



LESSON FOUR

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

Scripture Reading:

Section 1: Numbers 6:1-12

- 6:1 Then Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying,
6:2 Speak to the children of Israel and say to them, When a man or a woman makes a special vow, the vow of a Nazarite, to separate himself to Jehovah,
6:3 He shall separate himself from wine and strong drink; he shall drink no vinegar of wine or vinegar of strong drink, nor shall he drink any juice of grapes, nor eat fresh or dried grapes.
6:4 All the days of his separation he shall eat nothing that is produced by the grape vine, from the seeds even to the skin.
6:5 All the days of his vow of separation no razor shall pass over his head. He shall be holy until the days are fulfilled for which he separated himself to Jehovah; he shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow long.
6:6 All the days that he separates himself to Jehovah he shall not come near a dead person.
6:7 He shall not make himself unclean for his father or for his mother, for his brother or for his sister, when they die, because his separation to God is upon his head.
6:8 All the days of his separation he is holy to Jehovah.
6:9 And if anyone dies very suddenly beside him so that he defiles the head of his separation, then he shall shave his head on the day he becomes clean; on the seventh day shall he shave it.
6:10 And on the eighth day he shall bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons to the priest at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting,
6:11 And the priest shall offer one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering, and make expiation for him because he sinned by reason of the dead person. And he shall sanctify his head that same day.
6:12 And he shall separate to Jehovah the days of his separation and shall bring a male lamb a year old for a trespass offering, but the former days shall be void because his separation was defiled.
6:13 Now this is the law of the Nazarite when the days of his separation are fulfilled:

Section 2: Exodus 21:1-6

- 21:1 Now these are the ordinances which you shall set before them.
21:2 If you buy a Hebrew servant, he shall serve six years; but in the seventh he shall go out free without payment to you.
21:3 If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself; if he is the husband of a wife, then his wife shall go out with him.
21:4 If his master gives him a wife and she bears him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself.
21:5 But if the servant plainly says, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free;
21:6 Then his master shall bring him to God and shall bring him to the door or to the doorpost, and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him forever.

Section 3: 1 Samuel 9:1-17; 10:1

- 9:1 Now there was a man from Benjamin whose name was Kish, the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Becorath, the son of Aphiah, a Benjaminite, a man of wealth.
- 9:2 And he had a son whose name was Saul, a choice and handsome man; and there was not a man among the children of Israel more handsome than he; from his shoulders and up he was taller than all the people.
- 9:3 Now the donkeys of Kish, Saul's father, were lost; and Kish said to Saul his son, Take with you one of the servants, and rise up and go to search for the donkeys.
- 9:4 And he passed through the hill country of Ephraim, and he passed through the land of Shalishah; but they did not find them. Then they passed through the land of Shaalim, but they were not there. Then he passed through the land of Benjamin, but they did not find them.
- 9:5 When they came to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant who was with him, Come, and let us return; otherwise, my father will stop worrying about the donkeys and will worry about us.
- 9:6 But he said to him, There is a man of God here in this city, and he is a man held in honor; all that he says happens without fail. Let us now go there; perhaps he will tell us about our journey that we have set out on.
- 9:7 And Saul said to his servant, But if we go, what will we bring the man? For the food is gone from our bags, and there is no present to bring the man of God. What do we have?
- 9:8 And the servant answered Saul again and said, Here in my hand is a quarter shekel of silver, and I can give it to the man of God; then he will tell us our way.
- 9:9 (Formerly in Israel a man spoke this way when he went to inquire of God, Come, and let us go to the seer; for today's prophet was formerly called a seer.)
- 9:10 Then Saul said to his servant, Well said; come, let us go. So they went to the city where the man of God was.
- 9:11 As they went up the ascent into the city, they found some girls coming out to draw water; and they said to them, Is the seer here?
- 9:12 And they answered them and said, He is; there he is ahead of you. Hurry now; for he has just come to the city today, because the people have a sacrifice at the high place today.
- 9:13 Right when you enter the city, you will find him, before he goes up to the high place to eat. For the people will not eat until he comes, because he is the one who blesses the sacrifice. Right after that, those who have been invited will eat. Go up now then, for you will find him right away.
- 9:14 So they went up into the city. As they came into the midst of the city, there came Samuel out toward them, going up to the high place.
- 9:15 Now Jehovah had revealed this to Samuel a day before Saul came, saying,
- 9:16 At about this time tomorrow I will send to you a man from the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him ruler over My people Israel; and he will save My people from the hand of the Philistines, for I have looked upon My people because their cry has come to Me.
- 9:17 And when Samuel saw Saul, Jehovah declared to him, Here is the man of whom I spoke to you. This man shall rule over My people.
- 10:1 Then Samuel took the vial of oil and poured it upon his head, and he kissed him and said, Jehovah anoints you ruler over His inheritance.

