



# 3 | 1 SAMUEL 2:11-36

## JESUS, OUR FAITHFUL HIGH PRIEST

*Look to Christ alone as your Mediator.*

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### Call to Worship

I will give thanks to you, O Lord, among the peoples; I will sing praises to you among the nations. <sup>10</sup> For your steadfast love is great to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds. <sup>11</sup> Be exalted, O God, above the heavens! Let your glory be over all the earth! —*Psalm 57:9-11*

### Songs

*In Christ Alone*

*And Can it Be*

*Before the Throne of God Above*

*O Lord, My Rock and My Redeemer*

*Yet Not I But Christ Through Me*

## Introduction

We are in a series in the book of 1 Samuel called “Exalting God’s King.” We are learning how to exalt Jesus Christ as King in our lives. Our title this morning is: “God’s Faithful High Priest.”

According to the United Press International, “For 51 years Bob Edens was blind. He couldn't see a thing. His world was a black hall of sounds and smells. He felt his way through five decades of darkness. And then, he could see. A skilled surgeon performed a complicated operation, and for the first time, Bob Edens had sight. He found it overwhelming. “I never would have dreamed that yellow is so...yellow,” he exclaimed. “I don't have the words. I am amazed by yellow. But red is my favorite color. I just can't believe red. I can see the shape of the moon – and I like nothing better than seeing a jet plane flying across the sky leaving a vapor trail. And of course, sunrises and sunsets. And at night I look at the stars in the sky and the flashing light. You could never know how wonderful everything is.”<sup>1</sup>

Aren't you glad you can see spiritually? Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me! I once was lost but now I'm found, was blind but now I see!” I can see! We were once the blind enemies of God, but he's given us sight!

In 1 Samuel 2, we **have a prophecy against the spiritually blind**. Eli is the high priest and his sons Hophni and Phinehas are completely immoral. They should all be disqualified from being priests. We read about them and feel that this is **very relevant today** with ungodly leadership. **A priest is a mediator. His main calling is to bring people the right way to God**. All the priests of the Old Testament were at best a faint picture of our ultimate priest Jesus Christ. What's worse, most were **spiritually blind**.

But at the end of this chapter, we have this **bright explosion of grace** that overcomes the darkness. In the midst of one of the saddest stories of the priesthood in Israel, we have a stunning Messianic prophecy about Jesus. From the failure of the Levitical priesthood at Shiloh, after the time of the Judges, God promises to raise up a “faithful priest.” Look at this prophecy. It is stunning.

**1 Samuel 2:35** | And I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who shall do according to what is in my heart and in my mind. And I will build him a sure house, and he shall go in and out before my anointed forever.

We know Jesus Christ is the King of kings, and he is the ultimate Prophet, but he is also our great High Priest. The priests in the Old Testament were to picture Jesus but they are a great failure for the most part our Lord Jesus Christ arrives on the scene. We are warned against false priests. They are nothing but wolves. Jesus himself tells us we need to be aware of wolves in sheep's clothing. They are everywhere. They preach and do miracles and cast out devils, but Jesus says, “Depart from me, I never knew you, you lawless people” (*cf* Mt 7:21-23).

The ultimate priest is Jesus Christ. The first occurrence of “priest” in the Old Testament is the reference to the pre-Israelite “Melchizedek king of Salem ... priest of God Most High” (Gen 14:18). One of the foundational principles of the Israelite covenant with God at Sinai was that the

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<sup>1</sup> United Press International, “After 51 Years of Blindness, Bob Edens Amazed by Color,” March 7, 1981.

nation as a whole would become “**a kingdom of priests**” (Exo 19:6a).<sup>2</sup> How can we exercise the priesthood of every believer? We remember the words of the apostle Peter.

*1 Peter 3:5* | You yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

We offer spiritual sacrifices of praise and prayer, communing with God for ourselves and those around us. We are to “hold firmly” to our **sympathetic high priest** (4:14–16). Indeed, we are to come with the confidence of one of God’s own dear children. He is our Abba, so we should come boldly.

*Hebrews 4:16* | Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

We are **New Testament priests**, and we have to take our priesthood seriously. We also need to be warned by this very sad section of Scripture we are coming to. So here’s our key thought.

**Key thought:** Look to Jesus alone as your Savior and Mediator. The best of human leaders will let you down. You can and must be faithful even when the world is filled with even the most ungodly of leaders.

