

1 Samuel 2:12 - 3

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Date: 25 February 2024

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[0:00] Amen. Let's just start with a quick moment of prayer,! Take what I've said, but I pray, Lord, that everything would be weighed and your truth would be what stays in our hearts and anything that's not quite right, Lord, that you would yet help us to identify those things.

Lord, I pray that today you would transform us through the learning of your word. In Jesus' name, Amen. Amen. Right.

Let's start off with just kind of acquainting ourselves with where we are currently at in 1 Samuel. As you can see, I'm going to try and capture all of the rest of Chapter 2 and all of Chapter 3 of 1 Samuel.

If you haven't turned there already, now would be a good time. Right. So, does anyone know who that is? That's right, Winston Churchill.

Winston Churchill. Sometimes he is linked to a number of quotes. Some of them are clearly from him. Some are sometimes a bit apocryphal. Winston Churchill had a bit of a reputation for being a bit of a character.

[1:42] One of my favourite quotes, potentially apocryphal, is allegedly from an exchange with Viscountess Nancy Astor, who was the first female seated politician.

Seated MP, I should say. So, in a heated exchange, she's quoted as saying, Sir, if I were your wife, I would put poison in your tea.

To which Churchill allegedly retorted, Madam, if I were your husband, I would drink it. The quote that's directly relevant to today's study is this one.

Those that fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it. Sometimes it's misattributed. There's all kinds of arguments about it online as to who actually said it.

The quote's what's important, not who actually said it in this particular context. I have another quote which we need to consider as well. And that's, first of all, do we know who this is?

[2:50] That's right, it's Albert Einstein. Potentially not one of his quotes, but let's see. The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.

I think you'll find that is the definition of science. Apparently that's actually from Narcotics Anonymous, rather than from Albert Einstein.

You know, when you're trying to get addicts off of drugs, if you keep repeating the same method and not succeeding, surely it's insane to keep trying the same thing over and over again. Right, so we're in 1 Samuel.

It's important for us to consider what has happened up until this point in the text. So, let's just think for a moment.

We're at the beginning of 1 Samuel. If you had been going chronologically through the Bible, you would have just finished the book of Judges. And the end quote from that is, That's the final words in the book of Judges.

[4:09] Life hasn't changed a huge amount in the meantime. So, we're going to see a lot of this kind of behaviour. Just to kind of help us to think about what it means to have, what it means to have been in that time.

Well, if you just think about the book of Judges for a moment, you've got all kinds of things that have happened. I've put a few images on the screen for the benefit of those who listened back to the recording.

You've got things like Micah and his idolatry. You've got Abimelech, who sets himself up as king and gets a millstone dropped on his head.

You've got Jael and Sisera, who Jael kills him with a tent peg. Don't go camping, that's the warning from that one. You see Samson and his arrogance.

He ends up getting himself blinded and put in bondage. You've got the Levite and his concubine and that fateful trip. And you've also got the tribe of Benjamin getting practically wiped out here at the bottom there.

[5 : 15] There is an awful lot of things that have happened in the recent history at this point. Within 1 Samuel itself, we've not actually got very far. We've done one and a half chapters.

We've seen Hannah and Elkanah. They've had this son, miraculously, and she's dedicated the son Samuel to the Lord. Now, Hannah has then sung this prophetic song of praise to the Lord, which it kind of echoes some of the key themes that you'll see in this book.

And that key theme is that God is going to be humbling the proud and he's going to exalt the humble. You also need to think about where we're going in this book.

What's coming up? You have to remember, of course, obviously this is a period of moral chaos within their history. You've got coming up the death of Eli and his sons.

You've got Samuel becoming the next judge of Israel. You've then got Samuel's sons being just as bad as Eli's sons. And Israel calling for a king as a result.

[6 : 25] Samuel's going to feel rejected. God's going to confirm to him that actually it's God being rejected, not him. And then you get Saul being anointed first king of Israel. Then he sins.

And you have this quote from Samuel saying, has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice and to listen than the fat of rams.

Sacrifice is not the pinnacle. Obedience is. We're also going to see, later on in 1 Samuel, David is going to be anointed as king.

But when Samuel is looking for this king, he's looking at the same thing as Saul. Tall, handsome, mature. Actually, it's the runt of the litter.

It's David. David. Because, and as Samuel will note at the time, the Lord will tell him, do not look on his appearance or his height of his stature because I have rejected him.

