

**“At his birth, the nation was at its lowest ebb, in the depths of national degradation spiritually and politically. When he died, it was on the verge of the most splendid era in its history – the age of its widest dominion as a nation, and of their greatest glory as worshippers of God.”**

*M. Ashton – Samuel the Seer, pg.3*

## What Hannah & Samuel teach us

1. In the face of extreme adversity the faithful: a) maintain their personal integrity with God; and b) their faith in Him, knowing whatever they do is not enough, but trust He will do the rest
2. Our trials are designed, not just to be endured, but to bring us to higher levels of service to God
3. God is able to save men, women and children from out of the most wicked of circumstances
4. To raise a godly seed, our children must see that God comes first in our home
5. Parents influence their children unto evil by remaining silent in its presence

## **What Hannah & Samuel teach us (cont.)**

- 6. The community needs strong godly leaders (in families, ecclesia) who put the needs of others before their own**
- 7. God will deliver us from the enemy but it is a deliverance with an expectation – that we will serve Him with all our heart/soul/mind/strength**
- 8. Samuel taught the nation God's blueprint for getting our spiritual life back on the right track**
- 9. Serving God is a lifelong commitment – there are no retirement years**

# Samuel's diverse spiritual talents and responsibilities

- **Prophet** – 1<sup>st</sup> among the prophets (Acts 3:24)
- **Priest** – 1 Sam 9:12-13
- **Judge** – 1 Sam 7:15
- **Teacher** – restored respect for & obedience to God's Word
- **Scribe** – wrote Constitution & history of David's life
- **Visionary** – undertook new initiatives:
  - Established the School of the prophets
  - Annual circuit to bring God's Word to the people
  - Worked with David to design the temple worship
- **Mediator** – repeatedly appealing to God on peoples' behalf

## Samuel's role as mediator

**Jer 15:1** Then said the LORD unto me, Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people: cast them out of my sight, and let them go forth.

**Ps 99:6** Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among them that call upon his name; they called upon the LORD, and he answered them.

**1 Sam 7:8** And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto the LORD our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines.

**1 Sam 12:23** Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way:

## Samuel: “Heard of God”

- He was conceived as a result of answered prayer and named accordingly
- Hannah commemorated in his name, not that her prayer had been *offered*, but that her prayer had been *heard!*
- Samuel became living proof that God answers prayer
- Prayer was a key aspect of his life, God heard his prayers and responded to them
- Samuel wasn't just heard of God, he also heard God and obeyed what he heard
- The people came to highly esteem Samuel, not for his greatness as a man but because he was a great servant of God

## **The common characteristics with Christ**

- **A mother who had a close affinity with God**
- **Born of the Spirit, not by the will of the flesh**
- **Significant temple event at the age of ~ 12**
- **Raised under the loving & guiding hand of God**
- **Devoted themselves to saving their people**
- **Interceded for their people & were heard of God**