Section 4: 1 Samuel 8:1-7; 12:22-25

- 8:1 Now when Samuel was old, he made his sons judges over Israel.
- 8:2 And the name of his firstborn son was Joel, and the name of his second was Abijah; they were judges in Beersheba.
- 8:3 But his sons did not follow in his ways, but turned aside after unjust gain and took bribes and perverted justice.
- 8:4 Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah.
- 8:5 And they said to him, You are now old, and your sons do not follow in your ways. Appoint now for us a king to judge us like all the nations.
- 8:6 But the matter displeased Samuel when they said, Give us a king to judge us. Then Samuel prayed to Jehovah.
- 8:7 And Jehovah said to Samuel, Listen to the voice of the people according to all that they have said to you; for it is not you whom they have rejected, but they have rejected Me from being King over them.
- 12:22 For because of His great name Jehovah will not forsake His people, for Jehovah has been pleased to make you a people for Himself.
- 12:23 Moreover as for me, far be it from me that I would sin against Jehovah by ceasing to pray for you, but I will instruct you in the good and right way.
- 12:24 Only, fear Jehovah and serve Him in truth with all your heart, for consider what great things He has done for you.
- 12:25 But if you still do wickedly, both you and your king will be consumed.

QUESTIONS:**Section 1:**

1. What is a Nazarite?
2. What are the signs of a Nazarite?
3. What are the factors that may disqualify us from being a Nazarite and how can we be saved from them?

Section 2:

1. What is the main thing that Samuel learned from Eli? How can this be applied to us?
2. What is the significance of the slave in Exodus 21:6?
3. Explain God's wisdom in telling Eli through Samuel of the coming judgement.

Section 3:

1. What kind of lesson should we learn from Samuel in not being rebellious against the house of Aaron?
2. How can we say that Samuel, a man according to God's heart, was the acting God on earth?
3. What is God's intention? How can we see it from the Bible?

Section 4:

1. What kind of person is Samuel? How can we tell that God's heart was duplicated in Samuel?
2. What is Samuel's consideration in praying for God's people? How can we learn from him?
3. What should our attitude be regarding to our current environment? When should we care for God's interest? Please use Samuel as an example.

----- [INTRODUCTION] -----

In this message we will cover three points seen in the history of Samuel: spiritual principles, life lessons, and holy warnings. Through this message we want to develop a deeper appreciation of the history of Samuel. His story is not merely for children, young people, or students. Samuel's history offers many spiritual principles.

By looking at Samuel with these three points in mind, we will see how applicable this history is to every one of us. Today God is seeking a group of people to be today's Samuel, today's age-turners. In order to be such a corporate Samuel, we need to rise up in cooperation with God so that He can carry out His move in this age. We also need to learn these principles, these lessons, and receive these warnings. In other words, if we are to be such a person who is useful in God's hands for the outworking of His economy today, we need to be trained, to be perfected, and to learn.

