

Message Three

**Spiritual Principles, Life Lessons, and Holy Warnings  
Seen in the History of Samuel**

Scripture Reading: 1 Sam. 1:10-11, 18-20, 27-28;  
2:30, 35-36; 3:1-21; 4:11-22; 7:3-17; 12:23

- I. Samuel was of the tribe of Levi (1 Chron. 6:33-38) but was not of the house of Aaron, the family of the priests ordained by God; Samuel ministered to the Lord as one who was a priest not by birth but by the Nazarite vow:**
- A. God's move with His answer to Hannah's prayer was to produce an overcoming Nazarite who was absolute for the fulfilling of God's desire; even before he was born, Samuel was consecrated by his mother to be such a person—1 Sam. 1:10-11, 18-20.
  - B. God desires that all His people be Nazarites; to be a Nazarite is to be sanctified, separated, absolutely and ultimately to God, that is, to be for nothing other than God and for nothing other than His satisfaction—the testimony of Jesus, which is the testifying church as the testimony and the expression of Christ—Num. 6:1-2; Psa. 73:25-26; Rev. 1:2, 9-13; 19:10; cf. Exo. 38:21:
    - 1. For a Nazarite to abstain from wine and anything related to its source signifies abstaining from all kinds of earthly enjoyment and pleasure and taking and experiencing Christ as his enjoyment and pleasure; eating the tree of life, that is, enjoying Christ as our life supply, should be the primary matter in the church life—Num. 6:3-4; Rev. 2:7; Judg. 9:12-13.
    - 2. For a Nazarite to not shave his head signifies not rejecting but being absolutely subject to the headship of the Lord as well as to all deputy authorities appointed by God—Num. 6:5; Rom. 13:1-2a; Eph. 5:21, 23; 6:1; Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 5:5.
    - 3. For a Nazarite to not be defiled by the death of his blood relatives, but remain in his separation to be holy to God, signifies that a Nazarite overcomes natural affection—Num. 6:7.
    - 4. For a Nazarite to not come near a dead person or to not be defiled by the sudden death of one beside him signifies that a Nazarite is separated from death—vv. 6-9; Rev. 3:4; Lev. 11:31; 5:2; cf. 1 John 5:16.
- II. At the time of Samuel, the priesthood of the house of Aaron was utterly fallen; God, however, foresaw the situation; besides His ordaining the house of Aaron to be the priests, He made a supplement—the Nazarite vow in Numbers 6—in case there should be an inadequacy in the ordained priests:**

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- A. When the house of Aaron fell, this supplement was put into practical use; Samuel became a priest by being consecrated, separated, and lent to the Lord—1 Sam. 1:11, 27-28.
- B. At the time of Eli, God was poor as far as the priesthood was concerned, so Hannah lent Samuel to the Lord; when the situation is abnormal, the Lord becomes poor with respect to His administration, and there is the need for someone to voluntarily lend himself to the Lord.
- C. After she presented Samuel to Eli, Hannah praised God for His salvation accomplished through His marvelous deeds; her prayer was related to God's move in His economy and indicated that she realized something concerning God's economy—2:1-10.

**III. Samuel grew up under the custody of Eli; in his youth Samuel ministered to Jehovah before Eli (vv. 11b, 18-19), being taught by Eli the way to minister to God:**

- A. God called Samuel three times; “then Eli perceived that it was Jehovah calling the boy. And Eli said to Samuel, Go and lie down, and if He calls you, you shall say, Speak, O Jehovah; for Your servant is listening...Then Jehovah came and stood by and called as at the other times, Samuel! Samuel! And Samuel said, Speak, for Your servant is listening”—3:1-10:
  - 1. This was something completely positive that Samuel learned from Eli; as the Lord's servants, we need to maintain our fellowship with Him, always listening to Him—Luke 1:34-38; 10:38-42.
  - 2. Our lives depend on the Lord's words, and our work depends on His commands (Rev. 2:7; 1 Sam. 3:9-10; cf. Isa. 50:4-5; Exo. 21:6); the life of the believers hinges totally upon the Lord's speaking (Eph. 5:26-27).
  - 3. The Lord's speaking enables us to fulfill the goal of His eternal economy to have a bride as His counterpart—Rev. 2:7; Eph. 5:26-27; S. S. 8:13-14.
- B. While Samuel was learning, he observed the deterioration of the degraded Aaronic priesthood:
  - 1. He saw the Ark of God being usurped by the elders of the people and captured by the Philistines with the glory of God departing from Israel; he realized God's severe judgment on the house of Eli, which included the deaths of Eli and his two evil sons, Hophni and Phinehas—1 Sam. 2:12-36; 4:11-22.

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2. God's severe judgment on the house of Eli was prophesied by a man of God (2:27-36); then, this severe judgment was confirmed by the word of Jehovah spoken through Samuel (3:11-18).
3. God's purpose in telling Eli through Samuel of the coming judgment might have been to make an unforgettable impression on this young priestly boy; this was God's wisdom—vv. 17-18.
4. This did not weaken Samuel in his future Nazarite priesthood; rather, it became a constant warning to him throughout his priestly service that helped him to remain pure in his service to God for his entire life.