## Common characteristics with Christ (cont.)

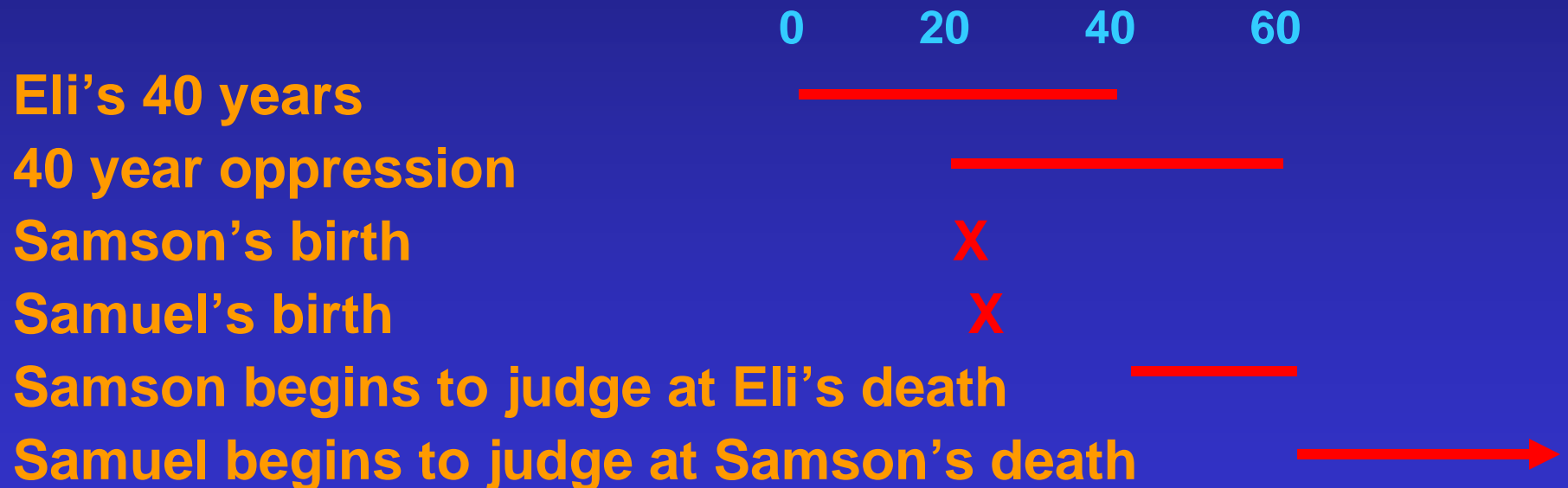
- **Linked to Shiloh & God's deliverance**
- **Answer to the "faithful priest" (2:35) whom God would raise up**
- **Brought God's message to their people and the people knew their message was from Gd**
- **Jesus did no sin; the record is silent regarding any wrong doing by Samuel**

### *Conclusion:*

*Samuel wasn't jus a type of Christ, he is proof that living like Christ can be done*

# Samson & Samuel

- Samuel's work must be viewed within the context of Samson's work, who just preceded Samuel
- Jud 13:1 the 40 year oppression begins
- 13:5 Samson sent to begin to deliver Israel
- 16:21 Samson judged Israel 20 years, the same 20 years the ark resided at Kirjath-Jerim



*When Eli dies, Samson's work begins; when Samson's dies, Samuel's work begins*

## Samuel's approximate age

- 5** - dedicated to God at Shiloh
- 12** - God first appears to Samuel at night in the temple
- 18** - ark is captured, Eli dies, Samson begins to judge
- 39** - Samson dies, Samuel begins to judge
- 62** - Israel asks God for a king
- 92** - anoints David, aged 17, to be king
- 98** - Samuel dies

# Spiritual anarchy prevails in the days of Elkanah & Hannah

- A dire lack of spiritual leadership in the community
- Idolatry dominated the lives of the people (7:2)
- The Law of Moses had been denigrated to a form of meaningless rituals
  - Law hadn't failed but its power to transform hearts/minds had been lost
  - 2:17 those who came to offer abhorred the sacrifices
  - 2:24 the people were made to transgress under the evil leadership of Hophni/Phinehas
- Shiloh will become a memorial to God acting against the nation for having apostatized (Jer. 7:12; 26:1-10)

# Hannah's influence in Samuel's life

- Prayer was a key part of her life and became so for Samuel, especially at times of crises
- She prays for the nation's deliverance, as does Samuel
- Hannah prays God will slay His enemies with thunder; Samuel prays when nation is under attack and Gods sends thunder to slay the enemy
- Hannah was a giver in a world of takers, Samuel life is devoted to giving and doing for others
- Hannah makes a vow of separation and service before Samuel's birth and he grows up to embrace her vow and to make it his own

## **Penninah the adversary**

- **She held in low esteem the one Mary highly regarded**
- **She caused Hannah great distress, “provoked her sore, made her to fret (#7481 – violently agitated)**
- **She enjoyed making Hannah’s life miserable**
- **Hannah was physically, mentally & emotionally shaken, but not spiritually**
- **Penninah used Hannah’s divinely closed womb as the basis for her provocations**
- **Instead of showing sympathy for Hannah’s state, she heaped greater anguish upon Hannah**
- **Penninah wrongly concluded it was divine punishment**
- **She knew how to maximize her provocation of Hannah – by using a spiritual context**