With this in view, we should pray, "Lord, make me a Samuel in this age. Lord, make us the corporate Samuel of today. Make those in Your recovery the corporate, acting God on the earth today. Make us those who are one heart with You, one mind with You, one being with You; make us in every way one with You."

----- [SECTION 1] -----

I. SAMUEL MINISTERING TO THE LORD AS ONE WHO WAS A PRIEST BY THE NAZARITE VOW

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. Samuel's name, given to him by his mother, means "asked for of God" (1 Sam. 1:20 and footnote 1). Hannah prayed earnestly and in a bitter way because she was barren and without child. She asked Jehovah for a male child, promising Jehovah that if He would give her this child, she would give Samuel back to God for His use. First Samuel 1:28 uses the word lent. Hannah lent Samuel to God. Why? It was because in those days, God was truly poor. God was not wealthy with regard to a human instrument, a human vessel, a priest, a prophet, a man of God, a man of prayer, or a judge. God needed someone to turn the age and bring in the age of the kingdom.

Thus, in His sovereignty, God allowed Hannah to be without child so that she would be desperate to come and pray at the tabernacle, and then that prayer was answered. Actually, it was God who initiated the situation. It was God who put such a prayer in the heart of this woman so that she in turn would pray for a son according to God, according to God's need, and according to God's economy. This son would be the priest whom God would raise up for Himself. This son would also be the prophet whom God would raise up for Himself. Nothing was accidental here. Nothing was coincidental. It was all purposed and arranged by God.

A. God Desiring That All His People Be Nazarites

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; Psalms 73:25-26; Rev. 1:2, 9-13; 19:10; cf. Exo. 38:21).

What is a Nazarite? A Nazarite is one who is consecrated to God by being separated from everything other than God. He is sanctified by God to exist totally and completely for God's satisfaction and to meet God's need. Today there is a need for people like this on the earth.

The present age is the age of the church, the age of grace. The church should be the house of God and the family of God...Nevertheless, a great degradation has occurred, and the priesthood of the believers has failed God in the last two thousand years...The situation today is terrible. Against this background, God needs to raise up the overcomers.

Who are these overcomers? They are the Nazarites. Today's Nazarites are simply the overcomers who stand against the tide of degradation, who stand for Jesus to be His testimony. These overcomers are the testimony of the church as the testimony of Jesus and the expression of Christ (cf. Rev. 1:2, 4)...We need to make this vow, and we need to be happy and determined to make this vow. This vow is something absolutely voluntary. We can offer ourselves voluntarily as a freewill offering because of our burden. God opens the door for such ones to become His real priests to meet the need in these days of corruption and degradation.

1. A Nazarite to Abstain from Wine and Anything Related to Its Source

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). In this law of separation, the first sign of a person separated unto God is that he abstains from all kinds of earthly enjoyment and pleasure. If we are before the Lord and if we read His word, we will know what earthly enjoyment and pleasure are. To be a present-day Nazarite, we must not be usurped by these earthly enjoyments and pleasures...We should be those who eat of the tree of life. This kind of enjoyment is the primary matter in the church life.

2. A Nazarite to Not Shave His Head

The second sign of a Nazarite is that his head will not be shaved. This means that he is wholly in subjection, in subordination, to God's headship. This one knows what authority is, and he is always under that authority. The ultimate authority in this universe is simply the Lord Himself, with His headship. What then is a Nazarite, who is separated and sanctified unto God for His purpose, other than someone who is fully under the Lord's headship? The Lord is preeminent in the life of a Nazarite; the Lord is the Head, the Husband, the King, and has all authority over such a person. This person is totally in subjection to Christ and under His authority.

In our daily life, in all things, big and small, do we simply say Amen to the Lord? Are we fully under His authority, fully under His leading and direction? Furthermore, we should recognize that we are not only under Him directly but also under the deputy authorities whom God appoints, which include human authorities in society and human authorities in the spiritual realm, that is, in the church life.