[7 : 30] For the Lord sees not as man sees. Man looks at the outward appearance. But the Lord, he looks at the heart. And then obviously you've got things like David and Goliath and Saul trying to kill David loads at times.

Right. If you put yourselves in that particular point in time, what is the body of Scripture at the time? Right. So we are in 1 Samuel. So the books that will exist at this point in time are Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, the Pentateuch, written by Moses.

You've got the book of Joshua and maybe the book of Job if you subscribe to an early writing of that book. According to the Talmud, Samuel is going to be the one who writes the book of Ruth and he's going to be the one that writes the book of Judges.

Okay. So some of this stuff may be known as stories because this stuff has already happened. But, we don't, it's not written down yet so we don't know how much the characters in this next story will know.

[8 : 37] Samuel's also going to write 1 Samuel up until chapter 25 at which point Gad and Nathan apparently are going to take over. Obviously you also have there's no day of Pentecost.

Right. So these people are not working with the Holy Spirit. They don't have the benefit of that.

Now, you've got some disobedience from some people in this passage.

We need to consider what kind of warnings that these people had. Okay. Well, you can see things like, well, there's Noah's flood, there's Lot's wife turning and turning and becoming a pillar of salt.

You've got Nadab and Abihu offering strange fire. The rebellion of Korah where the ground opens up and it's the people that wanted to replace Moses. And you also have Miriam getting leprosy.

And that just names a few of them. Right. If we just move on to the next slide, we'll actually get into the passage. Whilst we're in chapter 2, I'm going to put, I'm going to be dealing with smaller chunks.

[9 : 49] So I'm going to put them on the screen to make your life a little bit easier to keep up as to what we're dealing with. Right. So, starting in verse 12. Now, the sons of Eli were useless men.

They did not know the Lord. Now, let's break this sentence up a little bit. They're useless men. If you actually look at the Hebrew, it's actually made up of two words.

Belai and Yol. Belai means without and Yol means profit or benefit. So it means without profit, without gain.

Also could be translated as worthless, wicked, scoundrels, sons of Belial. Belial is a way of putting that together. Belial is another name sometimes for Satan.

Right. So you may sometimes see this written as these, they're just sons of the devil. But yeah, sons of Belial is a Jewish idiom for someone who's worthless.

[10:59] In 2 Corinthians chapter 6 verse 15 it says this, what harmony is there between Christ and Belial? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?

In other contexts it just means useless, worthless, without value. Such as in Judges 19 chapter 20, sorry, Judges chapter 19 verse 22, you see the wicked men of the city coming out to the Levite and the concubine.

They are described as wicked, it's this word. Nabal, who is Abigail's husband, who wants to do David in, he's described as being a wicked man, this word again, Shimei.

He curses David in 2 Samuel. He describes David using that word. In Proverbs chapter 6 verses 12 to 15 you have this, a worthless person, a wicked man, this, so a worthless person, a wicked man goes about with crooked speech, winks with his eye, signals with his feet, points with his finger, with perverted heart, devises evil, continually sowing discord.

Therefore calamity will come upon him suddenly, in a moment he will be broken beyond healing. So, let's go back to our passage.

[12:29] So, we have the sons of Eli were useless men. They did not know the Lord. What is a priest who doesn't know the Lord?

A priest who doesn't know the Lord, yeah, he's pretty useless. I think I have an appropriate picture for them. There we go.

Chocolate teapot. Absolutely useless. Unfortunately, these are the sons of Eli we're talking about. So, we better move on from that.

Right, this makes me think of Matthew chapter 7, verses 21 to 23, 23. Because not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my father who is in heaven will enter.

Many will say to me on that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name? And in your name cast out demons, and in your name perform many miracles, and then I will declare to them, I never knew you.

[13:38] Leave me, you who practices lawlessness. Priests used to intercede between the people and God. They performed the sacrifices in the tabernacle, but people weren't able to do this.

Priests were chosen by God. The sons of Aaron were to do the sacrifices. What if you were born from that line, but you had no interest in being a priest?

It's kind of tough. It's like our monarchs now. It's an inherited position, whether you want it or not, and whether the people want them or not. So Hophni and Phinehas didn't know the Lord.

Well, that begs the question, how do you know if someone knows the Lord? Well, there's great news. There is a whole chapter dedicated to this topic.

That's 1 John chapter 2. By all means, turn there. We're going to be there for a few moments. So the first test is this.