# The contrast of Hannah & Penninah

## Hannah

**A woman after the spirit**

**Sought spiritual gains for others, even at expense of self**

**Represented all the good intended from creation in the spiritual side of womanhood**

**Self-sacrificing devotion, patience, lovingkindness, nurturing, taking pleasure in serving others**

## Penninah

**A woman after the flesh**

**Sought personal gains for self at expense of others**

**Represented the ugliness, the evil side side of womanhood, after the flesh**

**Derived pleasure and satisfaction from making life miserable for others**

# Hannah's sufferings are real & deep

Provoked sore v6

Made to fret v6

Provoked her v7

Wept and did not eat v7

Heart grieved v8

Bitterness of soul v10

Wept sore v10

Affliction of thy handmaid v11

A sorrowful spirit v15

Poured out my soul v15

Abundance of my complaint (mg. meditation) & grief v16

God closing her womb, though not a punishment as  
Penninah insinuated, was part of her trial

*Compounding the situation was her husband's inability  
to grasp the scope of her sorrows and yearnings (v8)*

## **Hannah's vow (ch1) & her prayer (ch2) reveal the national depth of her spiritual outlook**

- **It is not her personal problems she is focused upon, it is the dilemmas facing the nation**
- **You don't ask for a son, then promise to give him right back to God for His service, if your focus is upon yourself**
- **It was the combination of Penninah's provocations and the apostasy and immorality at Shiloh, and the national idolatry and contentment with Philistine rule that brought her to the temple in tears**
- **She is not a woman drowning in a sea of self pity**
- **Hannah's faith blossoms, under immense trial; she turns to fasting, prayer, and a vow involving a lifelong commitment to serve God**

## **She fasts, prays, and makes her vow**

- **She won't eat that day until her prayers is heard (v18)**
- **She doesn't act irrationally, she is not at her wits end, nor emotionally unstable, or her vow is meaningless**
- **V10 describes a graphic scene of a woman in deep distress, pouring out her soul to her God in his temple**
- **She became a living sacrifice, pleading with God to intervene in her life**
- **She continued in prayer for a long time (v12 mg)**
- **She prayed out of the abundance of her meditations; spiritual men/women ponder ecclesial troubles & take the matter to God in prayer**
- **She prays to Yahweh of armies as did Elkanah (v3)**

## **A vow made in faith, not desperation**

- **She is not a woman who would do anything for a son**
- **She does not desperately need a son, the nation desperately needs a Savior**
- **It is a vow of service and dedication, without making any demands upon God**
- **She came to the temple looking for grace (v18), which only comes by faith, it cannot be demanded**
- **She can't be sure God will accept her vow which she makes in v11 and keeps on praying in v12; she won't find out her prayer is heard until v17**
- **Selfishness does not concern itself with separation from evil, a lifetime of service to God, and then give the child away**

## **A vow made in faith, not desperation**

- **She is not trying to cut a deal with God, this is not a business transaction**
- **Hannah is not in this for what she can get out of it**
- **Her motivation is not selfishness it is love, the highest form of love – giving your only begotten son**
- **It is the nation, not Hannah, that stands to benefit from her vow**
- **She knows exactly what the nation needs, a man exactly like Samuel grows up to be**
- **She perceived her son would need to be a Nazarite to teach the nation about separation from evil and dedication to God**

## **In the midst of her trials she vows to increase her service to God so others may benefit**

- **This is Godly love, a self-sacrificing love, serving others, putting their needs before one's own, even in the midst of one's own suffering**
- **Hannah is praying for her people, not herself**
- **We shouldn't put ourselves in Hannah's place and wrongly assume our response must have been hers**
- **The power of her example is lost if we fail to see beyond our own weaknesses in her situation**
- **God puts us in situations that are too big for us to solve to teach us to do all we can, by faith, trusting He will use our offering as He sees fit**

# Hannah's faithful response to her trials becomes a model for all disciples

- She doesn't let the bitterness of her trials cause her to become bitter towards God
- The blessed events of ch1 never happen if she responds with bitterness to God or anger toward Penninah
- Her trials did not distance her from God, they brought her closer to Him, which is their intent
- Her trials strengthened her faith, she became living proof of the wisdom of Heb 12:11
- Her adversary strengthened Hannah's character

# The lessons for parents from Hannah's vow

- Her vow was twofold:

