

# FROM ICHABOD TO EBENEZER

## 1 SAMUEL 4-7

Text:

Introduction:

We have here a story filled with events that that we should take notice of learn some important lessons.

Those involved in this story include Eli, and his two sons, Samuel as well as others. We'll see in this message the importance of a godly home. We also will see the importance of a relationship with God, not just knowing facts about Him. We see the unguent need of revival.

Notice with me the path of Revival under the ministry of Samuel.

### **1. GOD'S GLORY DEPARTED. (CHAP. 4)**

#### A. Great Sin

##### 1. Wickedness in the church

a. Eli raised (2) sons which knew not the Lord.

(1 Samuel 2:12) "Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the LORD."

1. I'm amazed today at the youth that are reared and raised in church that know not the Lord.

- b. Their sin was very great before the Lord.

(1 Samuel 2:17) "Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD: for men abhorred the offering of the LORD."

1. Why? Eli had failed in his responsibility as a father.

(1 Samuel 3:12-14) "In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end. {13} For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. {14} And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever."

(Proverbs 22:6) "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

(Proverbs 19:26) "He that wasteth his father, and chaseth away his mother, is a son that causeth shame, and bringeth reproach."

## 2. Worldliness in the battle

a. Went to battle without God's help.

b. Began to quarrel with God.

(Proverbs 19:3) "The foolishness of man perverteth his way: and his heart fretteth against the LORD."

c. Resorted to ritual and superstition instead of repenting and reform.

(1 Samuel 4:3-4) "And when the people were come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, Wherefore hath the LORD smitten us to day before the Philistines? Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of Shiloh unto us, that, when it cometh among us, it may save us out of the hand of our enemies. {4} So the people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring from thence the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth between the cherubims: and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God."

God had become an object to them.

1. Were concerned with the external observance instead of an internal rightness.

(2 Timothy 3:5) "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."

## B. Great Slaughter

1. Lost 4000 men the first time.
2. Lost 30,000 footmen the second time.

(Numbers 32:23) "But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out."

(Proverbs 28:13) "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."

## C. Great Sorrow

### 1. Eli

- Eli was 98 yrs old sitting by the wayside when the messenger arrived with the sad news of defeat.

- Desiring to know what the uproar was about the messenger informs Eli of the news.

(1 Samuel 4:17) "And the messenger answered and said, Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people, and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God is taken."

Notice the order of importance in which the messenger gives the news.

1. Israel is fled
2. Many have been slaughtered
3. Eli's two sons are dead
4. The ark has been taken

Notice Eli

1. His heart trembled for the ark. Why?
  - a. Possibly he knew the spiritual condition of the nation.
  - b. Possible he knew the ark was not where it belonged.

c. Possibly he knew he should have never let it be taken to the field.

2. Why was he sitting instead of praying?

Notice Eli's daughter in law

1. Died while giving birth to Ichabod

a. May I say that there has been many Christians and churches die while giving birth to Ichabod.

b. May I say that there have been many homes and families destroyed in giving birth to Ichabod.

c. May I say that there has been many teenagers destroyed giving birth to Ichabod.

d. May I say that there have been many empires and nations destroyed in giving birth to Ichabod.

## **2. GOD'S NAME IS DEFENDED**

A. Before the Heathen (5:1-5)

(1 Samuel 5:1-5) "And the Philistines took the ark of God, and brought it from Ebenezer unto Ashdod. {2} When the Philistines took the ark of God, they brought it into the house of Dagon, and set it by Dagon. {3} And when they of Ashdod arose early on the morrow, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the earth before the ark of the LORD. And they took Dagon, and set him in his place again. {4} And when they arose early on the morrow morning, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of the LORD; and the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands were cut off upon the threshold; only the stump of Dagon was left to him. {5} Therefore neither the priests of Dagon, nor any that come into Dagon's house, tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod unto this day."

1. God will not reveal His power on behalf of His sinning people, but He will not allow His glory to be mocked or His name to be defied.

## B. Before Israel

(1 Samuel 6:19) "And he smote the men of Bethshemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the LORD, even he smote of the people fifty thousand and threescore and ten men: and the people lamented,

because the LORD had smitten many of the people with a great slaughter."

### **3. GOD'S PEOPLE DELIVERED**

A. People lamented after the Lord.

(1 Samuel 7:2) "And it came to pass, while the ark abode in Kirjathjearim, that the time was long; for it was twenty years: and all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD."

B. People repented, returned, and reformed.

1. Did away with their idols and served the Lord only.

(1 Samuel 7:4) "Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the LORD only."

2. Poured out water - a symbol of the nation's repentance - their hearts poured out in sorrow for their sins

(1 Samuel 7:6) "And they gathered together to Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured it out before the LORD, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against the LORD. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh."



3. Offered a burnt offering - to show their complete dedication to God.

(1 Samuel 7:7-9) "And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpeh, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Philistines. {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. {9} And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a burnt offering wholly unto the LORD: and Samuel cried unto the LORD for Israel; and the LORD heard him."

4. God brought the victory

(1 Samuel 7:10-14) And as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel: but the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel. {11} And the men of Israel went out of Mizpeh, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them, until they came under Bethcar. {12} Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath the LORD helped us. {13} So the Philistines were subdued, and they came no more into the coast of Israel: and the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the

days of Samuel. {14} And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron even unto Gath; and the coasts thereof did Israel deliver out of the hands of the Philistines. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites."

Close:

I believe the journey from Ichabod to Ebenzer, from the absence of God's presence to the Help of His hand, can happen today.