[14:43] Do they keep God's commands? We're talking about obedience. So 1 John chapter 2, verses 3 to 6. By this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments.

The one who says, I've come to know him, and does not keep his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever follows his word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected.

By this we know that we are in him. The one who says that he remains in him ought himself also to walk just as he walked. Cool. So, first test, do they keep God's commandments?

Second test, do they love the brothers? verse 7 to 11. So, beloved, I am writing a new commandment to you, but an old commandment, which you have had from the beginning.

The old commandment is the word which you have heard. On the other hand, I am writing a new commandment to you, which is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining.

[15:48] The one who says that he is in the light and yet hates his brother or sister is in the darkness until now. The one who loves his brother and sister remains in the light and there is nothing in him to cause stumbling.

But the one who hates his brother or sister is in the darkness and walks in the darkness and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

Okay, so we have keep God's commandments, love the brothers, and do they confess Christ? verses 18 to 24.

Children, it is the last hour and just as you heard that Antichrist is coming, even now many Antichrists have appeared. For this we know that it is the last hour.

They went out from us but they were not really of us. For if they'd been of us, they would have remained with us but they went out so that it would be evident that they are all not of us.

[16:51] but you have an anointing from the Holy One and you will know. I've not written to you because you do not know the truth but because you do know it and because no lie is of the truth.

Who is the liar except the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the Antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son.

whoever denies the Son does not have the Father. The one who confesses the Son has the Father also. As for you, see that what you heard from the beginning remains in you.

If what you heard from the beginning remains in you, you will also remain in the Son and in the Father. So let's return to our passage.

So far we have got this far. The sons of Eli were useless men. They did not know the Lord. So let's move on. And this was the custom of the priests with the people.

[17:59] Okay. Customs. Customs are behaviours that become widely accepted way of behaving or doing something. They're regular behaviours.

If left for much longer, they become a tradition. The Pharisees had huge problems with this in the days of Jesus. They had prioritised tradition over God's way.

Mark chapter seven, verses six to nine, says this. And he said to them, well, did Isaiah prophesy, you hypocrites, as it is written, this people honours me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. In vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines, the commandments of men. You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men. And he said to them, you have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition.

Given that this is a warning, why is it that so many churches hold to traditions of men? I refer to you to my quote from Winston Churchill. They failed to learn from history.

[19:13] This is what the Pharisees did, they're just repeating it. May we all take heed from that. Moving on to the next part.

So, verse 13 B and onwards, when anyone was offering a sacrifice, the priest's servant would come while the meat was cooking with a three-pronged fork in his hand and he would thrust it into the pan or kettle or cauldron or pot.

Everything that the fork brought up, the priest would take for himself. They did so in Shiloh to all the Israelites who came there. So, three-pronged forks.

This can also be translated as being a flesh hook. These things were made of bronze and would go in and they'd grab the meat. there's no mention of this particular tool elsewhere in the scriptures. But if it is ceremonially unclean, then any food that touches it must be burned up and not eaten. Otherwise, it makes you unclean. Moving on to verse 15 and 16.

[20:29] also, before they burned the fat, the priest's servant would come and say to the men who were sacrificing, give the priest meat for roasting, as he will not take cooked meat from you, only raw.

And if a man said to him, they must burn the fat first, then take as much as you desire, then he would say, no, but you must give it to me now, and if not, I am taking it by force.

The priests were actually entitled to a share of this offering, but the fat itself, certainly not.

That had to be burned first, hence the objection. If they ate it with the fat, they would become unclean, and if you eat these things whilst you are unclean, you are then subject to this punishment, you must be cut off from your people.

Leviticus tells us quite a lot about these sacrifices, such as the guilt offering. In Leviticus it says this, all its fat shall be offered, the fat tail and the fat that covers the internal organs, both kidneys with the fat on them near the loins, and the long lobe of the liver, which is to be removed with the kidneys.

[21:48] The priest shall burn them on the altar as a food offering presented to the Lord. You're just sticking a fork in and taking what comes out. You've got no idea what's coming out. There's a very good chance you're going to get these bits which are specifically for the Lord.

If you look at Leviticus, chapter 4, what you have to do with the fat is mentioned in a number of different verses, verses 8 to 10, 19, 31 and 35.

In summary, it's that the fat has to be burned and they're not to eat the fat. Leviticus chapter 7 verse 22 to 27 says this, the Lord said to Moses, say to the Israelites, do not eat any of the fat of cattle, sheep or goats.