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## 1. THE MARKS OF WORTHLESS PRIESTS (2:12-22)

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After Hannah’s beautiful song of praise, we come to the story of the worthless priests in the time of Hannah her son Samuel. The Lord had called the Levitical priests to lead the people of Israel in holiness, and what we see here with Samuel in his boyhood is a complete and utter failure from Eli and his wicked sons. Jesus spoke of wolves a lot in his ministry. In one place he demonstrated how they are imitators of their father, the devil.

*John 8:44* | You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires.

That was how Eli’s sons acted, like their father the devil. **Satan is the ultimate deceiver.** We are reminded of this in the New Testament.

*2 Corinthians 11:14* | Even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.

We should not be surprised that Satan has his people in the highest levels in churches. Even some pastors are wolves. **There are whole denominations today that have Satan’s ministers as priests and pastors.** Eli’s sons teach us something about the character of wolves. They do the work of the devil who is always discouraging or distracting the people of God.

### A CONTRAST TO WORTHLES PRIESTS

First and foremost, we see that **wolves are unconverted.** They do not know the Lord. We open here with **a great contrast.** It’s light against darkness. Elkanah’s faithful family versus the

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<sup>2</sup> Richard E. Averbeck, “Priest, Priesthood,” in *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, electronic ed., Baker Reference Library (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1996), 633-636.

wicked priests. Look at Samuel's faithfulness. We have Eli's sons who are "worthless" contrasted with "the boy" Samuel, who is faithful, ministering to the Lord in the tabernacle. Before we look at the worthless wolves of Hophni and Phinehas, let's consider **the faithfulness of Samuel**.

1 Samuel 2:11 | Then Elkanah went home to Ramah. And the boy was ministering to the Lord in the presence of Eli the priest.

After Hannah weaned her boy Samuel, he stayed in Shiloh while the family returned to Ramah. Samuel began to be trained as a priest, beginning to do what a priest was meant to do, under the supervision of Eli.<sup>3</sup> From a young age he was "ministering to the Lord." Wow. What a testimony! That's what I want our young people to do. **It's one thing to minister for the Lord. It's a much greater joy to minister to the Lord.** The idea is that Samuel was faithful, and the Lord's heart was blessed by the boy. How about you? Are you walking in the sweet and joyful fellowship of the Lord? **This proves that children should serve God from the youngest of ages.**

As the years pass, **you can just imagine this young boy Samuel, joyfully singing to the Lord** as he **prepares** the morning and the evening sacrifice. He smells the sweet aroma of the sacrificial offering, and he worships the Lord, even at such a young age. God's hand is upon him. **The activities of young Samuel, however, were in stark contrast to other practices at that time at Shiloh.** Faithful Samuel is contrasted with the worthless sons of Eli.

## WOLVES ARE UNCONVERTED

1 Samuel 2:12 | Now the sons of Eli were worthless men. They did not know the Lord.

What an **indictment**. Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were **worthless** sons, or literally "sons of *belial*." They were priests in the tabernacle at Shiloh, but they **did the work of their father the devil**. In contrast to Hannah and her young son Samuel, "They did not know the Lord" (2:12).<sup>4</sup> The source of their evil behavior was their **unconverted hearts**. How sad that the priests of that time had not been converted. Eli seems to have some knowledge of the Lord, but his sons are completely lost.

Eli's sons were like so many who want to entertain the goats instead of feeding the sheep. They are unconverted. Instead of preaching heavenly conversion, they preach earthly success and prosperity. Instead of preaching the word of God, they preach psychology and the "power of positive thinking." **They do not know the Lord.** We don't rest our faith on men, even eloquent men. We rest our faith on the Lord. **Wolves will make you think they know the Lord when they don't.** Their actions revealed their **unconverted hearts**. Eli's sons were "worthless men," servants of the devil. Be careful, for some churches have pastors that are wolves in sheep's clothing. They may even preach about Jesus, do miracles and cast out devils, but they live for themselves. And our Lord will say to them, "Depart from me, you lawless people, I never knew you" (Mt 7:23). **Hophni and Phinehas did not know the Lord. What is worse, is that he never knew them.**

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<sup>3</sup> Woodhouse, *1 Samuel: Looking for a Leader*, 53.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

## WOLVES ARE USERS

Wolves fleece the sheep and tear them to pieces. They don't care about the sheep. They are hired hands, getting all they can out of the sheep for themselves. They don't love the sheep. They love themselves. We see this with Eli's sons, Hophni and Phineas.

