

(T) Welcome to **Discipleship training On The Air**. In this series about sharing from our quiet times you may learn to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. We are two teachers and every day during the past week we had a quiet time from 7 selected chapters from 1 SAMUEL in the Old Testament. Once a week we come together to share what we have learned from our quiet times. As you listen to this programme, make notes in a notebook or record the programme. Today's topic is A DISCIPLE SHARES WHAT HE LEARNS FROM 1 SAMUEL.

(S) **SHARING FROM SELECTED CHAPTERS FROM 1 SAMUEL**

This past week we have read, meditated and prayed from 1 Samuel 2,3,8,15,16,17 and 18. Now we will use our notes to share important truths and lessons from some of these chapters and discuss some difficult passages.

(T) **1 Samuel chapters 2 and 3.**

I would like to share from 1 Samuel 2:22-25 and 3:11-14 about Eli's failure to restrain the sins of his children. Towards the end of the period of the judges, Eli was the high priest serving at the sanctuary at Shiloh. His two sons were priests. However, they were wicked, because they took certain parts of the sacrifices by force from the people and thus treated the Lord's offering with contempt. Moreover, they committed sexual immorality with the women who had certain unofficial tasks at the sanctuary (Ex 38:8). By their unholy and wicked behaviour, these sons showed that they had no regard for the Lord. The way their father, Eli, dealt with their sins is a lesson for me.

First. Eli failed to confront his wicked sons with their sins. The Bible says that their father, Eli, knew what his sons were doing. But instead of *rebuking* their unholy and wicked behaviour, he *only questioned* their behaviour, saying, "Why do you do such things? No, my son, it is not a good report that I hear spreading among all the Lord's people." Instead of asking them "Why did you do this?" Eli should have asked them, "What did you do?" He should have *confronted* them, not with their sinful nature, but with their actual sinful deeds! *Their wrongdoing had to be brought into the light, so that they would feel guilty and ashamed of what they had done.* Only when people genuinely feel their guilt and know that they are losing face in front of other people, will they seek forgiveness for their wrongdoing. But Eli did not confront them with their unholy and wicked behaviour, probably because he did not want them to lose face (be shamed in front of other people). Not only Eli was too lenient with his sons, but also his sons were too hardened of heart. Although Eli warned them that judgment by the Lord is much more serious than judgment by people, they refused to listen to the warning of their father. Eli's failure to confront his sons with their sins, and his son's refusal to listen to their father, led to their destruction.

Second. Eli failed to restrain his wicked sons from continuing to do evil. In 1 Samuel 3:13 the Lord said to Samuel concerning Eli, "I told him that I would judge his family forever because of the sin he knew about; his sons made themselves contemptible and he failed to restrain them." The words 'to make themselves contemptible' means that they made themselves the object of God's curse by their God-defiant behaviour. And the word 'restrain' means to keep in check or under control. Eli failed to restrain his sons. So 1 Samuel 2:27-36 relates that the Lord sent one of his prophets to Eli to warn him of the coming judgment of God over his house. The Lord said that he would honour those people who honoured him, but that he would disdain those people who despised him (2:30). The Lord warned Eli that his whole house would be destroyed. In spite of the grave warning of the first prophet, Eli did nothing to restrain the unholy and wicked behaviour of his sons. Therefore, the Lord sent his second prophet, Samuel, to pronounce the final judgment over Eli's house. The Lord said that he would punish the house of Eli and especially his sons, precisely there where they sinned. Because they had taken the Lord's offerings by violence from the people, their guilt would never be atoned for by any sacrifice or offering! The sons of Eli had sinned beyond the point of the Lord's patience; they had become hardened beyond the point of repentance; they had sinned against the Holy Spirit; and every attempt to make atonement for their sins would be in vain!

Eli's failure to confront his children with their wicked behaviour and his failure to restrain them from continuing in their wicked behaviour, is a serious warning for me. I do not want my children to continue in sin and so miss the grace of the Lord (Heb 12:15). Therefore, I want to help them continually to confess their sins and to break with all evil practices.

(S) **1 Samuel chapter 8.**

I want to share from 1 Samuel 8:1-20 about Israel's rejection of God as their King. The book of Judges in the Bible teaches that God's purpose was to make Israel a pure theocracy, that is, a nation who is ruled directly by God as their King. The books of Samuel teach that Israel failed to be a nation that was ruled directly by God as King. The elders of Israel even came to Samuel to request that he appoint a human being as a king to lead them. There were basically two reasons why Israel requested to have a king like all the other nations. The first reason was that Eli's sons were evil

judges. They were not judges like in the book of Judges, but judges like in Deuteronomy 16:18-19 that decide disputes between people. They turned aside after dishonest gain, accepted bribes and perverted justice. The second reason was that Samuel had become too old to lead Israel in war like one of the judges in the book of Judges (7:16; 12:12). The request of the elders sounded completely in line with what God said in Deuteronomy 17:14-20 would happen in the future of Israel. But both God and the prophet Samuel saw that Israel's motives were not good.

