

Episode #606 Judges 43 – Samuel the Last Judge

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. Eli the high priest judged Israel after Samson, but his unfaithfulness to the LORD resulted in his just death when the news of the death of his sons and the capture of the ark came. Now Israel needs a new leader, one who will carry out the mission of deliverance that Samson and Eli never completed. Today we will consider that leader, the last judge Samuel.

III. I Samuel 4:18-22. Disaster on Israel and Eli.

- A. 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!
- B. I Samuel 4:19-22. Eli's daughter-in-law dies in bearing Ichobod = "No Glory." Eli's judgeship ends in disaster. Slaughter for the nation, capture of the ark, his own shameful death.

IV. Samuel and the Philistines

- A. The Philistines sacked and destroyed many cities in Israel, including, apparently, Shiloh, the city of the priests where the tabernacle had been. Consider Jeremiah 7:8-15: Shiloh was wasted and destroyed, though for a time it appears it was rebuilt.
- B. Yet in spite of the destruction of the city, the tabernacle, the altar, and the other holy instruments appear to have been delivered, and in the days of David we see them at Gibeon. I Chronicles 16:39.
- C. How were the tabernacle and the other holy things rescued from the Philistine invaders? We are not told. But we have a guess: God's prophet Samuel must have rescued them!
- D. We skip over chapters 5 and 6, which have nothing to do with the judges, but rather with the ark of Jehovah in the hands of the Philistines. God can and did take care of His Own ark and the Philistines had no choice but to return it to Israel.

V. I Samuel 7:1-6. Samuel and Israel.

- A. I Samuel 7:1-2. The cycle of judges continues, and Israel returns to Yahweh due to their oppression by the Philistines.
- B. I Samuel 7:3-4. Samuel represents the LORD to the people. He gives them God's command: get rid of their idols! And they do so.
- C. I Samuel 7:5-6. Samuel commands a gathering of Israel at Mizpah. Samuel, already a prophet and a priest, becomes also a judge. This reflects our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is Prophet, Priest, and King.

VI. I Samuel 7:7-14. Victory over the Philistines.

- A. I Samuel 7:7-8. The Philistines assume this is a military, not a religious, gathering, and come to fight them. The Israelites, ill prepared for war, beg Samuel to entreat Jehovah to save them.
- B. I Samuel 7:9. Samuel offers an offering to Yahweh, and Yahweh hears and grants his request.
- C. I Samuel 7:10-11. The LORD thunders against the Philistines, confusing and defeating them. The Israelites only have to chase them out of the land.
- D. I Samuel 7:12. Samuel sets up the stone Ebenezer (Stone of Help) to remind Israel that Jehovah had helped them.

E. I Samuel 7:13-14. Samuel the judge, as judges were supposed to do, delivered Israel out of the power of the Philistines. All the Israelite cities the Philistines had captured from them were taken back. The Amorites also do not dare to attack them.

VII. I Samuel 7:15-17. Samuel judges Israel from that time. Note: even after Saul is chosen as king, Samuel is still judge until his death! He judges in a circuit in four cities, though Ramah, his parents' home, is always his home. He builds Yahweh an altar there.

VIII. I Samuel 8:1-22. The last judge rejected, along with the King he serves.

A. I Samuel 8:1-3. Samuel's great mistake: he promotes his sons to judges when they were not worthy. Perhaps Samuel learned his parenting skills from Eli?

B. I Samuel 8:4-5. Israel complains of his sons and demands a king.

C. I Samuel 8:6-7. Samuel consults Jehovah. He reveals the truth of it: they were not rejecting Samuel, but Jehovah. Remember, the reason they did not have a king was that Jehovah was their King, and the judge His agent. To demand another king flies in the face of their current King!

D. I Samuel 8:8-9. This is just another of the many rejections of their King on the part of the people that we have seen all through the judges period. They are to receive another king, but they are to be warned what he will be like.

IX. The death of the judge Eli leaves Israel defenseless. When they turn to the LORD for help, however, a new judge takes charge, the man Samuel. When the Philistines attack Samuel prays and Jehovah gives them the victory. Samuel then becomes the judge of Israel for the rest of his days. In his old age, however, he makes the mistake of promoting his unworthy sons to judgeship, and they pervert justice by taking bribes. The people reject Samuel and God's judges and demand a king. But this was a direct insult to Yahweh, Who already was their King! Just as they rejected the LORD time and again for their idols, now they rejected Him as King by demanding another. How about us? Do we prefer to put something else in the place of God in our lives?