

Episode #605 Judges 42 – Eli’s Stolen Fat

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 are waiting for a judge to complete Samson’s mission and deliver the nation from the oppression of the Philistines. The next judge we meet after Samson, however, the high priest Eli, is far from the faithful judge we might wish for. Eli’s sons were wicked and defiled the LORD’s sacrifices. Though Eli scolded them for it, when they did not listen he did nothing else about it, choosing his sons over God and getting fat off the sacrifices stolen from Jehovah’s altar! Yet God was preparing a new, faithful servant: the young boy Samuel.

III. 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!
- B. I Samuel 3:2-5. Jehovah calls Samuel, but he thinks it was Eli. Eli once knew Jehovah’s call, but that was long ago. He fails to recognize it now.
- C. I Samuel 3:6-7. A second call, a second failure to understand. Note: Samuel did not know Yahweh nor have the Word of Yahweh revealed to him. Who is the Word of Yahweh? John 1:1. It was Jesus Christ Who was going to be revealed to Samuel!
- D. I Samuel 3:8-10. Eli finally realizes that the LORD is calling Samuel, and gives him instruction. Note: the LORD was standing there. How? As the Word incarnate! Note 2: Samuel cannot quite bring himself to say the Name of the One he is talking to!

IV. I Samuel 3:11-21. Eli’s refusal to hear.

- A. I Samuel 3:11-14. Eli’s failure to respond to rebuke has increased Jehovah’s anger against him and his house. He could have restrained them, even after the previous word, and perhaps Jehovah would have been gracious. Now, no grace is possible.
- B. I Samuel 3:15-17. Samuel, understandably, is reluctant to bring his foster father this sad message, but Eli puts him under oath to do so.
- C. I Samuel 3:18. Note Eli’s inadequate response: It is all Yahweh’s fault! No, it was Eli’s fault for refusing to obey. Who knows but even now he might have been able to win some reprieve if he had acted? But he is dead set in choosing his sons over God and will not be dissuaded no matter what!
- D. I Samuel 3:19-21. Samuel is the Godly son Eli should have realized he had. He grows in relationship with Jehovah and in fame for being a prophet throughout all the land.

V. I Samuel 4:1-11. Israel battles the Philistines.

- A. I Samuel 4:1-2. Israel joins battle with the Philistines, but without a judge leading them. Their first attempt is a failure.
- B. I Samuel 4:3. This was an excellent question, but they never sought the true answer. Instead, they decided to use the ark like a good luck charm or pagan god!
- C. I Samuel 4:4. They bring the ark and its two wicked attendants into the camp. Instead of examining their own hearts and confessing their sins before God, they bring two wicked men God was determined to destroy into their camp!
- D. I Samuel 4:5-9. The Philistines are afraid, but bolster their courage.
- E. I Samuel 4:10-11. Israel is slaughtered. The LORD is no good luck charm! The wicked priests die, as God intended. The ark is captured!

VI. I Samuel 4:12-18. The death of fat, old Eli.

- A. I Samuel 4:12-13. Note Eli's heart: it trembled for the ark in a way it never trembled for Jehovah's reputation when his wicked sons were blaspheming it! When we fall into religious apostasy we place great importance on the forms of religion all the while we have rejected its heart. That is the sad case of Eli.
- B. I Samuel 4:14-15. The messenger comes to Eli. He is 98 and blind.
- C. I Samuel 4:16-17. The messenger gives the unhappy report. Eli hears the punishment God promised: his two, wicked sons died together. So much for him sparing them!
- D. I Samuel 4:18. Eli's death. Remember Yahweh's accusation: I Samuel 2:29. Eli was making himself fat off the stolen offerings. Now, it is that very fat that kills him!

VIII. Samuel, the faithful servant boy, receives a visit from the Word of Yahweh. He receives a message for Eli of disaster because he chose his sons over God. Eli is set in his choice, however, and tries to place the blame on the LORD! When Israel fails in battle with the Philistines, they fail to ask themselves why. Instead, they try to use God's ark as a good luck charm! Instead, bringing Eli's doomed sons into the camp only seals their defeat. Eli, on hearing of the capture of the ark, falls backwards off his seat, and his fat, caused by the fat stolen from Jehovah's sacrifices by his sons, breaks his neck. God's justice, when it falls, is very fitting and very fair. How shall we, sinners against God, escape His righteous sentence of death against us? Only through the sacrifice of His Son on our behalf!