

## 1-2 Samuel

February 19, 2006

“Theocracy to Monarchy” or “From *God-as-King* to *Man-as-King*”

1 Samuel–“The People’s Choice: Saul”(8:5,19-22;9:1-2; 11:11)

2 Samuel– “God’s Choice: David”(1Sa 13:14;16:7;2Sa 7:8-16)

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Originally First and Second Samuel were a single book and one can readily see that the narrative or 2Samuel follows in natural succession to 1Samuel. Samuel’s birth is recorded in the first chapter and he and his sons were the last of the “judges” (cf. 1Sa 7:15-17; 8:1-3).

1 Samuel has many “pairs” of characters who contrast with each other. As you read it look at the contrasts: Hannah & Penninah; Eli & Samuel; Saul & Jonathan; Saul & David; David & his brothers; David & Goliath, etc.

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Inasmuch as 1Sa 2:30 (“...Them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.”) comes in judgment of Eli’s house, compare the lives of Hannah and Eli as presented in the first two chapters of 1Samuel. For Hannah, note particularly 1:11,27-28; 2:1-11, 19 [remember, this was her first and only child]. For Eli, note 2:12-17, 22-25, 27-36; 3:12-14. Try to articulate in a single sentence the attitude of Eli and/or his sons toward the things of God. How might this attitude show itself in our lives today? What was the substantive difference in Hannah’s perspective? As Hannah followed through on her promise and “gave up” “her” son to the service of the Lord, she let go of that which would have meant the world to any mother. *Question:* Would we be brave enough to make a similar level of promise/commitment – and then follow through on it? (Remember 1Sa 2:30)

1Sa 3. Though dedicated to the Lord from before birth it remained to be seen what the character of Samuel would be like (after all, his surrogate family was that of Eli!). Amid the back-and-forth dialogue of Samuel and Eli we can easily miss that the important character in 1Sa 3 is God. God called and worked in and through Samuel’s life. *Prayer:* “God, please open my eyes that I might see that success and fruitfulness comes from you, and as I see that, give me a thirst for you that can only be assuaged by you. Let me desire drink from no other fount. Let me realize my need to come to you regularly, fervently, in prayer for the strength that you alone can give.”

God is not a “good-luck-charm” (1Sa 4:3-5, 9-11). Instead he is God. He is not to be trifled with, ignored, or taken for granted. Contrast the *attitude* of the Israelites in 1Sa 4:1-4 with their attitude of 20 years later in 7:3-9. Then contrast the *results* in 4:5,9-11 with 7:10-11, 13-14. What was different in their attitude? results? What does this suggest for your life if you want to have an ongoing walk with God that evidences growth and progress? Robert Robinson wrote, “*Come thou fount of every blessing, tune my heart to sing thy grace.*” God is the source [fount], but do you sometimes find your heart needs “tuning-up?” Robinson also writes, “*Let thy goodness, like a fetter, bind my wandering heart to thee.*” [I often resonate with that request!] But in his 2<sup>nd</sup> verse he wrote, “*Here I raise my Ebenezer – hither by thy help I’m come.*” Notice that the first battles with the Philistines began near “Ebenezer” (4:1). Now note Samuel’s deliberate action, 20 years later (7:12). With the contrasting settings, what point do you think Samuel was trying to make? . . . Come to the fount of every blessing!!

No professed God-follower wants to be perceived as being in obvious contradiction of God’s commands. In 1Sa 13:8-14 and 1Sa 15:1-28, how does Saul “explain” his actions to Samuel? *Prayer:* “God, lead me not into temptation, and give me clarity of vision so that I can see myself as you see me.”

Christ makes a significant point to the Pharisees in Mat 15:18-21 after they accuse the disciples of not ceremonially washing their hands before eating. His point there is similar to that made by God in 1Sa 16:7 when Samuel was sent to choose a new king. The outside may (16:12) or may *not* be attractive – but that is not what is essential. Cultivate your heart, as you would (or “ought” to) cultivate a garden. Protect it from vermin, poison, weeds and useless, unnecessary other things. Fertilize it with that which yields spiritual fruitfulness.

1Sa 17 – David and Goliath. Great chapter! – contrast David and Goliath; pray that God will encourage your heart and direct your steps from David’s example.

2Samuel 6:1-23 Why do we so often do things the world’s way?

2Sa 12:13 How do *we* respond when God points his finger at us? Contrast David’s reaction to God’s pointing finger with Saul’s (1Sa 13:11-12; 15:12-15, 20-21).