break the cycle.
- God sought a man whose heart was fully devoted to Him.
- God chose Samuel before he even was conceived!
- A godly lady named Hannah was praying for a child.

The context of Samuel

- At that time the priest Eli judged Israel.
- Eli loved the Lord.
- But he was a poor father, and did not train and discipline his wicked sons.
- His wicked sons abused their authority as priests for robbery, gluttony and adultery.
- They robbed the offerings and sacrifices, and ate portions dedicated to the Lord.

The context of Samuel

- God sent warnings to Eli.
- From an unknown prophet: 1 Sam 2:29 *Why do you kick at My sacrifice and at My offering which I have commanded in My dwelling, and honor your sons above Me …*
- From the child Samuel: 1 Sam 3:13 *For I have told him that I am about to judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knew, because his sons brought a curse on themselves and he did not rebuke them.*

The context of Samuel

- Eli's sons despised the Lord, and Eli did not rebuke them.
- Parenting requires disciplining children. Eli raised his children to be entitled thugs.
- Additionally, they indulged in sexual sin.

The context of Samuel

- Deut 21:18-21 gives instructions about rebellious children. They were to be brought to the elders and stoned to death.
- Today obviously not! However, we do have to discipline our children.
- We should also let our children reap the consequences of their choices. We cannot always protect them from the consequences.
- And we should always pray for them.

The context of Samuel

- Hannah vowed to the Lord that if He gave her a child, she would dedicate him to the Lord's service, as a lifelong Nazirite.
- And Hannah conceived Samuel, whom she brought to Eli.
- Eli adopted him, and was a father to Samuel.
- Samuel loved the Lord, and heard from Him even as he was a child.

The context of Samuel

- Hannah's story is the story of a godly lady in much sorrow and distress.
- Hannah prayed in faith, and believed that the Lord had heard. 1 Sam 1:18 … *So the woman went her way and ate, and her face was no longer sad*.
- God answered Hannah's prayer according to her desire, and accomplished great things through her son Samuel.

The context of Samuel

- When we are in distress, we should pray to the Lord for His help.
- Then we should trust the Lord, and no longer be sad.
- He may or may not answer the prayer according to our desire. But whatever happens will be for our good!
- Rom 8:28 *And we know that God causes all things to work together for good, to those who love God and are called according to His purpose.*

Eli and Hannah Contrasted

- Hannah dedicated her son to the Lord.
- Eli indulged his sons.
- Hannah responded to the Lord's closing her womb with fervent prayer.
- In 1 Sam 2:27-36 God sent an unknown prophet to warn Eli about his sons, saying "*Why do you kick at my offering … and honor your sons above Me …*"
- Eli did not respond to the rebuke.

The context of Samuel

- The time of the judges was an ungodly era.
- Judges 21:25 …*everyone did what was right in his own eyes*
- But there is always a remnant!
- Even at this time there was the family of Ruth and Boaz.
- And the family of Elkanah and Hannah and their son Samuel.

The context of Samuel

- When Elijah cried that all Israel had abandoned the Lord, God said to him in 1 Kings 19:18 *"Yet I will leave 7000 in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal and every mouth that has not kissed him".*
- God always has His remnant.

The context of Samuel

- 2 Chron 16:9 *"For the eyes of the Lord move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His …"*
- God is strongly supporting those whose heart is completely His.
- The world today is morally bankrupt.
- But we can be His remnant! He will support us!

The end of Eli's Judgeship

- Samuel, as a child, prophesied the demise of Eli's line.
- Samuel's prophecy to Eli came true.
- The Ark was taken by the Philistines during a battle with them.
- The sons of Eli died on the same day in that battle, as predicted by the child Samuel.
- And poor Eli fell down and died on hearing this news.

Israel getting back the Ark

- God miraculously restored the Ark to Israel.
- He cursed the Philistines with sickness and rats.
- The Philistines realized it was due to their taking the Ark.
- God prevailed on them to return the Ark to Israel on a driverless ox cart.
- Thus the Philistines knew that the Lord was God.

Samuel installed as Judge

- When Eli died, Samuel was still a child or a very young man.
- He became the priest of Israel.
- Twenty years passed.
- Samuel was now a grown man
- He was now the Judge of Israel, after Eli.
- Samuel exhorted Israel to follow the Lord.

Samuel calls Israel Back to the Lord

- 1 Sam 7:3 *"If you return to the Lord with all your heart, remove the foreign gods and the Ashtoreth from among you and direct your hearts to the Lord, and serve Him alone; and He will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines"*.
- Deliverance is promised when they
  - Return to the Lord.
  - Remove foreign Gods
  - Directed their heart to the Lord.
  - Serve Him alone.

Samuel installed as Judge

- 1 Sam 7:4 *So the sons of Israel and removed the Baals and Ashtoreth, and served the Lord alone*.
- 1 Sam 7:6 *They gathered to Mizpah, and drew water and poured it out before the Lord, and fasted on that day and said there, "We have sinned against the Lord"...*
- Outpouring of water indicates repentance.

Samuel installed as Judge

- Is 30:18 *Therefore the Lord longs to be gracious to you, and therefore He waits on high to have compassion on you …*
- Is 55:7 *Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the Lord, and He will have compassion on him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.*

Samuel installed as Judge

- God waits on high to have compassion on us!
- God waits for us to forsake our sin, and repent and return to Him.
- God is the Father of the prodigal son.
- The Father was waiting for the prodigal.
- When the Father saw him afar off, He ran to embrace him!

