

2017: Week 26

Sunday, June 25th 2017

"Good or Bad– How Will You Respond?"

1 Samuel 3:19–20

"Thus Samuel grew and the LORD was with him and let none of his words fail. All Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel was confirmed as a prophet of the LORD." (NASB)¹

This past Sunday Johnnie guided us through **1 Samuel 2**, focusing on the childhood experienced by the Bible character Samuel. Although Samuel is widely considered a tremendous "success story," it might be surprising that Samuel's childhood was one in which he had very limited interaction with his God-fearing parents. **1 Samuel 2** provides a stark contrast between Samuel and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas. Throughout this account it is quite clear that the sons of Eli who were born with incredible privilege and access to their father *chose* their own path– a path of disregard for the Lord and His commandments. On the contrary, the son who was born without the privilege of being raised by his God-fearing parents (Samuel) was the one who *chose* to fear the Lord and keep His commandments. Possessing spiritually mature parents is an incredible blessing, but such a reality does not guarantee that the children of such parents will walk with the Lord. Likewise, children who lack the advantage of being raised by God-honoring parents are not doomed to spiritual failure either. Each person is responsible for his or her own decisions, specifically whether or not they will respond to the grace of God and *personally* decide to trust Him and walk with Him. Whether you were raised by good, bad, or absent parents, you are responsible for how you relate with the Lord. You can respond to Him in such a way that He will act as your loving and accessible Heavenly Father!

1. "THE TEXT"

READ 1 Samuel 2:11–26

- Johnnie mentioned that many scholars think Samuel was around two to three years old when his parents left him to serve the LORD at Shiloh. He also mentioned that it was probably a six to eight hour donkey ride's distance from his parents.
 - If you were Samuel's parents, how would you feel leaving your young son that far away under the responsibility of the aging Eli and the probable influence of Hophni and Phinehas?
 - If you were the child Samuel, how would you feel knowing that you wouldn't be able to see your parents except for maybe once a year?
- What would lead Hophni and Phinehas to do the things that they were doing?
- How do you think Samuel was growing "in favor both with the LORD and with men?" (2:26).

2. "YOU"

- Football coach Barry Switzer once said, "Some people are born on third base and go through life thinking they hit a triple." In other words, some people are born with certain advantages, maybe even advantages of which they are unaware.
 - What advantages have you been given in your life?
 - What disadvantages have you been given in life?
- Everyone has been given a mixed bag of advantages and disadvantages, some vastly disproportionate than others. How does the Lord want a person to live who has been incredibly advantaged?
 - How does the Lord want a person to live who has been incredibly disadvantaged?
- Who is responsible for whether or not a person fears the Lord and keeps His commandments?

3. "REMEMBER"

- **Ecclesiastes 12:13** ¹³ "The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person."

FAMILY PRAYER: Dear Lord, thank You for being my Heavenly Father, and thank You for always loving me. Help me to make wise decisions that are honoring to You and in obedience to Your Word. Amen

¹ All Scripture notations taken from the **New American Standard Bible (NASB)** unless otherwise noted.