

1 Samuel 2:12–36

Corruption, Faithfulness, and God's Faithful Priest

Main Idea

God judges those who dishonor Him, preserves those who remain faithful, and ultimately provides a perfect and faithful Priest in Jesus Christ.

I. The Corruption of Eli's Sons (vv. 12–17)

A. Their Character

- "Worthless men" (sons of Belial)
- Good-for-nothing, destructive, spiritually corrupt
- Fundamental problem: **"They did not know the LORD"** (v. 12)

B. Their Abuse of Authority

- Perverted God's law concerning priestly portions
 - Leviticus 7:34
 - Deuteronomy 18:3
- Took more than God allotted
- Sent a servant ("boy") to do their dirty work
- Used force to get what they wanted (v. 16)

C. Their Great Sin

- Treated God's sacrifices with contempt
- Despised the worship of God
- Sin against both people and God

Key Principle

Spiritual privilege without genuine faith often produces spiritual corruption.

II. The Faithfulness of Samuel (vv. 18–21)

A. A Deliberate Contrast

"But Samuel..."

- Another "boy" at Shiloh

- Serving faithfully before the Lord
- Wearing a linen ephod

B. A Faithful Family

- Hannah and Elkanah continued their devotion
- Annual worship and obedience
- Demonstrated honor toward God

Key Principle

God always preserves faithful servants, even during times of widespread corruption.

III. Eli's Failure as a Father and Leader (vv. 22–25)

A. Unchecked Sin Expands

- Greed became immorality
- Sexual sin at the tabernacle
- Disregard for God's holiness led to moral decay

B. Eli Knew the Problem

- He heard the reports (v. 23)
- He understood the consequences (v. 24)
- He recognized the seriousness (v. 25)

C. Eli Failed to Act

- No meaningful discipline
- No decisive correction
- No genuine call to repentance

Discussion Question

What should Eli have done differently?

1. Properly supervised the priesthood
2. Held his sons accountable
3. Removed them from ministry
4. Protected God's worship

Key Principle

Rarely does unchecked sin remain contained.

IV. Hardened Hearts and Certain Judgment (v. 25)

A. Refusal to Listen

- "But they would not listen..."
- Persistent rebellion

B. The Danger of Hardness

- Repeated sin hardens the heart
- Rejection of correction invites judgment

Cross References

- Galatians 6:1–5
- Numbers 3:4

Key Principle

Apostasy leads to destruction.

V. Samuel Continues to Grow (v. 26)

A. God's Work Behind the Scenes

- Samuel grew physically
- Samuel grew spiritually
- Samuel gained favor with God and man

B. God's Quiet Preparation

- While Eli's house declined
- God was preparing His servant

Key Principle

God is often working quietly while judgment is developing openly.

VI. The Prophetic Rebuke (vv. 27–34)

A. God's Grace Remembered

- God chose Aaron's house
- Election should produce:
 - Humility
 - Gratitude
 - Worship

Not:

- Pride
- Presumption
- License

B. The Central Accusation

"You honor your sons above Me" (v. 29)

Discussion Question

How can people become "too important" in our lives?

C. The Coming Judgment

- Strength cut off
- Influence removed
- Descendants judged
- Sons would die as a sign of fulfillment

Key Principle

When people become big, God becomes small.

VII. God's Promise of a Faithful Priest (vv. 35–36)

A. Immediate Fulfillment

- Samuel
- Later, Zadok

B. Ultimate Fulfillment

Jesus Christ

Christ is:

- The Faithful Priest
- The Lord's Anointed
- The Perfect Mediator
- The Merciful and Faithful High Priest (Heb. 2:17)

Key Principle

Human leaders fail, but God's faithful Priest never fails.