**Separation from evil and**

**a lifetime of dedication and service to God**

- This is how you raise a godly seed in the midst of a world given over to idolatry and immorality
- Our children must learn to differentiate between clean/unclean, right/wrong; using God's definition
- We need to establish with our children the expectation that they will become lifelong servants of God

# Faithful Elkanah

- Everything revealed about him portrays a man of spiritual uprightness
- He went to Shiloh each year to worship the LORD of hosts
- He taught his family about God and included the children in the worship and sacrifice
- He didn't stay away from Shiloh despite the wickedness there; he didn't let the ungodly ways of others prevent he and his family from worship
- The Law required he ratify Hannah's vow (Num. 30)
- When Hannah decided to remain at home until Samuel was weaned, he spoke of God establishing His Word
- He and Hannah dedicated Samuel together

# Hannah's Prayer – A confirmation of her spirituality

- Though just having dedicated her son, she is not forlorn but praises God for His grand purpose
- She expresses her: hope in the promises, belief in the resurrection, and her vision of the Kingdom
- Her expressions reveal her godly outlook:
  - God is her Rock (v2)
  - He keeps the feet of the saints (v9)
  - the poor & beggar are to be exalted to sit with princes & to inhabit the throne of glory (vv7-8)
  - the adversaries of God to be broken in pieces when God thunders (his judgments) upon the earth (v10)

# Hannah's Prayer – A confirmation of her spirituality (cont.)

- She understood the concepts of which she spoke; the Holy Spirit didn't put words/ideas into her mind that were foreign to her
- Hers is the first reference in scripture to the Messiah being God's King (v10)
- She declares idolatry to be a false doctrine (v2)
- She recognized the corrupt priesthood had to be removed and prayed for the day of its removal

*What Hannah prays for in v5, God promises to do in v36, revealing how in step she was with His Purpose*

# Hannah's Prayer – A confirmation of her spirituality (cont.)

- Hannah's prayer for her people in ch2 is in perfect alignment with her vow for her people in ch1
- She did not seek revenge against her enemy but committed the matter and any vengeance to God
- Her hope lay in the future, the coming Kingdom is the overriding joy in her prayer
- She understood latter day prophecy!
  - God's adversaries (Ps 2) to broken in pieces (Dan 2)
  - Christ/saints roar out of heaven (Rev 19), when God will thunder forth His judgments (Rev 10)
  - God is coming to judge the earth (Ps 98)
  - and will give strength to His King (Ps 2)

**According to Hannah's vow, who  
takes responsibility for the care and  
nurturing of Samuel?**

**It's not Hannah – she was to give him up**

**It's not Eli – he is condemned as an  
unfaithful father on 2 occasions**

**It's God!**

**Samuel was to be His Son**

## Hannah put her faith in Ps 127

*“Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD”*

- Our children do not belong to us, they belong to the LORD
- It is God who opens a mother's womb, it is He who grants conception
- Today's emphasis on scientific knowledge and 'family planning' tend to obscure our recognition that God opens our mothers wombs to give birth to His children
- He has known them by name long before us

*It is critical that we raise them consistent with how God will raise them as their Father, and that we teach them to cherish their heritage*

## Samuel's development is purposely contrasted with the evil of Eli's sons

- Samuel: v11, 18-21 26; Sons: v12-17; 22-25
- The sins of the sons were particularly repugnant to a faithful Israelite
  - taking what rightfully belonged to the offerer
  - taking (by force if necessary) what rightfully belonged to God
- Meanwhile, Samuel ministered before the LORD
- The linen ephod was a garment worn by a priest (v28)
  - Samuel, though a child, must have worn it with integrity for it to be so recorded

*It is never too early for our children to begin to learn what it means to serve God, to stand apart from the evil, and about their life as a future priest in God's house*

# Reflecting on the ways of Providence

- Samuel was in God's plan from the beginning; Hannah's vow did not create the need for him
- God made ready the way for Samuel by preparing Hannah
- God prepared Hannah through her sufferings
- It is out of the tearful and pleading prayers of a faithful daughter that Samuel will be conceived/born
- Unlike Samson, whose birth was announced to his mother, Samuel required a mother who would be specially prepared under trial
- She gave him up at an early age, but her influence over him for good eventually touches every family in Israel