**1 Samuel 2:13-16** | The custom of the priests with the people was that when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant would come, while the meat was boiling, with a three-pronged fork in his hand, <sup>14</sup> and he would thrust it into the pan or kettle or cauldron or pot. All that the fork brought up the priest would take for himself. This is what they did at Shiloh to all the Israelites who came there.

<sup>15</sup> Moreover, before the fat was burned, the priest's servant would come and say to the man who was sacrificing, "Give meat for the priest to roast, for he will not accept boiled meat from you but only raw." <sup>16</sup> And if the man said to him, "Let them burn the fat first, and then take as much as you wish," he would say, "No, you must give it now, and if not, I will take it by force."

Hophni and Phinehas were taking what they wanted, by force if they had to. **This reminds me of the prosperity preachers today.** They claim to be working for God, but they are robbing the sheep. They are not drawing converts through the convicting work of the Holy Spirit but are alluring people through the **false promise of material possessions** or the hope of physical healing. Prosperity theology is cruel, teaching that if you lack health or wealth, it's because you lack faith. God indeed does heal the body. Praise him for that! But that's not why we come to him. Healing and miracles are all wrapping paper. **False teachers today love the wrapping paper instead of loving the Lord.** These wolves are users. They want you to essentially pay for the blessings of God. They are like **Simon Magnus** in the book of Acts who thought he could **franchise and market the Holy Spirit** for his own financial greed! The word of God tells us that these kinds of prosperity preachers are worthless wolves. Warn people about them. **Expose their greed and abuse.** Have nothing to do with them. They will only use you and leave you by the wayside.

## WOLVES ARE FAKERS

False teachers do not love the Lord. They don't care about the substance of true worship, like fellowshiping with the saints, seasons of prayer, and the joy of God's presence. Like the sons of Eli, they treat the sacrifices of God's people with contempt.

**1 Samuel 2:17** | Thus the sin of the young men was very great in the sight of the Lord, for the men treated the offering of the Lord with contempt.

Hophni and Phinehas **cared nothing for the Lord or his worship.** They looked upon him with sheer contempt. They were using the Lord to get what they wanted. We find out that Eli's sons, according to the **Mosaic law, deserved death** for treating the Lord's worship as worthless (Deut 17:12-13). Not only did their father Eli not remove them, he turned a blind eye to them.

False teachers, like their father Satan, masquerade as "angels of light." Often false teachers will **teach a lot of "correct" doctrine** so they might fool the sheep. Beware! Don't believe it. Look at the lives of the false teachers. They rob the sheep so they might live **lavish lifestyles.** They

are often **lascivious and sexually immoral**. A man who is immoral is no longer qualified to be a pastor. Many of these pastors are **control freaks**. One qualification of a pastor is that he not be domineering. The sons of Eli were **ravenous wolves**. They ruled over God's people for their own selfish benefit. Under the law of Moses, they should have been a public example and at the very minimum taken out of the priesthood. What a disgrace we have in the tabernacle at Shiloh! They are fakers, administering the sacrifices for their own gain.

### **GOD'S MERCY AMIDST WOLVES**

On the other hand, there was another young man at Shiloh. Quietly, perhaps hardly noticed, he provided a stark contrast to the destructive pride and reckless arrogance of Hophni and Phinehas.

#### *God's Mercy to the Believing Home*

**1 Samuel 2:18-19** | Samuel was ministering before the Lord, a boy clothed with a linen ephod.<sup>19</sup> And his mother used to make for him a little robe and take it to him each year when she went up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice.

Samuel was not a descendant of Aaron, but he was a Levite (1 Chr 6:22–30). Samuel's "ministry," therefore, was limited to that of a Levite, but the language suggests that his work was at least semi-priestly. **Young Samuel wore a "linen ephod," the garb of priests (22:18). The "ephod" was also associated with prophets**, and Samuel the author is letting us know that Samuel is not only a priest, but also a prophet.<sup>5</sup>

The yearly robe Hannah would bring her son, reminds us of the beginning of our story with those visits to Shiloh that were so miserable for Hannah year after year (1 Sam 1:3–7). But now these visits are joyful. She's not only giving God the praise for his answer to prayer. But she is **continuing to guide Samuel and urge him to serve the Lord** with gladness in the midst of this perversity. One way to demonstrate stability for your children in an unstable world, is spiritual stability in the home.

