

Commentary on 1st Samuel Chapters 3 and 4 by Chuck Smith 7.14.21

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July memory verse, Exodus 14:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴ The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace."

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Chapter three,

The child Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli. And the word of the Lord was precious [or scarce] in those days; there was no open vision. [God just wasn't speaking to man.] And it came to pass, when Eli would lie down in bed at night,... Samuel went into his bedroom; And Samuel heard a voice calling him, and he said, Here am I. And he ran into Eli, and he said, Did you call me? And Eli said, No, I didn't call you; go back to bed. Samuel went back to bed again. And he heard the voice, Samuel, Samuel. And he went running in, he said, Here I am what do you want? He said, I didn't call you go back to bed, kid. Samuel went back to bed again and again he heard the voice saying, Samuel, Samuel, he went running in and said, Surely you called me what do you want? [The old man began to get the picture at this point and he figured that, "Hey maybe God is speaking to this boy."] So he said, Go back to bed, if you hear your name being called again, say, Speak, my Lord; for your servant heareth. So Samuel went back to bed. And he heard the voice, Samuel, Samuel. And he said, Speak my Lord; for thy servant heareth. And the Lord said to Samuel, I'm gonna do a work in Israel, [that when the people see it,] or hear it their ears are going to tingle. In that day I'm gonna perform against Eli all of the things which I have spoken concerning his house: and when I begin, I'm gonna finish. For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knows; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not ([1Sa 2:1-13](#)).

Here is something to me that is very interesting, something that we had better take note of. It was his refusal to discipline his sons that brought the judgment of God upon his house. His refusal to discipline them in their actions. Fathers, you have a responsibility in the disciplining of your children. Don't shirk that responsibility. Eli did not discipline his sons. He allowed them to go on with these actions, and thus God promised that He was gonna judge the house.

And therefore I have sworn to the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifices nor offerings for ever. [They can't offer any sacrifice to cleanse them.] Samuel lay until the morning, and he opened the doors of the house of the Lord. But he was afraid to tell Eli the vision. And Eli called Samuel, and he said, Samuel, my son. And he answered, Here am I. And he said, What is the thing that the Lord said unto you? I pray that you will not hide it from me: for God do so to thee, and more also, if you hide any thing from all of the things which God said. [Boy, that isn't fair, you know lay something like that on you, "Tell me and God do the same to you and more also if you don't tell me every thing that God said."] So Samuel told him every thing, did not hide any thing from him. And he said, It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good ([1Sa 2:14-18](#)).

Now this is quite an attitude for the old man, a submission unto the judgment of God. "It is the Lord: let Him do what seems right." A commitment of himself to that judgment, that promised judgment of God.

So Samuel grew, the Lord was with him. And all of Israel from Dan to Beersheba realized that Samuel was established to be the prophet of the Lord. And the Lord appeared again in Shiloh: and the Lord revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the Lord ([1Sa 2:19-21](#)).

Chapter 4

Now in chapter four we find the Philistines had come against the Israelites and they met them in battle and defeated them. Four thousand of the men of Israel were slain. So the Philistines were getting ready to attack again, and the people said, "Let us bring the Ark of the Covenant into the camp in order that the Philistines cannot defeat us."

Now they were beginning to look at the Ark of the Covenant as sort of an amulet, a good luck piece kind of a thing. "Well if the Ark of the Covenant is

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here, it will bring us good luck over the Philistines." Making it almost a fetish kind of a thing, bringing it into the camp. It was wrong, but they did it anyhow.

When the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, came with the ark of the covenant, all of the men began to shout and, [a big cheer went up, and a lot of shouting]. And the Philistines said, What's going on over there? And so when they found out that they had brought the ark of the covenant, the Philistines said, Oh that's not fair it never happened in battle that the people brought their gods into battle with them. These are the Gods that wiped out the Egyptians and the Amorites and all, what chance do we have ([1Sa 4:4-8](#)).

The Philistines, it had a reverse effect actually, they said, "Men fight with everything you got or else you're gonna be their slaves. Even as they have been our slaves." It so inspired the Philistines that they attacked. They defeated the men of Israel, and they took the Ark of the Covenant back to their own city. They captured the Ark of the Covenant and took it back to their Philistine cities.

So the two sons of Eli were slain in that battle. A young man came running to tell the news, and Eli was sitting in a chair by the road, and the young man came. And Eli said, What's the meaning of all this noise, the tumult? [Now Eli at this point was ninety-eight years old, his eyes were dim, he could barely see.] and this young fellow said, I came out of the camp of the army, and he said, Israel is fled before the Philistines, and your two sons were killed, and the Ark of the Covenant was taken. When the old man heard that the Ark of the Covenant was taken, he fell over backwards, broke his neck [Because he was a very heavy man.] and he died: Now his daughter in law, the wife of Phinehas his son, at that time was expecting a child: when she heard that her husband had died, she went into labor pains. The women were standing around her to help her, and they said, Fear not for you have had a son. But she answered not, neither did she regard it. But she named the child Ichabod, saying, The glory is departed from Israel: because the ark of God had been taken by their enemies ([1Sa 4:11-22](#)).

Ichabod means "no glory", or "the glory is departed." So this child of course is stuck with this name Ichabod. She died in the birth of the child