

Episode #604 Judges 41 – Eli’s Wicked Sons

I. In the book of Judges, we have a brief record of the early history (the first centuries) of the history of the land of Israel. We see the leaders God chose, judges, who ruled under Jehovah, the King. Through the lives and work of these judges, we can learn about God’s works and ways.

II. In the book of I Samuel we have a continuation of the history of the judges. Samson, the twelfth judge in Judges, never really finished his mission because he only BEGAN to deliver Israel from the Philistines. In the book of I Samuel we start out still waiting for the judge who will accomplish this task. In the first chapters of the book we meet the next judge after Samson, the high priest Eli. Last time, we met a man named Elkanah with two wives, Peninnah and Hannah. Hannah has no children and is crushed about it. Last time we saw her go before the tabernacle of the LORD to request a child, promising to give him back to the LORD.

III. I Samuel 1:1-2:11. Introduction to Eli.

A. I Samuel 1:12-14. Our first picture of Eli: a man who once was close to the LORD, but had been so worn down by the apostasy of the many around him that he can no longer tell the difference between an honest seeker after God and a drunk woman!

B. I Samuel 1:15-18. Eli’s mistake is corrected and he speaks God’s blessing on Hannah.

C. I Samuel 1:19-2:11. The prayer granted and the promise is fulfilled. Eli receives the young child to raise as a priest. But what about the old man’s own children?

IV. I Samuel 2:12-21. Eli’s wicked sons.

A. I Samuel 2:12. This sums it up: they did not know Jehovah, as their father did.

B. I Samuel 2:13-17. They gravely desecrate His offerings.

C. I Samuel 2:18-21. Samuel, Eli’s adopted son, grows before Yahweh.

V. I Samuel 2:22-36. Eli’s response to his wicked sons.

A. I Samuel 2:22-25. Eli scolds his sons. His reasoning is sound, but they do not listen. Note: does Eli take the next step: removing his sons for their wickedness? No!

B. I Samuel 2:26. Eli’s adopted son is again the contrast. If Eli had to rid himself of his own, ungodly sons, God had graciously given him a Godly replacement. But Eli was not willing to do what it took to protect the LORD’s reputation from his own family!

C. I Samuel 2:27-36. Jehovah’s prophecy to Eli.

1. I Samuel 2:27-29. Note: Jehovah accuses Eli himself of dishonoring His sacrifices! Why? Because he honors his sons more than God! Note 2: Eli himself is becoming fat on the fat stolen from the offerings!

2. I Samuel 2:30-31. Eli’s house, which he honored more than Yahweh, will actually come to ruin because of this choice!

3. I Samuel 2:32-33. The curse: a rival priestly family will take over, but until that time not a one of Eli’s descendants will live to old age!

4. I Samuel 2:34. The sign of this prophecy’s fulfillment: both his sons will die the same day.

5. I Samuel 2:35. A faithful priest will arise to replace Eli. This was begun in Samuel, but completed in David’s days with Zadok.

6. I Samuel 2:36. Eli’s house will be left begging for a minor priestly job.

VI. I Samuel 3:1-10. Samuel meets the LORD.

A. I Samuel 3:1. The word of the LORD was rare. In our day even moreso: we have been tied down to the written Word of God for over 1950 years!

VII. Eli, the next judge after Samson, was also the high priest of Israel. He was a Godly man at first, but when his sons were wicked, he chose to honor them rather than the LORD. Jehovah, however, had already chosen a more faithful man to follow Eli: the boy Samuel. Eli could have viewed this honorable young man as a replacement for his disgraceful sons, but he did not. Question: are we ever tempted to honor our wicked children and dishonor the LORD? If so, which will we choose? Who is more important to us: God or family? Eli's life is a warning: those who choose family over God may well end up losing both!