God today is a God of authority and power in this universe. In order to work out His economy, He has a divine administration, a divine government. He has a kingdom, and in this kingdom the primary matter is His authority, His rule, and His reign. God not only rules and reigns directly but also sets up His deputies to rule on His behalf and to represent His authority. We

would do well to learn to submit to the Lord's established and appointed authorities. This is not a small thing. To have any kind of rebelliousness within us will disqualify us from being a Nazarite, one who is separated unto God.

3. A Nazarite to Not Be Defiled by the Death of His Blood Relatives

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). This third point, regarding cutting off all natural affection, is a very important item in the law of a Nazarite. The Lord did this. In Matthew 12:48 He said, "Who is My mother, and who are My brothers?" He was there only for the Father's business. He was not there for His natural relationships and natural affection. Today, if we want to be used by the Lord to change the age, to be the present-day Samuels, the present-day Nazarites, we must overcome natural affection; we must be thoroughly holy to Jehovah. This is an important lesson to learn.

4. A Nazarite to Not Come Near a Dead Person

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)...We may not even be aware of it, yet someone right next to us, even someone close to us, a companion, might die suddenly. We are speaking of spiritual, not physical, death...Some among us heard gossip and rumors and were affected by the poison of death. They became dead spiritually and deadly to others. This could happen to our friends, even family members...The whole course of our Christian life, should be a life of separation. We should be separated from all forms of death. Death is more serious than sin. We think that sin is dirty, but death is many times more abominable, dirty, and defiling in the eyes of God. When someone touches death, his vow is canceled and is rendered ineffective. He must then rededicate, re-vow, reconsecrate, and reestablish his separation according to the law of the Nazarite.

II. IN HIS YOUTH SAMUEL MINISTERING TO JEHOVAH BEFORE ELI, BEING TAUGHT BY ELI THE WAY TO MINISTER TO GOD

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. Eli at least did something good in cooperation with God before he died—he trained Samuel how to minister from the time that Samuel was just a child. Although he was just a little child, Samuel ministered to Jehovah. Perhaps he was the youngest minister of God. He learned under Eli and ministered before Jehovah as a boy with a linen ephod, fully dressed as a priest. Under Eli and with his mother's support, Samuel continued to grow up before Jehovah. He grew up "in stature and in favor both with Jehovah and with men" (v. 26). Much of this was due to his learning under Eli.

A. Our Needing to Maintain Our Fellowship with the Lord and always Listening to Him was Something Completely Positive That Samuel Learned from Eli

The main thing that Samuel picked up under Eli was to learn how to hear God's word, that is, how to receive the Lord's speaking. A genuine priest is one who receives God's speaking and speaks that same word, which he received, to God's people.

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). Even though Samuel was young, he learned to listen to the Lord. Learn to pray this way. "Lord, I am here. Speak, for I am here to listen." When we go to the Lord, the important thing is not to speak but to hear.

This is why in Exodus 21 the slave who decided to serve his master forever was brought to the doorpost. Verse 6 says that the master was to bore his ear through with an awl. This signified that for his entire life, this slave would only listen to his master. One who is a real slave and a real priest is one who hears God's speaking. We need

to have an open ear. We need to be in a position to hear the Lord's speaking. This is also why the Lord said that Mary had chosen the good part, the better part (Luke 10:42)—she "sat at the Lord's feet and was listening to His word" (v. 39).

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 (1:34-38; 10:38-42). Who is a real servant of the Lord? A real servant is not necessarily one who does many things, but one who maintains his fellowship with the Lord, one who is in constant communion with the Lord. He is always listening, always inclining his ear to the Lord's mouth.

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). Daily we should be dependent on the Lord's words, not only the written words in the Bible but also the rhema words, the living words, the Spirit-words that the Lord will speak in a timely, instant way to us. Our work for the Lord and our service to the Lord depend on His commands. It is entirely presumptuous for us to do anything without His command.