#### *God's Mercy to a Growing Family*

**1 Samuel 2:20-21a** | Then Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, and say, "May the Lord give you children by this woman for the petition she asked of the Lord." So then they would return to their home.<sup>21</sup> Indeed the Lord visited Hannah, and she conceived and bore three sons and two daughters.

Apparently, Hannah prayed for more children, and the Lord was merciful to give her five more children: three sons and two daughters (*cf* Psa 113:9). **Hannah gave one child to the Lord and the Lord gave back five!**<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Leithart, *A Son to Me*, 46.

<sup>6</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Successful*, "Be" Commentary Series (Colorado Springs, CO: Victor/Cook Communications, 2001), 24.

## God's Mercy in the Coming Christ

I want you to see a little lighthouse in the darkness, if you will. Here is Samuel growing in the presence of the Lord. We already learned that the boy Samuel was “ministering to the Lord” (2:11), and now we read of his growth in the presence of the Lord.

**1 Samuel 2:21b** | And the boy Samuel grew in the presence of the Lord.

This sweetly points us to what will later be written about our Lord.

**Luke 2:52** | And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.

The true and faithful priest is coming. Samuel is little lighthouse that points us to Christ! This tells us again about how children should live before the presence of the Lord. They should be praying from the youngest of ages. They should be enjoying God's presence. The joy of the Holy Spirit should fill the atmosphere of our homes. What a joy to see Samuel growing in the Lord, even in the midst of wolves.

### WOLVES ARE IMMORAL

**1 Samuel 2:22** | Now Eli was very old, and he kept hearing all that his sons were doing to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who were serving at the entrance to the tent of meeting.

**Instead of encouraging the women of the tabernacle in their spiritual walk, the two brothers seduced them.** These women were not official servants appointed by the law but were volunteers who assisted the priests and Levites. Perhaps they helped care for the little children who came with the adult worshipers, or they may have been there just to be close to the presence of the Lord. Ministerial immorality is in the news today, and it's a tragic thing, but it's sadly nothing new.<sup>7</sup> Remember these brothers in the priesthood were also robbing the people of the best cuts from the sacrifices. Here we recognize two forms that corruption in leadership commonly takes. Two great temptations are compromises with financial and moral corruption. Leadership like that of Hophni and Phinehas was—and is—evil.<sup>8</sup>

**Let us as men of God lead in the light.** Let us walk in the light. Let us **protect our marriages and celebrate our wives.** Your marriage is a shelter for you. Let us also reject the temptation of money and greed. Our contentment is in Christ. **Be content with the family and the income that Christ has given you.** Wolves are never satisfied. That's why they are immoral. They don't know the Lord.

If you are not content with Christ, then you are capable of all kinds of evil. If you are not content with Christ, you ought to see these two wicked men and be very afraid. They were not content with the Lord, and so they could never be satisfied.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>8</sup> John Woodhouse, *1 Samuel: Looking for a Leader*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008), 58.

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## 2. WARNINGS FOR WORTHLESS PRIESTS (2:23-34)

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### A WARNING FROM THE FATHER

Eli spoke to his sons about their perversity. He called them to give an account of themselves. But it really was **too little, too late**.

**1 Samuel 2:23-25** | And he said to them, "Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all these people. <sup>24</sup>No, my sons; it is no good report that I hear the people of the Lord spreading abroad. <sup>25</sup>If someone sins against a man, God will mediate for him, but if someone sins against the Lord, who can intercede for him?" But they would not listen to the voice of their father, for it was the will of the Lord to put them to death.

While Eli rebuked his sons, they paid no attention. And Eli did no more than rebuke them. He should have stripped them of their priesthood, the least he might have done. <sup>9</sup> Don't miss the note that "it was the will of the Lord to put them to death." They had passed the point of no return in the Lord's eyes. That's a fearful place to be.

### A WITNESS FROM THE LORD

Here's a simple message to us from the Lord: I've got my remnant.