# The sins of the sons and the father

- Scripture emphasizes both the evil the sons were doing and what Eli was failing to do about it
- Their sins were adversely impacting the nation (v24)
- The enormity of their wickedness is stressed, “*Eli heard all that his sons did, unto all of Israel*”
- The worship of Yahweh had become no different than the worship of Baal & Ashterah; Moabites would have felt right at home at Shiloh
- A progression of deterioration is portrayed, the sins of the sons expanded as they were left unrestrained

*Unrestrained sin will only expand; if we turn a blind eye to the sin of our children we guarantee their greater sin*

## Like father, like son

- A hearer not a doer; 3 times 'he heard' the evil report

*“be ye doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves” Jms 1:22*

- He recognized the flagrant sins of his sons left them without an intercessor, i.e. without forgiveness (v25)
- 'judge' (#6419) to judge, intercede, pray; Hannah (1:10,12; 2:1); Samuel (7:5; 8:6; 12:19,23)
- Eli was not condemning his sons but appealing to them to return to the right behavior required of priests; how could they intercede for others if their behavior left them without an intercessor?
- Their refusal to heed his appeal left God no choice but to remove them from their office

*The greatest tragedy: Eli's failure to heed his own words*

## A man of God sent to Eli

- Eli had been given special privileges to serve in God's house, commensurate with his special responsibilities to lead the nation in righteousness. His response? v30
- **Eli's 3 sins:**
  - 1) he grew spiritually complacent (kicked: Deut 32:15)
  - 2) he honored his sons above God
  - 3) they made themselves fat from what belonged to God
- Eli had rebuked his sons for wrong conduct, and declared them unfit to be priests, he is then rebuked for wrong conduct and declared unfit to be priest

*Eli forsook the Word, his special calling, & his responsibilities to indulge himself in life's pleasures. Though he knew the Truth and could teach it to others, he couldn't bring himself to live what he knew*

# Samuel – the faithful priest God raised up

- Faithful not just in conduct, but in his reliability
- Samuel fulfilled all aspects of a priest: offered sacrifices, teaching, mediating
- He consistently did “*according to that which was in God’s heart and mind*”
- He would walk before the LORD’s anointed forever, Hannah’s very words at his dedication (1:22)
- Hannah’s little coat (robe of ephod) was teaching her son about his future work as God’s priest
- ‘I will build him a sure house’ is a *promise* of Samuel’s salvation (how David understood this same phrase spoken to him in 2 Sam 7:25,29, 1 Chr 17:27)
- Hannah’s vow (ch1) become God’s promise in ch2!

## Ch 3 – Samuel's Divine Credentials

- Events of ch3 will reveal both the identity of God's faithful priest and his trustworthiness
- God will put His stamp of approval upon Samuel in a way that convinces the nation of his divine authority
- Samuel will begin a new type & level of service to God
- Eli and Samuel share a loving relationship that fostered Samuel's service to God (3:1)
- God could use a hearer of His Word, who was not a doer, in Samuel's development, but only to a point
- It will not be easy for Samuel to relay a message of condemnation to a man who has been his tutor, mentor and father
- Samuel will learn one's faith must only be put in God

# The spectacular events of the night

- Samuel 'did not yet know the LORD' (v7) because God had not yet dealt directly with him
- God calls Samuel 3 times because He is waiting for Eli to recognize what is about to happen
- Samuel saw a vision that night (v15); likely of the glory of God (cp. Num 12:5-8; Ex 34:5-6; Ps 99:6)
- While Samuel was not of the proper lineage to serve as a priest, the events of ch3 would remove all doubt as to his standing with God

# The message of condemnation for Eli

- Eli is not condemned for the sins of his sons; they bore their own guilt
- Eli is condemned because he knew they made themselves vile, but failed to restrain them
- This sin is so grievous it cannot be purged (#3722 – *kaphar* – covering), there is no forgiveness

*We are not responsible for the sins of others (our children, brothers/sisters) but we are responsible for how we respond to them (2 Jn)*

- There is a limit to God's willingness to forgive, forgiveness is not unconditional, nor is it unlimited
- God forgives us for a purpose and with an expectation – that we will forsake the evil and restrain its influence