Samuel first protested, because he felt that he was rejected as judge over Israel. But God told him to do what the people requested and to warn the people what would happen when they had a human king. God said, "It is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their King." God's answer to Samuel teaches us the following about the theocracy of Israel.

First. Hereditary kingship in Israel was a rejection of God as their King. Samuel was seen as Israel's last judge. "Judges" in the sense it has in the book of Judges, were directly called and appointed by God to lead Israel both politically and spiritually. Their task was to liberate Israel from their oppressors and to lead Israel back to serve their only King, the Lord himself. That is why their task was temporary. However, Israel wanted permanent kings instead of temporary judges. *They wanted another system of government, namely, hereditary kingship, which they thought would give them greater national unity and stability.* Israel showed that their attitude was unspiritual, because instead of returning to God, they sought their salvation and welfare in another system of government.

Second. Hereditary kingship was a refined form of idolatry. Israel's present behaviour was in line with their behaviour since God led them out of Egypt. Time and again, Israel *rejected God and replaced him by something else.* In Exodus 32:1, Israel rejected God's appointed leader, Moses, and replaced him by an idol cast in the shape of a calf. According to Numbers 25:1-3 and Judges 2:12, Israel rejected the worship of God and replaced it by sexual immorality and idolatry. And here in 1 Samuel 8:3-6 Israel rejected God as their King and replaced him by human kings! Their desire to have a hereditary kingship must be viewed as a refined form of idolatry. By rejecting God, Israel also rejected God's servant, Samuel. Samuel experienced what Jesus said in John 13:16, "A servant is not greater than his master".

Third. Hereditary kingship became an institution through which God disciplined Israel. Although Israel's motives were evil, and God did not approve of Israel's request, nevertheless in God's sovereign plan, it was God's time to establish kingship in Israel. It was not Samuel who established the kings, but God himself who commanded it. But Israel would not get what they expected, namely, a king like in all the other nations. *Israel would get a king in which God himself would remain the real King and the earthly king would only rule in God's name and as a type of the coming Messiah King!* Because Israel refused to listen to God's word, they now had to feel God's discipline. They would have to experience the consequences of their choice. The first earthly king would be a king with whom God would not be pleased. Through king Saul, Israel would learn the many and great disadvantages of having hereditary kingship. The human king would be like a despot. The Israelites would lose their personal freedom by becoming the king's unwilling labourers. They would lose much of their possessions, because the king would levy heavy taxes and take from them their best fields, orchards and vineyards, in order to reward his officials. *Israel would become a nation of serfs.* They would have duties, but no rights. This would happen gradually, but by the time Israel discovered their mistake it would be too late to change. Through the many human kings with whom God would not be pleased, God was going to prepare Israel first for the king with whom he would be pleased, king David, and finally for the coming of the Messiah King. In spite of the fact that Israel heard what Samuel said, they still insisted to have a human king and be like all the other nations around them (8:19-20). It is very clear that Israel did not realise that it was their greatest privilege to be different than all the other nations and not have a human king, but God himself as their King!

Israel's rejection of God as their King has made me more determined to acknowledge God as my only King and to make sure that I do not replace him by any human institution. No government on earth or any human leader in any church may replace God as the King in my life!

(T) 1 Samuel chapter 15.

I want to share from 1 Samuel 15:22-23 about God's rejection of Saul as king. The life of king Saul is a description of the failure of hereditary kingship, as Israel desired it. After his initial victories, king Saul became impatient and arrogant. The history of his life shows that his wrong decisions and choices finally led to his downfall. It shows that God's threat and purpose to take the kingship away from him (13:13-14) was finally fulfilled. It did not merely happen as Saul's fate, as something that happened to him outside his own decisions and acts, but it happened to him because of his wrong decisions and acts. Saul's history as king progressed from bad to worse.

In 1 Samuel 13, Saul acted *impatiently* and took the matter of offerings into his own hands.

In 1 Samuel 14, he was *overzealous* as commander and unjustly strict towards his son, Jonathan. Saul was not really concerned with God's glory, but wanted to satisfy his feelings of revenge. He used the nation as his instrument and pushed them to the point of exhaustion (28,31). As a result, he came into conflict with his son Jonathan (29), with the whole nation of Israel (39,45), and eventually with God (37).