The fat of an animal found dead or torn by wild animals may be used for any other purpose, but you must not eat it. Anyone who eats the fat of an animal from which a food offering may be presented to the Lord must be cut off from their people.

And wherever you live, you must not eat the blood of any bird or animal. Anyone who eats blood must be cut off from their people. If we move to our next verse, verse 17, there we go, and so the sin of the young men was very great before the Lord, for the men treated the offering of the Lord disrespectfully.

[23 : 14] Numbers chapter 15 verses 30 to 31 says this, but the person who does anything defiantly, whether he is native or an alien, that one is blaspheming God, and that person shall be cut off from among his people because he has despised the word of the Lord and has broken his commandment.

That person shall be completely cut off. His guilt will be on him. How big a deal is it to be taking a random piece of meat before it is cooked?

They only want to have it barbecued rather than boiled, this meat, surely. Can't say I blame the preference. But the disobedience and the disrespect is actually beyond measure.

Later on Samuel is able to reflect on when he's talking about this, when he's talking about Saul's sin. So in 1 Samuel 15, 22, as I mentioned earlier on, has the Lord as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord?

Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice and to heed than the fat of rams. Right.

[24 : 41] Let's move on. Verse 18 to 19. Now, Samuel was ministering before the Lord as a boy wearing a linen ephod and his mother would make him a little robe and bring it up to him from year to year when she would come up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice.

So, first of all, I want to say that Elkanah lives in Ramathaim, also known as Rama, and the tabernacle is in Shiloh. I've got a map for this.

So, Ephraim is the area we're talking about because Jerusalem is still not part of Israel at this point. David's going to be the one who captures Jerusalem.

So, Shiloh is here, Rama is this one here. It's actually one day's journey. I don't think the scripture is actually saying they only ever saw him once a year.

They're just saying that's when she would bring this particular item of clothing. Then Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife and say, may the Lord give you children from this woman in place of the one she requested of the Lord.

[26 : 01] And they went to their own home. The Lord indeed visited Hannah and she conceived and gave birth to three sons and two daughters. And the boy Samuel grew up before the Lord.

Okay, so what's this trying to say? The Lord blesses Hannah's offering, Samuel, and he multiplies it.

Luke chapter 6 verse 38 says this, give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, for by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return.

The Lord blesses our sacrifices, he blesses our offerings, he blesses our tithes. we could do a whole sermon on that topic.

There's about a dozen topics in this passage that we could do sermons on to be quite honest. So we now get this passage where Eli rebukes his sons.

[27 : 14] Now, Eli was very old and he heard about everything that his sons were doing to all Israel and that they slept with the women who served at the doorway of the tent of meeting.

So he said to them, Why are you doing such things as these? The evil things that I hear from all these people. Know, my sons, for the report is not good which I hear the Lord's people circulating. If one person sins against another, God will mediate for him. But if a person sins against the Lord, who can intercede for him? But they would not listen to the voice of their father, for the Lord desired to put them to death.

So, Eli knew what his sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were up to. They're stealing sacrifices, they're sleeping with the women who served at the doorway of the tent of meeting.

So, let's pull in some extra information. Firstly, we know from chapter three that Eli's eyesight is nearly gone. And in chapter four, we also learn that Eli is fat.

[28 : 30] The prescribed punishment for some of the crimes of his sons was for them to be cut off from the people. There's actually a separate study as to what it means to be cut off, but suffice to say, sometimes it means banishment of being expelled from the nation of Israel, and other times it means death.

Numbers chapter 15 verses 30 to 31 says this, but the person who does wrong defiantly, whether he is a native or, I've read that already, suffice to say, they need to be cut off.

So, Eli knew the prescription, and he didn't do it. His sons need to be banished, yet Eli, he speaks to them in the weakest possible way, and he puts no sanction in place.

parents. The scripture talks about if you spare the rod, you hate your child, or spoil your child, depending on the translation you're looking at. Consider these two men, they are now adults, consider them ruined.

There are instructions in scripture for children to obey their parents, but they're not given until the New Testament. As these are adults, they wouldn't have been captured by that verse anyway.

[29 : 52] However, they are still under the general instruction to honour your parents, and that's targeted to all of us, not just children. But when we're parenting, we need to remember things like Proverbs chapter 22 verse 6, train up a child in the way he should go, and when he's old he won't depart from it.