# The 'forevers' in 1 Samuel 1-3

## The 'forever' associated with Samuel

**1:22** “he will abide for ever before the LORD”

**2:35** “he shall walk before mine anointed forever”

## The 'forever' associated with Eli and his sons

**2:30** they had been given the opportunity to walk before God forever, but lost it due to their conduct

**2:32** “shall not be an old man in thine house forever”

**3:13** “I will judge his house forever for the iniquity...”

**3:14** “house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering forever”

*Two different outcomes stemming from two different walks, based upon two different expectations: put God 1<sup>st</sup> or put self 1<sup>st</sup>; this principle can be taught/learned in the home, at the earliest ages*

# **A spectacular yet challenging assignment**

- **To see the vision of God's glory and hear the divine voice would have been a thrilling experience**
- **But his first assignment as God's prophet will be to tell the high priest his household is beyond forgiveness**
- **Samuel's ears would have been the first to tingle**
- **God's unspoken message to Samuel, "I am through with Eli and you must be too"**
- **Samuel's apprehension in relaying the message to Eli reveals his compassion**
- **His full recounting of the divine message reveals his faithful obedience to do 'according to God's heart and mind' (2:35)**

# The wonder and mercy of our God

- God had provided Eli with many special responsibilities and privileges related to the temple worship and his role as high priest
- God sent a child into his life, straight from heaven, who wore a linen ephod
- Eli observed the annual visit of Elkanah & Hannah
- Eli watched Samuel grow up under his own roof, as he grew in favor with both the LORD and with men”
- Eli taught Samuel how to minister before the LORD and the lad’s singleness of heart in serving his God
- God sent to Eli a man of God in ch2 and warned him of the coming destruction, but Eli did not repent
- Finally, God uses Samuel himself to appeal to Eli

*In His mercy, God attempted every possible means to save Eli, who comes to represent the rejected*

# He let none of his words fall to the ground

- What Samuel said came to pass and established him as God's prophet (3:19-20)
- As with Hannah's vow, a reciprocating feature –  
*Samuel's part: say & do according to God's heart & mind*  
*God's part: uphold Samuel's word by bringing it to pass*
- This special gift to 'speak' God's Word was tailored to his mission to return the nation back to righteousness
- The national transformation could only be achieved by the people being re-educated in the Word & embracing the need to for their lives to governed by it
- It would have been immensely helpful to Samuel's work to have the people recognize that when he spoke, he spoke God's Word

## Ch 4 – one of Israel's darkest days

- The battle will be fought on the basis of the apostate religion in Shiloh, apart from Samuel's involvement
- In stories regarding the Philistines, insert 'Sin' to see the application to our own day
- At stake is slavery to the enemy (v3,9)
- As a result of the first day's defeat, Israel were a people in trouble, and a people in trouble turn to the religion they practice

## Israel's religion in Ch 4 – an appearance of Truth

- The ark and the priests were important
- They have great enthusiasm and optimism upon the ark's arrival
- They fully expect to be delivered in the 2<sup>nd</sup> battle
- But God was not foremost in their heart/mind, their religion was self-centered religion (v3 – “us”)
- Prayer, faith, humility, confession of sins, separation from idols, need for total dedication to God and the need for a mediator were all missing
- There was no power to change hearts and transform characters
- It was the religion of Eli, Hophni, and Phinehas

*The whole nation had now made itself vile before God and without restraint*

## Israel & the Philistines practice the same religion

- When Israel goes into battle on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day, they don't take God with them, they take an idol
- They have concluded their god is angry with them and needs to be given a more prominent position
- One camp fears Israel's idol will bring defeat, the other camp is certain it will bring victory, but both camps based their belief on superstition!
- Israel's core superstitious belief: "when it comes among us it may save us"
- The Philistines feared exactly what Israel believed – that Yahweh was in the box and would fight for Israel

*The Philistines hadn't latched onto the Truth,  
Israel had latched on to the religion of the Philistines*

## Ch 4 reveals Israel's religion in practical application of daily living

- It puts God first but only as an outward show
- It honors family/self above God
- It shows little to no restraint regarding sin
- It teaches participation in the right rituals can redeem wrong behavior, without the need for a change in character
- It can see God's hand at work to rebuke, but does nothing to change the underlying reasons for His displeasure, and instead presumes upon His grace