**1 Samuel 2:26** | Now the boy Samuel continued to grow both in stature and in favor with the Lord and also with man.

God is telling Israel something. I have my faithful prophet. All is not resting on the house of Eli. **God has his faithful servants**. Hophni and Phinehas had heard from their father. They saw the example of Samuel. Finally, God sends an unnamed prophet to announce his judgment against them.

### A WARNING FROM AN UNNAMED PROPHET

Eli won't truly warn his sons, so God sends an unnamed prophet who warns Eli of the consequences of his family's behavior. Eli's two sons will no longer serve as priests, and, in fact, they will die on the same day.

**1 Samuel 2:27-34** | And there came a man of God to Eli and said to him, "Thus says the Lord, 'Did I indeed reveal myself to the house of your father when they were in Egypt subject to the house of Pharaoh? <sup>28</sup>Did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to go up to my altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me?  
I gave to the house of your father all my offerings by fire from the people of Israel. <sup>29</sup>Why then do you scorn my sacrifices and my offerings that I

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<sup>9</sup> Richards, *The Teacher's Commentary*, 201.



commanded for my dwelling, and honor your sons above me by fattening yourselves on the choicest parts of every offering of my people Israel?’

<sup>30</sup>Therefore the Lord, the God of Israel, declares: ‘I promised that your house and the house of your father should go in and out before me forever,’ but now the Lord declares: ‘Far be it from me, for those who honor me I will honor, and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed.

<sup>31</sup>Behold, the days are coming when I will cut off your strength and the strength of your father's house, so that there will not be an old man in your house. <sup>32</sup>Then in distress you will look with envious eye on all the prosperity that shall be bestowed on Israel, and there shall not be an old man in your house forever.

<sup>33</sup>The only one of you whom I shall not cut off from my altar shall be spared to weep his eyes out to grieve his heart, and all the descendants of your house shall die by the sword of men. <sup>34</sup>And this that shall come upon your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, shall be the sign to you: both of them shall die on the same day.

The summary verse from this unnamed prophet's message is verse 30 and 34. It's a severe judgment on the house of Eli.

*1 Samuel 2:30, 34* | Those who honor me I will honor, and those who despise me will be lightly esteemed. <sup>34</sup>And this that shall come upon your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, shall be the sign to you: both of them shall die on the same day.

The judgment is that Eli's sons are going to die, and their legacy will be despised forever. They will forever be known as worthless priests of Satan.

**Sadly, so many spiritual leaders today, like Eli's sons (2:12–17), abuse their position and power for selfish ends** (3 Jn 1:9–10). Every year we hear reports of clergy who are involved in sexual and financial scandals. In many cases, such men either remain in their positions or are quickly restored to office. Some pastors are domineering over their flocks (1 Pet 5:3), demanding loyalty to themselves rather than to God. Some exert their own authority against that of God (Mt 15:3) as they deny the teaching of Scripture on issues such as miracles, creation, and even justification by faith alone. Some spiritual leaders, like Eli (2:29), are more concerned about pleasing man than honoring God.<sup>10</sup>

**Dear church, pray for your pastors that we will be faithful until the very end.** It is my highest joy to walk humbly with the Lord. I would rather God take my life prematurely than be unfaithful to the Lord in any way. Pray for us. We are weak human beings like anyone else. But we believe that no sin shall have dominion over us as believers (Rom 6:14). I would rather die than that be the case. We celebrate the victory over sin we have. If the ministry became too much, I would step down before allowing myself to allow the pressures of ministry to make me compromise. I thank God that until this very day, I have a clean conscience. May God preserve all of us pastors and elders until the day of his coming as blameless and pure before his presence.

<sup>10</sup> Jim Newheiser, *Opening Up 1 Samuel*, Opening Up Commentary (Leominster: Day One, 2011), 30.

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## 3. GOD'S FAITHFUL PRIEST (2:35-36)

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In contrast to the utter failure of the priesthood in the days of Eli and his unfaithful sons, we have a beautiful prophecy that though God is done with Eli's family, he's not done with the priesthood as a whole. There's coming a priest who will faithfully serve the Lord. God's faithful priest, the high priest of all priests, is Jesus Christ, God's Son.

### THE PICTURE OF JESUS

Throughout the Old Testament, the priesthood is an imperfect representation of Jesus. He is our perfect mediator between God and man. He is the ultimate prophet, priest, and king. That's why this prophecy in 1 Samuel 2 is so wonderfully placed.