I think that ship has set sail already, unfortunately. if one person sins against another, God will mediate for him, but if a person sins against the Lord, who can intercede for him?

Sounds like he's talking about an unpardonable sin here. Second half of verse 25, that they would not listen to the voice of their father, for the Lord desired to put them to death.

They would not listen because God wanted to put them to death. God's hardened their hearts, just as he did with Pharaoh in the book of Exodus, just like in Romans 1.

God gave them up to a depraved mind to do these things which are not proper. Effectively, we are talking about God washing his hands of them, but he knows the hearts of all men.

[31 : 23] Therefore, it would be true to say that God knows that nothing will make them turn away from their current course of action. It's perfectly just for him to give them over.

You and I don't have perfect knowledge, so it wouldn't be the same if we wanted to do this to someone else who's in their sin. But the Lord has perfect knowledge. voy voy voy!

voy! voy! voy! voy! voy! voy! voy! voy! voy! Then a man of God came to Eli and said to him, this is what the Lord says.

Did I not indeed reveal myself to the house of your father when they were in Egypt in bondage to Pharaoh's house? Did I not choose them from all the tribes of Israel to be my priests, to go up to my altar, to burn incense, to carry an ephod before me?

And did I not give to the house of your father all the fire offerings of the sons of Israel? Yes, yes, yes, you did. You did say that.

[33 : 01] Therefore, the Lord God of Israel declares, I did indeed say to your house and the house of your father was to walk before me forever. But now the Lord declares, far be it from me. For those who honour me, I will honour, and those who despise me will be insignificant.

So this is that. My apologies, my notes are all over the shop, it would appear at this point.

I've actually jumped to verse. Why are you showing contempt for my sacrifice and my offering, which I have commanded for my dwelling? And why are you honouring your sons above me by making yourselves fat with the choicest of every offering of my people of Israel?

Okay. This is directed to Eli, not at the sons. Why are you, Eli, showing contempt for my sacrifice? Eli's, why are you honouring your sons above me?

Eli's showing contempt, not just the sons. Eli has the cart before the horse. Our offspring are to honour us, not for us to honour our children, not above the Lord anyway.

[34 : 12] In the modern day, there's a temptation to build our lives around our children, rather than to build the family's life around our Lord. Eli should have cast his sons out, let alone them still being part of, they shouldn't just be part of Israel, and they certainly should not be in the most sacred places doing the sacrifices in the tabernacle.

By making yourselves fat with the choicest of every offering. In this society, fatness was a mark of affluence. God didn't allow them to eat fat.

But clearly, Eli is also partaking in these sacrifices that his sons are stealing. When it comes to parenting, there are some shocking examples.

This week, a former YouTuber, the name of Ruby Frankie, was jailed for up to 60 years for child abuse. Her crimes include denying food, denying water to her children, not giving them beds to sleep in, tying the children up, applying cayenne pepper to the wounds that are caused by the friction of their bonds.

Parents are so frightened of being accused of being that parent that they can forget to parent at all. Now, we're not told to be a one-trick pony.

[35 : 42] You know, literally. Using a rod to discipline our children through physical punishment. The thing is, the final few chapters of Deuteronomy talks about God's discipline for Israel.

If you do X, I will do Y. If you keep doing it, I will do Z. If you return to me, I'll do this. God has multiple ways of dealing with his children.

And we should too. Deuteronomy chapter 6, verses 6 to 7 says this.

These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall repeat them diligently to your sons, and speak of them when you sit in your house, when you walk on the road, when you lie down, and when you get up.

Proverbs 29, 17 says, Correct your son, and he will give you comfort. He will also delight your soul. Ephesians 6, verse 4. Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

[36 : 43] Colossians 3, 21. Fathers, do not antagonise your children, so that they will not become discouraged. Quickly deal with the word antagonise. It means to provoke, irritate, annoy.

Why does the Lord tell fathers not to do this? Why does the Lord tell fathers not to do this? And yet he doesn't feel the need to tell mothers. Does this mean that mothers are free to antagonise their children?

No. The Bible just tells men what typically they need to hear, and what women typically what they need to hear. It's using broad brushstrokes. No parents should antagonise their children, it's just that men have more of a tendency to do it.

Therefore, the need of a reminder. Another example of that is husbands love your wives. There's no requirement for a wife to love her husband. These broad brushstrokes, they're actually very unwelcome in modern society.