In 1 Samuel 15, Saul was *disobedient* to God. God had commanded him to totally destroy the Amalekites, but Saul spared their king and the Israelites spared the best sheep and best cattle. They were unwilling to destroy anything that was good, and only destroyed what was despised and weak (9). All these events showed that Saul did not humble himself before God in repentance, but instead continued to exalt himself (12) and to take matters into his own hands (9). When Samuel confronted Saul with the incompleteness of his task, Saul blamed his soldiers for saving all the good animals and pretended that they were going to *sacrifice* them to God. Then Samuel said that God is much more delighted when people *obey* him than when they bring sacrifices to him. He said that disobedience to God is as bad as the sins of fortune-telling and idolatry.

This warning of Samuel to king Saul is also a warning to me. Whoever disobeys God's words in fact obeys his own will! Whoever rejects God's sovereignty, in fact worships himself as a god! Because king Saul rejected God's word, God rejected him as king of Israel. I do not want God to reject me. Therefore I want to always obey his words to me.

(S) 1 Samuel chapter 16 and 17.

I want to share from 1 Samuel 16:14-23 and 17:31-39,55-58 about two difficult questions.

The first difficult question is from 1 Samuel 16:14. How could the Lord send an evil spirit to torment king Saul? The statement that the Spirit of the Lord had departed from king Saul and that the Lord had sent an evil spirit to torment Saul, was not simply an explanation of the writer concerning Saul's state of mind. Satan and all his evil spirits are enemies of God, but they are nevertheless subject to God's sovereign control. Satan, all his evil spirits as well as all their evil actions *stand under the sovereign control of God* and *they can only act when God gives them permission to do so!* In Job chapter 1-2, God also gave Satan permission to destroy all Job's children and possessions and even his health. But, as the book of Job clearly teaches, God had a definite purpose for doing that, even if he did not reveal that purpose to Job!

The second difficult question concerns the comparison between 1 Samuel 16:14-23 and 1 Samuel 17:31-39,55-58. Do these two chapters contradict one another or is there a good explanation? 1 Samuel 16 describes how David entered into the service of king Saul for the first time after Saul was plagued by an evil spirit. But 1 Samuel 17 gives the impression that David only entered the service of king Saul when he fought Goliath. The Hebrew way of poetry was to repeat with different words in the second line, what was said in the first line. Likewise, *the Hebrew way of writing history often stated a fact and then afterwards elaborated that same fact.* For example, in 1 Samuel 3:19-21, the writer summarises the work of Samuel, which is later elaborated. And in 1 Samuel 14:47-48, the writer summarises the battles of king Saul, which are later elaborated. Likewise, in 1 Samuel 16:14-21, the writer relates how David came into Saul's service. But in 1 Samuel 17, he elaborates this topic. 1 Samuel 17:15 clearly states that in the beginning, David was not permanently in Saul's service. He travelled back and forth from serving king Saul in Jerusalem to serving his father in Bethlehem. Before his fight with Goliath, Saul did not take much notice of David. But after his victory over Goliath, Saul wanted to know more about David and finally took him permanently into his service (18:2).

But another difficulty is that in chapter 16 Saul asked David's father to allow David to come into his service, but in chapter 17 Saul inquired who the father of David was. This is just another example, that *in 1 Samuel 16:19-21 the writer got ahead of his own story* and described that David went permanently into Saul's service, not only as a musician in times Saul was plagued by an evil spirit, but as one of his armour bearers.

There is also no contradiction between the description of David being a brave warrior or David being a boy. When a servant described David as "a brave man and a warrior" in 1 Samuel 16:18, he was trying to impress Saul with David's qualities. But when Saul described David as being "only a boy" in comparison to Goliath, "who was a fighting man from his youth", he was only expressing his doubt whether David would be able to conquer Goliath.

What I have learned is not to believe the critics of the Bible, who say that the Bible is full of discrepancies. By studying the Bible, I have seen that there is a good explanation for every difficulty in the Bible. The Bible is a wonderful book, full of truth and every truth is consistent with the truth in the rest of the Bible.

(T) ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK

First. Every day have a quiet time from one chapter from 2 Samuel. The selected chapters are 2 Samuel 5,6,7,11,12,13 and 24. Record the meditations of all your quiet times in a notebook. Once a week meet with a friend or with a house fellowship or discipleship group and share your discoveries, lessons and blessings.

Second. See the workbooks "Go and preach God's kingdom" and Internet on www.dota.net

Third. Listen every SATURDAY to WEDNESDAY on the radio to "Discipleship training on the air".