1 Samuel 2:35 | And I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who shall do according to what is in my heart and in my mind. And I will build him a sure house, and he shall go in and out before me forever.

Though we immediately think of Jesus, actually in this passage we have a number of people who would fit the mold of God's "faithful priest."

#### *Samuel*

First there is Samuel. From all that we have read so far in 1 Samuel we may reasonably suspect that Samuel will prove to be the "faithful priest" whom God was raising up for himself. Although Samuel will turn out to function more as a prophet than a priest, there is no doubt that with the death of Eli and his sons at Shiloh, Samuel will take over priestly functions and will be faithful in them. He will indeed do "what is in the Lord's heart and mind."<sup>11</sup>

#### *Zadok*

The house of Zadok then became the priestly line (*cf* 1 Kgs 2:35; 4:1).<sup>12</sup> These words about God's faithful priest certainly refer to faithful Zadok and the priestly line of his house that would serve in the days of King Solomon.

#### *Jesus Christ*

But the divine resolution of this prophecy could be fulfilled only in the coming of Jesus, God's true High Priest. Whenever we consider the roles given to Israel's priests, we should realize that Jesus is the One who truly performs and fulfills this sacred office.

A priest was ordained first, God said, "to go up to my altar" (1 Sam 2:28), presenting the sacrifices to atone for the people's sin. Only Jesus makes the true sacrifice for our sin, having been made "a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people" (Heb. 2:17). Jesus is the Priest who offers the effectual atoning blood—the blood of his cross—to cover our sins forever in the presence of God.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Woodhouse, *1 Samuel: Looking for a Leader*, 71.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> R.D. Phillips, *1 Samuel*, 62.

## THE PERFECTION OF JESUS

1 Samuel 2:35a | And I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who shall do according to what is in my heart and in my mind.

Here we **have a reference to later generations of the priests** of Israel, but this **goes beyond** the Old Testament priesthood. This is a stunning and glorious allusion to our Lord Jesus Christ, who is God's ultimate faithful priest. He left his heavenly throne and put on human flesh to become our high priest. He was tested in every way as we are, yet without sin! Because we have such a sympathetic high priest, we can run to Jesus.

He does "according to what is in the heart and mind" of God. He is the exact image of the invisible God, the Word who became flesh for us. A priest appeals to God on our behalf, and we could have no better priest than Jesus (*cf* Heb 7:26). **Jesus is our perfect Advocate before the throne of God on our behalf!**

1 John 2:1-2 | If anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. <sup>2</sup> He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

## THE PEOPLE OF JESUS

1 Samuel 2:35b | And I will build him a sure house.

The house that Jesus builds is his church, which is the very household—the precious family—of God. **We are adopted into his house as heirs of God and joint-heirs of the Lord Jesus Christ.** We are God's "masterpiece" (Eph 2:10, NLT). Listen, Jesus said, "I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Mt 16:18).

## THE PRIESTHOOD OF JESUS

1 Samuel 2:35c | And he shall go in and out before my anointed forever.

**This can't be referring to Samuel since his sons would not be faithful** (*cf* 1 Sam 8:1–3). Zadok's "house," however, continued until the exile. Again, we see this surprising title, "anointed," which is the word "Messiah." So we see that it is ultimately **in Jesus the work of faithful priest and anointed king would be combined in one person** (*cf* Heb 6:20; 7:1).<sup>14</sup> Let us praise our God that Jesus is not only King of kings, but he is also the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (Jn 1:29). **He is King and Priest and Sacrifice combined.**

The priesthood would continue with some good priests, and a lot of bad priests, but even at its best, it was a faint picture of the priesthood of our Lord Jesus Christ, our perfect high priest!

## THE POVERTY OF LIVING WITHOUT JESUS

Though the perfect priesthood of Jesus is prophesied, there is also another prophecy, this one very dim and dire. **The house of Eli will come crashing down.** His family will be taken out of the way. The punishment will fit the crime. The gluttonous bullies will become hungry beggars. It

<sup>14</sup> John Woodhouse, *1 Samuel: Looking for a Leader*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008), 71–72.

is just as Hannah had said: "Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread" (1 Sam 2:5).<sup>15</sup>

**1 Samuel 2:36** | And everyone who is left in your house shall come to implore him for a piece of silver or a loaf of bread and shall say, "Please put me in one of the priests' places, that I may eat a morsel of bread."