That doesn't stop them being on the whole true, nor does it stop it being untrue for particular individuals. But the message to children is all parents want for you is for you not to repeat their mistakes.

[37 : 56] Let's move on to verse 30. Because time is running out. Therefore, the Lord God of Israel declares, I did indeed say that your house and the house of your father was to walk before me forever.

But now, the Lord declares, far be it from me, for those who honour me I will honour. Genesis chapter 12, verse 3 says, I will bless those who bless you, and whosoever curses you I will curse. there are a whole host of examples of people being humbled or exalted. In the interest of time, we'll just pick a couple out.

Matthew 23, 12, whoever exalts himself shall be humbled, and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted. That theme is repeated throughout the scriptures.

James chapter 4, verse 6, and he gives a greater grace. Therefore, it says, God is opposed to the proud but gives grace to the humble. You will find that quote lots of times in the scriptures.

[39 : 04] So why does it, why do we, why do we keep getting this reminder that God gives grace to the humble but he opposes the proud? It's because we don't listen.

Right, so verse 31, behold the days are coming. Okay, what God is saying I'm not going to do it just yet.

2 Peter chapter 3, verse 9 says this, the Lord is not slow in keeping his promise as some understand slowness. Instead, he's patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish but everyone to come to repentance.

The rest of that verse says, the days are coming when I will eliminate your strength and the strength of your father's house so that there will not be an old man in your house.

And you will look at the distress of my dwelling in spite of all that I do for Israel and there will never be an old man in your house. Yet I will not cut off every man of yours from my altar so that your

eyes will fail from weeping and your soul grieve and all the increase of your house will die in the prime of life.

[40 : 25] Exodus 20, verse 5 says this, I, the Lord, visit the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me but show steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

God isn't saying that these people can't be saved. He's saying that they will not live to an old age during their physical life. He's remaining true to himself in that he is remaining just and holy and loving.

And this will be the sign to which will come in regard to your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas. On the same day, both of them will die. It's pretty self-explanatory. Two sons are going to die on the same day.

Chapter 4 will show the fulfilment of this and actually it will also include Eli dialing as well when he hears the news. Oh, spoiler alert. 35.

But I will raise up for myself a faithful priest who will do according to what is in my heart and my soul and I will build him an enduring house and he will walk before my anointed always.

[41 : 47] And everyone who is left in your house will come to bow down to him for a silver coin or a loaf of bread and say, please assign to me one of the priest's offices so that I may eat a piece of bread.

It starts off sounding like it's going to be Jesus. But this is fulfilled in Zadok as a priest in David's time. It can't be Jesus because this person is going to walk before my anointed always.

He can't walk in front of himself. Right. Chapter 3. We're going to blast through this. Now the boy Samuel was attending to the service of the Lord before Eli and the word of the Lord was rare in those days.

Visions were infrequent. Why was the Lord speaking so rarely? He had nothing to say as he'd already spoken. As parents there's a temptation to get into a back and forth with our kids.

I'm the worst of hypocrites on this particular point but if the Lord has already spoken and is waiting for you to be obedient is it an unreasonable parenting tactic to say I've already told you what to do I will wait for you to do it as you've been instructed.

[43 : 06] When the kids start being mouthy with their mother whether she's right or wrong they're breaking the commandment honour their father and mother. We need as parents to support one another encourage the children to start showing some honour to their mother before I'm interested in moving forward.

Verses 2 to 9 But it happened at that time as Eli was lying down in his place now his eyesight had begun to be poor and he could not see well and the lamp of God had not yet gone out and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the Lord where the ark of God was that the Lord called Samuel and he said here I am and he said to Eli and he said here I am for you called me but he said I did not call you go back and lie down.

It's a bit of a pantomime this. So he went and he lay down and the Lord called yet again Samuel so Samuel got up and went to Eli and said here I am for you called me but he said I did not call my son go back and lie down now Samuel did not yet know the Lord nor had the word of the Lord been revealed to him so the Lord called Samuel again for the third time and he got up and went to Eli and said here I am for you called me then Eli realised that the Lord was calling the boy not all lost for Eli at this point and Eli said to Samuel go lie down and it shall be if he calls you that you shall say speak Lord for your servant is listening so Samuel went and lay down in his place so they are sleeping in the temple of the Lord the tabernacle the lamp of God has not gone out Exodus 25 verse 31 to 40 actually describes this golden lamp stand Exodus 27 verses 20 to 21 says this you shall command the Israelites to bring you clear oil of crushed olives to be used for the light so that you may keep lamps burning always from evening to morning