The lesson here is to learn to listen to the Lord. We should pray, "Open my ear, and give me a word so that I can be fed and supply the needy." This is the position of a servant of God. We should tell the Lord, "My life and my service are wholly dependent on Your words; they hinge entirely on Your speaking. I must have Your word." First Samuel 3:1 says, "Now the word of Jehovah was rare in those days." The good word of God was rare because of the decrepit priesthood, but it was not rare to Samuel.

B. Samuel Observing the Deterioration of the Degraded Aaronic Priesthood and God's Severe Judgment on the House of Eli Becoming a Constant Warning to Him.

While Samuel was learning, he observed the deterioration of the degraded Aaronic priesthood. It was necessary for Samuel to see all these terrible things taking place. Through his seeing these things, he was actually learning. He observed the sad situation...There were times for us to observe what is wrong, what is bad, what is rebellion, what is ambition, and what is

impurity. Therefore...in whatever situation we are placed, we can still learn something.

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). One of Eli's son's wives, who was giving birth to a son, named him Ichabod, which means "no glory," for the glory had departed from Israel because the Ark had been captured (vv. 21-22). Samuel saw and learned from all these things.

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). At that time Samuel was not the prophet that he would become; he was learning. There was actually a man of God who spoke to Eli about the fate of his whole family. The severe judgment was confirmed by what Samuel heard directly from Jehovah, which he then spoke to Eli.

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). God knew the training that Samuel needed to have in order to raise him up.

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. All these things became a warning to Samuel. Similarly, all the things that happened with Israel in the Old Testament have become warnings to us today (1 Cor. 10:11). All the things that happened in the past turmoils, in those times of rebellion, are holy warnings from God, and we need to heed them.

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III. SAMUEL BEING ONE WHO TURNED THE AGE INTO THE AGE OF THE KINGDOM WITH THE KINGSHIP

A. Samuel Not Rebelling against the House of Aaron

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. Samuel anointed two kings; the first king was Saul, a negative one

as a black background to show Israel that they were rejecting God as their king. However, Saul was removed. He was not the one whom God wanted. God wanted to raise up another one—David. With the anointing of David, Samuel turned the age to the age of the kingdom with the proper kingship. This was a great thing not only in the history of Israel but even in the history of mankind.

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. The lesson to be learned here is that we need to follow Samuel in his not being in a hurry and not staging a rebellion to claim the priesthood. Rather, Samuel was submissive. As long as Eli was there, he remained under his authority. He was not in a hurry to have a revolution. Samuel did not become what he was by a revolution, by claiming or fighting for something. Instead, he left that to God. God arranged the environment to perfect Samuel and build him up so that he could be an age-changer.

We need to learn to trust God in His timing, in His environmental arrangement, and in His perfecting hand. You do not need to hurry up. You do not need to help God. You do not need to do anything for yourself. God will arrange certain situations and the environment. You do not need to manipulate it. You do not need to be political or find votes for yourself. You do not need to do anything but remain under the King, submitting to Him. The Lord will do His work.

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. Do we see this? Samuel received the revelation from the word and the speaking of God. Thus, he did not need to claim anything or declare anything.

B. Samuel Being a Man of Revelation

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" (1 Sam. 3:21); 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...Samuel did everything according to what he saw, based

on what God revealed to him. Furthermore, Samuel was a man according to God's heart; thus, he never did anything rebellious. We should stay away from rebellion. Young brothers and sisters, stay away from death, stay away from rebellion. Instead, learn to be a man according to God's heart.

C. God's Representative

At the end of his ministry, by the time that Saul was raised up to be the king in Israel (9:3—10:27), Samuel had reached the highest position. We may say that in the whole universe, there was only one who was above him, and that one was God. We may even say that, as God's representative, Samuel was the acting God. God intended to move, to act, yet He needed a representative. Samuel thus became a prophet, a priest, and a judge. He was God's oracle and God's administration.