**How sad for those priests who do not look forward to Jesus the Messiah.** Those who had gorged themselves on the sacrifices (vv. 12–17) were reduced to begging for a morsel of food.<sup>16</sup> Eli's sons will be destroyed in one day by the Philistines when they burn the tabernacle to the ground after 369 years at Shiloh. "**Ichabod**", i.e. "The glory has departed," will be written over that time period and that leadership. God will not be mocked. Judgment must begin at the house of God, and that means the priests. Sadly, Hophni and Phinehas have their part in the lake of fire that burns with fire and brimstone.

**1 Corinthians 6:9-11** | Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals,<sup>10</sup> nor thieves, nor *the* covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God.<sup>11</sup> Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

Don't be deceived, Paul says, by those who may profess to know Christ or even preach for him. Anyone who promotes or participates in these activities is not regenerate. They will not enter Christ's kingdom, but will be confined to the lake of fire.

## APPLICATIONS

**Take your calling as New Testament priests seriously.** We are all called to "know the Lord" as Samuel did.

**Beware of wolves who are in sheep's clothing.** Don't be afraid to call them out and warn others. That's part of our job as priests is to guard the sheep from wolves.

**Rejoice in our high priest, the Lord Jesus Christ.** Keep short accounts with God. Walk in the light with a clean conscience.

### *Conclusion*

Once **I remember a dog attacked Kristen** when she was younger. It bit right through her skin. There is nothing more haunting to a parent than to see your child torn by a wild dog. We ran at that dog. If we would have had a bat, we would have used it. That dog could have torn Kristen to pieces. Thankfully Kristen escaped.

That's how Satan treats all our lost friends and family. He's got his **wild dogs and ravenous wolves** out there tearing people's lives to pieces. Broken homes. Drug addictions. Abortions. Some of these precious people go to our churches. Satan has them in his grip. Let's be good New Testament priests and rescue these dear people. Let's take our calling as the Lord's priests

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> John MacArthur Jr., ed., *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997), 381.

seriously. And may God give us much good fruit as we point people to the ultimate high priest, our Lord Jesus Christ.

## LIFE GROUP QUESTIONS

1. Read 1 Samuel 2:11-36. What are some of the themes that stuck out to you?
2. According to our passage, Eli honored his sons more than the Lord (1 Samuel 2:29). Do you honor anyone or anything more than the Lord? If so, what will you do about it?
3. Though Eli was a religious and political leader for 40 years, he was remembered as a failure at home. What will keep that from happening to you? How do you feel about the role you play (or may play in the spiritual upbringing of your family)?
4. Throughout the chapter, Samuel is seen as "ministering to the Lord" and growing up in the presence of the Lord. What does this teach us about God's desire for children? How do you rear your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?
5. How did Eli's sons deal with other people? How are we as New Testament priests to mediate for God? (read 1 Peter 2:5-9)
6. Eli's sons were corrupt. Is it possible for someone to attend church regularly and not know the Lord? What are some warning in Scripture? (Start with Matthew 7:21-23)
7. Eli's sons did not fear the Lord. What does it mean to fear the Lord? Proverbs 1:7, 9:10
8. A prophet ("man of God") rebukes Eli for his son's behavior (v.29). Why is Eli being held responsible for his sons' sin? What lessons do we learn from this?
9. Eli's sons are given a death sentence from the unnamed prophet. Do you have a difficult time thinking about God's glory in his judgment and wrath and the doctrine of eternal punishment? Why is it important that we consider this aspect of God's character?
10. Have you ever found it to be especially comforting knowing there will be the day at Christ's second coming when justice is restored?
11. Samuel developed physically and spiritually. How can we as Christian do the same grow in grace today? What are the means of grace God uses to help us grow? (God's word, prayer... what else?)
12. 1 Samuel 2:12 says that Eli's sons were worthless sons of belial, and they "did not know the Lord". What are some marks of unconverted pastors / false churches today? (Talk about doctrine, character, etc)
13. What are some marks of a godly pastor and a godly church?

14. Consider 1 Samuel 2:35 and how Jesus fulfills this verse. Jesus is our perfect mediator, priest and advocate. Read 1 John 1:9-2:2 and talk about how Jesus in our perfect Advocate and high priest.