Aaron and his son shall maintain them before the Lord in the tent of meeting outside the veil which hangs in front of the covenant let's have a quick tour of the tabernacle so we've got a top down bird's eye view of the tabernacle okay there are three things I've circled here over here is the east gate this is where the sons of Eli will pick up women fantastic well done guys fools brazen altar this is where sacrifices will take place and the golden lamp stand is just inside the tent here if we want to have a quick look at what that might look like zoom into that it's a menorah you'll be familiar there's a very specific description of it in Exodus let's have a look inside this room here there's the lamp stand there there's the showbread and over here that's the altar for incense and a slightly more

important bit there's your curtain separating the holy of holies from where the priests are generally allowed only once a year one priest can go inside that curtain and inside that curtain is Indiana Jones' prizes prizes the Ark of the Covenant next week we will see that used as a trinket but this is where the presence of God will be will be found when we are looking to listen to God we could look at this piece of scripture and we can go right let's build a formula you need to be really careful about building formulas for things out of scripture if you just look at how Jesus healed blind people you will see that there is no formula for it so in John chapter 9 the man born blind Jesus spits in some mud sticks it on his eyes and then tells him to go and wash in the pool of Siloam in Bethsaida Mark chapter 8 he just spits on the guy's eyes and then after first checking if he can see and he can only see blurry at this point he then puts his hands on and then he can see clearly in Jericho when he heals blind Bartimaeus in Luke chapter 18 he just says receive your sight your faith has saved you what can you learn from that well yeah formulas don't work but there's general principles you can take from trying to hear from the Lord such as listening being quiet and being still [48 : 09] Elijah for example didn't hear God in the loudness of the wind or the earthquake or the fire but in a still small voice yet Moses he spoke to him from a bushfire after Jesus was baptized the father spoke to Israel through the clouds you are my beloved son in you I am well pleased everybody heard it Psalm 29 verses 3 to 9 say this the voice of the Lord is over the waters the God of glory thunders the Lord over many waters the voice of the Lord is powerful the voice of the Lord is full of majesty the voice of the Lord breaks the cedars the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon he makes Lebanon to skip like a calf and Syrian like a young wild ox the voice of the Lord flashes forth flames of fire the voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness the Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh the voice of the Lord makes the deer give birth and strips the forests bare and in his temple all cry glory verse 10 to 14 and then the Lord came and stood and called as at all the other times

Samuel Samuel and Samuel said speak for your servant is listening then the Lord said to Samuel behold I'm going to do a thing in Israel and both ears of everyone who hears about it will ring on that day I will carry out against Eli everything that I have spoken in regard to his house from beginning to end but I have told him that I'm going to judge his house forever for the wrongdoing that he knew because his sons were bringing a curse on themselves and he did not rebuke them the subheading in my Bible said he did rebuke them I think God's right rather than the subheading therefore I have sworn to the house of Eli that the wrongdoing of Eli's house shall never be atoned for by his sacrifice or offering so God is saying well he's going to do what he's already told him that he's going to do Eli's response is he is the Lord let him do what seems good to him so the first time Eli was rebuked for or bombed by an unnamed prophet there is no recorded response at all to that the second response is one of resignation when Joe first gave me this passage I'd been teaching on the book of Jonah with the kids the Ninevites are told in 40 days time I'm going to destroy you what's the response these guys aren't Jews they don't know the Lord what's the response sackcloth ashes repentance the king making proclamations we're in the we need to sort our act out I could spend five minutes reading it I don't have the time unfortunately chapter 3 of the book of Jonah repentance Eli knows the Lord or at least knows of him but this man is so inept his parenting is questionable and faced with impending doom his response is alright seriously so Samuel lay down until morning then he opened the doors of the house of the Lord but Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to

Eli and Eli called Samuel and said Samuel my son and he said here I am and he said what is the word that the Lord has spoken to you please do not hide it from me may God do the same to you and more so if you hide a single word from me all the words that he has spoken to you so Samuel told him everything that he and he hid nothing from him and he said here's the Lord let him do what seems good to him I am so glad you're not my priest Eli given that Eli is a judge of Israel working in the tabernacle as a priest of the Lord his response is let's be generous to him and say it's pretty weak could he have repented when Eli rebuked his sons he said well part of Eli's rebuke it was if one person sins against another