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. This is not a small description. Samuel, at that time, was so completely according to God that he was God's direct representative. He was acting on behalf of God. He was God acting on the earth...Do you aspire to be like this? God still needs His corporate Samuel today.

D. God's Intention to Have a Kingdom

Although Samuel was God's representative, God did not have any intention to make him a kingdom. Rather, according to the Bible, God determined to raise up a man named David, through whom He intended to build up a kingdom. When God chose Abraham, it was not His intention to gain a single person or even a group of people who would seek after Him. God's intention has been to have a kingdom. The consummation of the revelation in the Bible is a kingdom. Revelation 11:15 says, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ." In the new heaven and new earth with the New Jerusalem, there will be the eternal kingdom of God.

In Matthew 16 there is a word concerning both the kingdom and the church. When Peter received the revelation of Christ as the Son of the living God (vv. 16-17), Jesus said to him, "You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church" (v. 18), and then He went on to speak of the kingdom of the heavens (v. 19). In these

verses the phrase "the kingdom of the heavens" is used interchangeably with the word "church." This shows that God does not want just a church but a kingdom-church. In Romans 14:17 Paul also indicated that the practical church life is the kingdom: "The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."

Even though Samuel eventually attained the highest position, God still had not reached His goal. As a man who was according to God's heart, Samuel knew that within God's heart there was a desire for a kingdom. God wanted the kingdom to be brought in not through Samuel but through David.

E. God Using a Negative King to Discipline Israel

The history in 1 Samuel was directed by God. God did not go directly to David because David was still young and because Israel, whom God loved to the uttermost, needed some training. They needed to be disciplined by God with a negative king so that they would realize that replacing God with a king was not a matter of blessing.

God is a God of patience. Even though Eli was not so positive, God allowed him to be the judge for forty years. It is difficult to determine the length of Samuel's judgeship, which must have lasted at least thirty years before Saul came in to reign over Israel negatively. Next, God tolerated the reign of Saul for forty years, and then He brought in David.

Without Samuel it would have been very hard for God to carry out His economy. God had the intention that Christ would be born in the lineage of David, and only Samuel could bring in David. Without a David there would not have been the lineage of Christ's genealogy. In order for God to reach the time of incarnation, there had to be some preparation, and Samuel was a part of that preparation. God raised up Samuel and prepared him for God's use to do whatever was necessary to gain, through David, the proper lineage of the genealogy of Christ.

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IV. SAMUEL BEING A MAN ACCORDING TO GOD'S HEART

A. God's Heart Being Duplicated in Samuel

When someone attains a high position, there is always a question as to whether he will allow

someone else to come in to match him or to be above him. If you had been Samuel, would you have given any ground for someone to match you or be above you? Samuel was pure and single. He was a Nazarite according to his mother's vow and was altogether not self-seeking. He never sought to gain anything for himself. He had no heart for anything besides God and God's elect. God loved Israel, and His heart was duplicated in Samuel.

Because God's heart was duplicated in Samuel, Samuel did not care for his own interest or gain. At the end, Samuel gained nothing but a tomb to be buried in. Due to the situation at the time, Samuel appointed his sons to be judges, but, contrary to Saul, he had no intention to build up a kingdom for them. His sons did not follow in his ways but went after unjust gain, took bribes, and perverted justice (1 Sam. 8:1-3). When the people asked Samuel to appoint a king, he was not offended by anything related to his sons; on the contrary, he was offended by their desire to replace God (vv. 4-7). Because he had no intention to build up a kingdom for his descendants, Samuel's concern was not for his children but for God's people. In such a situation it was easy for God to bring in the kingdom.

B. A Person Who Cared Only for God And for God's Interest and Profit

Samuel would never have cooperated with God if he had been a self-seeking person. As we will see in the next message, the day before Saul came to Samuel, God revealed to Samuel what He wanted him to do. God said to him, "At about this time tomorrow I will send to you a man from the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him as the leader over My people Israel" (9:16). When Saul and his servant came to Samuel, Samuel did exactly as God had instructed. He did not care to gain anything for himself or for his children.