*This false religion of Eli, Hophni & Phinehas was permitted to exist right along side the Truth – the wheat and the tares growing together*

# The Progression of Deterioration

- It reached its low point when Hophni & Phinehas dared take the ark into battle
- They hadn't abandoned the ark, just as they hadn't abandoned the sacrifices or temple worship; they used all for their own personal gain
- The Philistines could have easily decimated Israel during the 1<sup>st</sup> battle, but God's plan called for an interim period to permit the arrogance and pride of these two vile men, and their apostate religion, to bring about their end

*Because one man failed to restrain his sons and honored them above God, a new religion had taken hold in Israel; when the ark passed by Eli on its way to battle, he heard (being blind) one last time all the evil his sons were doing, and he restrained them not!*

**Deliverance from the enemy**

# Israel seeks to be delivered

- 20 years after the events of ch4, likely at the death of Samson, *all* Israel laments (#5091 – groan, bewail) after the LORD – the first step towards reconciliation
- Samuel's work to bring God's Word back into the lives of the people causes them to seek deliverance from the enemy on God's terms
- Everything Samuel says and does and asks Israel to do in vv3-12 is related to the single objective of deliverance
- Samuel's instructions will lead to Israel's deliverance from the Philistines; for us the same instructions will lead to our deliverance from Sin

# The path to deliverance

1. **“If ye do return unto the LORD”** – it begins with an acknowledgment of past wrong doing and of a need to return to righteousness
2. **With all your heart** – deliverance is only possible if there is total dedication to it
3. **Put away the idols** – anything that prevents a total dedication to deliverance must be removed
4. **Prepare/direct your heart unto the LORD** – a heart ‘firmly established’ (Vine’s), which involves a personal commitment to God by faith (heart), and which can occur only after all idols are removed
5. **Serve the LORD only** – faithful obedience following the commitment; a heart rightly prepared will be reflected in a life devoted to serve God

# A jealous God

*For they provoked him to anger with their high places,  
and moved him to jealousy with their graven images.  
Ps 78:58 (the time of Samuel)*

- Human jealousy is typically petty and a sign of immaturity
- God's jealousy is a spiritual jealousy
- He knows there is only room for one purpose at the center of our life
- He will not share our heart with anything else because He loves us and knows He cannot deliver us from the enemy if we do not love Him with our whole heart

# Israel's spiritual transformation

*“Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the LORD only.”*

- Samuel didn't force them at any time, deliverance is a thing a person or nation must willingly choose
- He showed them the path to take, then stepped back and let the people decide what they would do, leaving room for them to act by faith
- Their decision had to come from the Word working upon their hearts, creating in them a new heart
- The land was cleansed, as were the hearts of the people; prayers, worship, marriages, raising children, loving your neighbor as yourself, all took on new meaning & purpose

# The nation gathers at Mizpeh

- God 'instructed' Samuel to assemble the nation
- He will put Israel in a very vulnerable situation
- This is a gathering for worship, not war
- A specific sin remains (v6), likely connected with taking the ark into battle
- Drawing of water a sign of contrition (Ps 22:14; Job 3:24; Lam 2:19)
- Samuel 'judged' Israel that day conveying God's acceptance of their appeal for forgiveness (cp. 24:15)

# Our part in our deliverance from the enemy

- It begins with a yearning to be delivered
- It requires we put God first in our life, preparing our heart unto Him
- It requires we put away all idols
- And in place of the idols we serve God alone
- Sins are confessed in humility, with a broken spirit and contrite heart, pleading for forgiveness through the saving work of our Mediator
- We must be actively engaged in the battle
- It is all possible because of the death of the Lamb which offers a way out of death, provided we bring our life into conformity with his

# Ebenezer – The Triumph of God’s Truth

- A new religion had taken hold in Israel – the Truth
- Israel had embraced it and were living it, even faced with severe trial
- It’s what every disciple must come to embrace
- The battle of ch7 is contrasted with that of ch4
  - it was the same battle, against the same enemy, at the same place and involving the same issue
  - it was God’s way of redemption taken into battle in ch7, not the idolatrous paganism of ch4
- Samuel memorialized the victory to ensure every future generation would recognize the difference between the two battles and the only means by which deliverance over the enemy can be achieved