Samuel calls Israel Back to the Lord

- Suffering is not always due to sin.
- But sometimes, as in the case of the Israelites at this time, suffering is due to sin.
- When suffering is due to sin, we can repent, and be delivered.
- But it must be true repentance, turning away from sin, and turning our hearts to the Lord, to serve Him alone.

The end of Samuel's Judgeship

- 1 Sam 7:13 *… And the hand of the Lord was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.*
- Samuel was the best judge. Israel followed the Lord all the days of Samuel.
- Then Samuel grew old and appointed his sons judges of Israel.
- But his sons turned aside after dishonest gain, took bribes and perverted justice.

The end of Samuel's Judgeship

- Samuel grew up in the house of Eli, as his son.
- Eli was a poor father, and Samuel was also a poor father.
- Like father, like (adopted) son! Be careful … your children will imitate you!
- Israel asked Samuel for a King.
- Samuel was distressed, for the Lord was Israel's King.

Israel seeks a King

- God allowed Israel their desire for a king.
- God miraculously led Saul to Samuel.
- God spoke to Samuel about Saul.
- God led others, including donkeys!
- The hand of the Lord can sometimes be seen when multiple actors work simultaneously towards an end.

Israel seeks a King

- Saul is publicly chosen as king by lot.
- Samuel gave Saul orders to go to Gilgal, and wait 7 days till Samuel came, in order to receive further instructions.
- Then God gave Saul an immense victory over the Ammonites to establish Saul.
- Saul and the people rejoiced greatly.
- Samuel warned Saul and the people to follow the Lord.

Saul's Kingship

- But soon Saul showed his true character.
- He went to Gilgal as Samuel told him to in order to war with the Philistines.
- And waited 7 days, as Samuel instructed.
- But Samuel did not show up, and the people were scattering.
- So to rally the people together, Saul himself offered the burnt offering.

Saul's Kingship

- Saul disobeyed Samuel. He should have waited for Samuel.
- It was not his place to offer the burnt offering.
- His motivation was incorrect. He did not do it to worship the Lord, but to keep the people from scattering.
- Saul resorted to situational ethics rather than Samuel's instructions.

Saul's Kingship

- Have we acted impulsively, when we should be waiting on the Lord?
- Sometimes young people choose the wrong partner.
- Sometimes we make impulsive decisions when we should instead wait for the Lord's leading.
- How can we know when the Lord is leading?

Samuel contrasted with Saul

- Samuel started off by praying for a king for Israel.
- Samuel waited on the Lord to lead him to the king He had chosen.
- Saul did not take Samuel's instructions seriously.
- Saul did not wait for the Lord's leading, and instead acted as he saw fit.

Samuel contrasted with Saul

- Like Samuel, we should keep in prayer for His leading.
- 1 Kings 22:7 *But Jehoshaphat said, "Is there not yet a prophet of the Lord here that we may inquire of him?"*
- We should seek counsel from people who know the Lord.
- We should wait and see how God orders the circumstances.
- When His direction is clear, we should step out in faith.
- But not before!

Saul's continued sins

- He made a rash vow, require people to fast until a battle was over.
- Jonathan, Saul's son, was almost killed due to his breaking this regrettable vow by Saul.
- When Samuel told Saul to utterly destroy Amalek, he *partially* obeyed.
- He spared Agag their king.
- He saved the best of the livestock (supposedly for sacrifice), and other good things.

Saul's continued sins

- Samuel warned Saul in 1 Sam 15:22 " … *Behold to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams."*
- In 1 Sam 15:23 "*For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry…"*
- The conclusion in 1 Sam 15:23 "… *Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He has also rejected you from being king*".

Saul's continued sins

- Even then, Saul is not concerned about his sin.
- 1 Sam 15:30, Saul says "*I have sinned; but please honor me now before the elders of my people and before Israel …*"
- Saul was more concerned about his reputation among the people, than his losing the Lord's favor.

Saul's continued sins

- Do we, like Saul, sometimes ignore our sin, and worry about the approval of men?
- John 12:43 "*for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God*"
- Do we, like Saul, obey partially?
- Do we, like Saul, make promises we cannot keep?

Saul's continued sins

- The time would come when Saul would slide further and further into sin.
- He would try to cling to the kingdom, even though he knew God had torn it from him.
- He would repeatedly try to murder David.
- He would even resort to Spiritism to get the guidance of deceased Samuel.

Saul contrasted with David

- Contrast Saul's response to being confronted to his sin, with David's response.
- When Saul was confronted by Samuel, he gave lame excuses, and requested Samuel to pretend to support him.
- When David was confronted by Nathan, he acknowledged his sin, and wrote Psalm 51 confessing his sin and prayed for forgiveness.

Saul contrasted with David

- Saul had the sorrow of the world in his response to his sin.
- David had the sorrow of the Lord in his response to his sin.
- 2 Cor 7:10 *For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death.*

Judas contrasted with Peter

- Judas had the sorrow of the world in his response to his sin of betrayal.
- Peter had the sorrow according to the will of the Lord in his response to his sin of denial.
- Judas's sorrow led to his death.
- Peter's sorrow led to his restoration with the Lord, and a wonderful rich service to Him. Peter's sorrow led to life.

Summary

- In every age there is a remnant that follows God. God is looking out for them!
- Seek the Lord's leading with prayer, good counsel, and trust in the Lord.
- Wait patiently till His will is clear.
- Fully obey the clear will of the Lord. It is better to obey than to sacrifice.

Summary

- Do not make rash promises.
- If you sin, express your sorrow and repentance to the Lord, and turn away from your sin.
- He will forgive your sin, restore and heal you, and make you effective in His service!