Now we can see why Samuel was so useful in the hand of God. He had no self-seeking nor any thought of self-gain. Instead, as a Nazarite, who allowed no razor to come upon his head and who did not drink any wine, he was absolutely for God. He was happy to go wherever God wanted him to go and to do whatever God wanted him to do. He was a man according to God, a man according to God's heart. Therefore, he was a man whom God could use to carry out His economy.

We should not think that Samuel did not have any kind of human concept. One day Jehovah said to him, "Fill your horn with oil, and go; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite; for I have selected for Myself a king among his sons" (16:1b). When Samuel heard this, he said, "How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me" (v. 2a). This indicates that Samuel was very human and had human concepts. Nevertheless, he was not a self-seeking person. All of his seeking was for God and for God's elect. He cared for God and for His interest and profit, and He prayed for God's people.

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. Samuel had nothing. He had nothing in his mind, his consideration, his dreams, his future, or his aspiration. Whatever was there was what was in God's heart, and Samuel existed to carry it out. How pure, how absolute, and how separated and sanctified this person was. May we be such persons. May we know God's heart. May we be here for the working out of whatever is in God's heart, not ours, not our preference, desire, or intention. May we let all those die and be discarded. May we retain only what is God and what is in His heart. God eventually found this in David. David was a man according to God's own heart. Samuel was a priest-prophet who was according to God's heart. David was a king according to God's heart. This means that the main thing in whatever we may be or do is that we are here for what is in God's heart.

C. Samuel Considering That Not Praying for God's People Was a Sin against Jehovah

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). Samuel said to the children of Israel, "Moreover as for me, far be it from me that I would sin against Jehovah by ceasing to pray for you" (1 Sam. 12:23). What a heart for God's people this is. He considered not praying for God's people to be a sin against Jehovah. Moses and Daniel were the same. They prayed on behalf of God's people before God. Why pray for God's people? It is because God's people, no matter their condition, are still God's personal and peculiar treasure and possession. In your eyes they may not be good, but God still loves them. God made a covenant with them. God is faithful to them. God still wants to gain them

eventually for Himself and for His purpose. Thus, we must pray for them.

D. The Contrast Between Samuel and Samson

Some Bible students have pointed out that Samuel was a person of high character. The matter of character, however, is not the crucial point regarding Samuel. Many people have a high character, but they are just for themselves, their enterprise, and their kingdom. They are not for God's kingdom. Samuel was not only high in character; he was high in the Nazarite vow.

It is worthwhile to compare Samuel with another Nazarite—Samson. Samson also was a Nazarite by his mother's vow, but he was very different from Samuel. When the Bible speaks of Samson and the other judges, it often says that the Spirit of God rushed upon them (Judg. 14:6, 19). But there is no such word about Samuel. A Nazarite does not need rushing power; rather, a Nazarite needs a heart that is a reflection of God's heart. Unlike Samson, Samuel did not gain a mighty victory by slaughtering a great number of others. On the contrary, Samuel was a Nazarite for God's interest.

E. Samuel Stand for God in His Particular Environment, His Caring for God's Interest and Turning the Age

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). Samuel's environment was not an easy one. Do not wait for a good environment to be perfected. Do not wait for a good environment to care for God's interest. Now is the time. In whatever environment, in whatever situation, we need to care for God's interest and turn the age. We need to live this kind of all-fitting life. In whatever situation we are, our heart should be for God and His people, His church. In Jeremiah 15:1 Moses and Samuel are the only two mentioned who could stand before Jehovah. Samuel is ranked with Moses in being for God and God's interest.

We should pray over this word and go to the Lord with all these things. May the Lord gain His Samuels and His corporate Samuel today.