God will mediate for him but if a person sins against the Lord who can intercede for him well his theology stops there no one Jesus hello verse 19 to 21 now Samuel grew and the Lord was with him and he let none of his words fail and all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was confirmed as a prophet of the Lord so quick use of a map because we've it's mentioned a couple of places Dan to Beersheba so we're not talking about the tribe of Dan's area we are talking about this place here Dan and Beersheba is here it's an idiom for the length of the country I don't

know a lot about Kadesh or Sidon but maybe it just doesn't rhyme or something but it's not surprising that people have heard of this it's a grave word from the Lord it would have been the talk of the town

[54 : 06] Eli and his sons have been behaving appallingly they all know it as leaders they have abused their power to their own benefit as believers it's essential that we stop and we reflect on this reflect on our own flaws as well and how they might harm us and other people as well but it's also important to remember that we're not saved by our works we're saved by grace and despite human evil God is working out his purpose to oppose the proud and exhort the humble the first will be last I love this last verse and the Lord appeared again at Shiloh because the Lord revealed himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the word of the Lord now this is the real reason everybody heard about the stuff that was going on with Samuel the presence of the Lord is back in the tabernacle the light's gone on that's a massive change because God's been missing the Holy of Holies where the Ark of the Covenant is suddenly has someone present sadly next week that Ark's going to be wheeled out as a trinket yeah we've seen the sin of Hophni and Phinehas we've seen how Eli he's actually partaken in it because he's been eating the fat despite warnings from their father they didn't care and they carried on on their path despite knowing that they're up to no good

Eli didn't remove them from their position and cut them off from Israel evil prospers when good men do nothing in this case he joined in we've seen the Lord speak to Eli through a prophet warning him and we've got no response or action we've seen the Lord speak to Samuel telling Eli that he will send the judgment coupled with an unrepentant response we know that that will be fulfilled next week it's very easy for us to look at this story and say well I don't work in the tabernacle I don't deal with sacrifices this doesn't apply to me but we'd be failing to learn from history this true story it's not a fairy tale this true story of the fate of Hophni and Phinehas does apply to you what can we see is that God is working his purposes out despite the sin of men what if it was you that was bringing the sacrifice and Hophni and

Phinehas are going yeah that thing you want me to use to mediate between you and the Lord I'm going to steal that before you use it despite these despicable things that can be done by people especially when they're pretending to do things in the name of the Lord we need to call these things out don't be like Eli be like Samuel it's not as simple as that is it Samuel's actually a terrible parent as well 1st Samuel chapter 8 will actually show us that he was an inept parent too Samuel appoints his own children Joel and Abijah as judges over Israel and then Israel rejects them and calls for a king yay well done Samuel we've had a look at the lamp I want to try and end wrap this up Luke chapter 8 verse 16 to 20 says this no one lights a lamp and covers it over with a container or puts it under a bed but he puts it on a lampstand so that those who come in may see the light for nothing is concealed that will not become evident nor anything hidden that will not be known and come to light sins of those sons are known so take care how you listen that whoever has to him more will be given whoever does not have even what he thinks he has will be taken away from him now that's Jesus speaking after that now his mother and brothers came to him and they were unable to get to him because of the crowd and it was reported to him your mother and your brothers are standing outside wishing to see you but his answer was this my mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it the great news for us is the role of priest is obsolete from a human perspective the lord wanted perfection for us to be saved we couldn't do it but he could and he did providing a way for us for the role of priest he also needed perfection again these stories show us we couldn't do it hence why Jesus is our high priest and it is him that intercedes for us so when Jesus was crucified that curtain in that temple was torn in two that curtain separated men from the presence of God in the holy of holies we're not talking about a net curtain that you'll see in any old house we're talking about a thick multi-layered curtain we don't need any other priest to intercede for us other than

Jesus the Christ the Messiah the high priest our worship therefore should be aimed in only one direction not our own lust but only at the Lord I finish with one last quote Romans chapter 12 verse 1 I appeal to you therefore brothers by the mercies of God to present your body as a living sacrifice holy and acceptable to God which is your spiritual worship right father we just want to thank you for your words we ask that you would use these words as something to transform us into a better likeness of you may we not be defeated by the failures of our flesh we will repeatedly be

[60 : 53] Hophni and Phinehas we will repeatedly fail help us to know you Lord help us to want to follow you all the better yeah may your Holy Spirit transform us and help us with our walk in Jesus

name Amen