#### **IV. Samuel was one who turned the age into the age of the kingdom with the kingship; this was a great thing not only in the history of Israel but even in the history of mankind:**

- A. Samuel did not rebel against the house of Aaron, and he did not usurp anything of the house of Aaron; as Samuel was growing, God arranged the environment to perfect him and to build up his capacity to do everything that was needed for God to change the age into the age of the king with the kingdom.
- B. As a priest Samuel replaced and, in a sense, terminated the stale Aaronic priesthood; God used Samuel to change the age not through rebellion or revolution but through the way of divine revelation to bring in the kingship.
- C. Samuel was a man of revelation, and he did everything according to what he saw; "Jehovah revealed Himself to Samuel...by the word of Jehovah" (v. 21); furthermore, Samuel was a man according to God's heart—a copy, a duplicate, of God's heart; as such a person, he would never do anything rebellious.

#### **V. Samuel's whole being and person, not just his doing, living, and work, were according to God; Samuel's being and God's heart were one; for this reason we may say that Samuel, a man according to God, was the acting God on earth:**

- A. God's mind was Samuel's consideration; he had no other thought, consideration, or thinking; his living and working were for the carrying out of whatever was in God's heart.
- B. Samuel anointed Saul and David to be kings (10:1; 16:1, 13); this was according to God's ordination that Samuel should go before His anointed continually (2:35) to supervise the king, observing what the king was doing.

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- C. This indicates that Samuel, the acting God on earth, was greater than the king; Samuel could be qualified to such an extent because for many years God had been perfecting him uniquely for His economy:
    - 1. Samuel could be used by God to carry out His economy because he was a man according to God and God's heart, having no self-seeking nor any thought of self-gain—cf. Matt. 16:24-26; Luke 9:23-25.
    - 2. He had no heart for anything besides God's heart and God's elect; his heart was a reflection of God's heart—cf. Phil. 2:19-22; 2 Cor. 3:16-18.
    - 3. Samuel considered that not praying for God's people, who are His personal treasure and possession, was a sin against Jehovah—1 Sam. 12:23; Exo. 19:5.
  - D. Although it was not easy for Samuel to stand for God in his particular environment, he cared for God's interest and turned the age; according to the Old Testament, Samuel is ranked with Moses in being for God and for God's interest—Jer. 15:1.
  - E. "Samuel told the people the practice of the kingdom, and he wrote it in a book and laid it before Jehovah"—1 Sam. 10:25a:
    - 1. Moses gave the law to the children of Israel, but before Samuel came they did not have a set of bylaws, a constitution.
    - 2. Samuel taught the people the bylaws, the constitution, the practice, the customs, the manners, the ordinances, and the rules of how to practice the kingdom of God on earth.
- VI. God began a new age in raising up Samuel, a young Nazarite, as a faithful priest to replace the degraded priesthood—2:35:**
- A. Samuel was established by God to speak the word of God to replace the teaching of the word of God by the old priesthood; in the priesthood the first thing that a priest should do is to speak for God.
  - B. The breastplate and the Urim and the Thummim worn by the high priest were the means used by God to speak to His people (Exo. 28:30); in the degradation of the priesthood God's speaking was almost lost (1 Sam. 3:1, 3a).
  - C. God ministered His word to His elect by establishing Samuel as a prophet in the uplifted prophethood (vv. 20-21), and He exercised

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His authority over His elect by raising up Samuel as a judge (7:15-17).

- D. Samuel, as the last judge, terminated the judgeship, and, as the new priest, brought in the kingship, which was strengthened by the uplifted prophethood.
- E. God needed to raise up a living person, a prophet, to speak for Him; in God's ordination Samuel is considered as the first prophet because he brought in the prophethood for God's speaking—Acts 3:24; 13:20; Heb. 11:32.

### **VII. Samuel was one with God on earth; as the acting God on earth, the representative of the very God in heaven to rule over His people on earth, Samuel ministered in five statuses—1 Sam. 7:3:**

- A. Samuel ministered as a Nazarite, consecrated to God absolutely for God's fulfillment of His economy—1:11, 28a.
- B. Samuel ministered as a God-honoring, God-pleasing priest to replace the stale and degraded priesthood, and he was faithful to act on behalf of God, even to appoint and establish kings for the divine government on earth—2:30, 35-36; 7:3-17; Judg. 9:9, 13.
- C. Samuel ministered as a prophet established by God (1 Sam. 3:20) to speak the word of God to replace the teaching of the old priesthood at a time when the word of Jehovah was rare and visions were not widespread (vv. 1-10, 19-21).
- D. Samuel ministered as a judge in the reality of the kingship to replace the judging of the people by the old and stale priesthood—7:15-17.
- E. Samuel ministered as a man of prayer who prayed for God's elect so that they would be kept in the way of God, would be one with God, would not be ensnared by the idols of the nations, and would enjoy God as Ebenezer (meaning "the stone of help"—v. 12) in order that God's desire in His will regarding them might be fulfilled (vv. 3-17; 8:6; 12:19-25; 15:11b).