

'The Rise of the Kings Series'

Sermons in the Book of 1 Samuel



Message 5 - 'Judgement Begins at the House of God' 1 Samuel 2:11 - 36

The narrative that we considered last time saw the focus move away from Elkanah and his family, and move towards exposing Eli's family. There is an increasing contrast between Samuel and Eli's sons, Hophni and Phineas. We saw that just as Eli's sons abused their position, Samuel was growing to love the things of God, and God's grace was establishing him. As we looked on what Hophni and Phineas were doing, it seemed as though they were getting away with it all, but all the while God was working, He was preparing His judgment for Eli and his wicked sons, whilst also equipping Samuel for the work that lay ahead. We saw:

1. Sinful Sons - Hophni and Phineas took the opportunity of their Father's demise to abuse their position, and revel in their power. Not only did they hurt and slander the people of God, but worse still, their service was an abomination before the Lord. It is clear that even though they had been born into a line of privilege, they did not know the Lord, and are actually described as 'sons of Belial'. Their abuse was seen in a number of vivid illustrations that we are given. The first relates to the portions of sacrifices that belonged to the priests. Yet, there was more to their sin, they not only showed disrespect for the sacrifices on the altar, but they also had no regard for the women who served at the door of the tabernacle. Instead of holding them as precious in an honourable way, encouraging them in spiritual things, they seduced them. Whatever their purpose, they were seduced and abused by the priests and it was appalling. How relevant in this day and age is the warning that we see here! How wise, how careful Pastors must be when dealing with circumstances regarding the opposite sex! Ministerial/Pastoral immorality sadly is a common occurrence in the church today, and it is horrendous, but as we can see it is not new. However, there is a lovely contrast that takes place alongside this wickedness. The faithfulness of Samuel is not overbearing in this passage but remains evenly dispersed, hope in the midst of trouble. Samuel was a boy growing physically and spiritually (v21). It is here that we can be reminded of our Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ who '*increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men*' (Luke 2:52). All the while God was silently working to bring His purposes to pass.

2. Foolish Fatherhood - In these verses we see the sad reality of Eli's demise. His advanced years and apathetic state had lead him to a position where he was a liability to the Lord's work, and to the Lord's people. Godly people had told Eli about the sin of his sons. Now he did speak to Hophni and Phineas and it had no impact upon their attitude and action. How sad! Yet, that intervention was too late. His position as a spiritual leader in the home did not amount to much that it had come to this point already.

3. Damning Declaration - An anonymous man of God comes to Eli to declare the damning judgement of the Lord. . It is interesting that the prophet deals with the past, the present, and the future. There message was a terrible judgement including Eli's two wicked sons to be killed on the same day. It would impact the people of God, in that the tabernacle would have to be moved, and the blessed Ark of the Covenant was captured signalling the departure of God's glory and presence. God is not mocked, He is also no respecter of persons, and the cleansing of this situation was done with dramatic power.



Penzance Baptist Church

'Upholding the Ordinary Means of Grace'

Pastor Jonathan Stobbs