

**Chuck Smith:**

This book presents the history, the personal history of Samuel who was the last of the Judges. It ushers in the beginning of the period of the kings in the children of Israel, or among the children of Israel.

There's a certain man of Ramathaimzophim, of mount Ephraim, and his name was Elkanah. He had two wives; one was Hannah, the other Peninnah: Peninnah had children, Hannah had no children. This man went out of the city yearly to worship and to sacrifice unto the Lord of hosts in Shiloh. [Which at that time was the religious center of the nation.] And the two sons of Eli, [Who was the high priest at that time] Hophni and Phinehas, the priests of the Lord, were there. And it came when the time was that Elkanah offered, he gave to Peninnah, and her children portions: But unto Hannah he gave a goodly [or an extra] portion; because he loved Hannah very much: but God had shut up her womb [and that she was barren] (1Sa 1:1-5).

So the scene is set the man living in polygamy, two wives. One he loved more than the other. One had many children, but the one he really loved could not have any children.

And so her adversary (1Sa 1:6),

That is Hannah's adversary, or the other wife. So there was friction in the house between the two wives as they bide for the attention and the love of the one man. As I said this morning, any man's a fool who thinks that he can satisfy all of the needs of two women. You're bound to have problems. So they did.

The inner strife within the house as

Peninnah provoked Hannah, made her fret, because that she was barren (1Sa 1:6).

Really pressed the issue, really taunted her over her inability to have children. So Elkanah was heading for Shiloh, vacation time, feast time. Time of celebration, it's to be a time of merriment and rejoicing as you go up to the house of God to worship. It's interesting to me that God wants the rejoicing to, or the worship of Him to be a rejoicing, happy experience. They called them the "feasts" and they were just feasts. People would go up and just have a great feast. It was a holiday, a time in which they worshiped God and gathered before Him, a time of rejoicing and happiness. So Elkanah was heading up for this time and taking his wife Hannah with him. She was weeping all the time and wouldn't eat.

So Elkanah said to her, Why do you weep? why aren't you eating? why is your heart so grieved? am I not better to you than ten sons? ["Can't you be happy with me?"] So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk. And Eli the priest sat upon a seat by a post of the temple of the Lord. And she was in bitterness of soul, and she prayed unto the Lord, and she wept sore. And during this period she vowed a vow unto the Lord, and she said, Lord if you will indeed look upon the affliction of your handmaid, and remember me, and not forget me, but if you will give unto me a man child, ["Give me a boy"] I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head (1Sa 1:8-11).

"Lord if you'll just give me a son, I'll give him back to You, but I want a son, I'll give him back to You all the days of his life."

Now there are many times when we pray and we wonder why our prayers are not answered immediately. There are some times in which God delays the answer to our prayers. Here's the case now Hannah no doubt had been praying about a son for a long time. Cursed with barrenness she had no doubt brought it before the Lord many times in prayer. "Oh God give me a son. Lord I want a son. God why haven't You given me a son?" Yet there seemingly was no answer to her prayer. God delayed the answer.

Now with Hannah there was a reason why God delayed the answer, and with us. If God delays the answer of our prayers there's a reason for His delay. Often times, with Hannah, the reason being that God is seeking to bring us around to His purposes. The Bible says, "The eyes of the Lord go to and fro throughout the entire earth to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose hearts are completely towards Him" (2 Chronicles 16:9). So God was waiting, bringing Hannah around to where her heart was completely towards God, and the things of God, and that which God wanted.

God was needing a man to lead Israel during these desperate days of transition. He needed a man that He could speak to, and that would speak to the people for Him. For during this period of their history, they had not really

heard from God. It says, "The word of the Lord was precious", it means it was scarce. God wasn't speaking to men. There were no men whose ears were really open to God.

So Hannah finally out of the desperation of her soul said, "Lord, if You will just give to me a son, I will give him back to You all the days of his life." This is what God was desiring, this is what God was looking for, and so when God brought her around to this place of that commitment to God. "Lord, if You'll just give me a son, I'll give him back to You." Then the Lord answered her prayer.

When God now gives, He many times delays giving, in order that He might give more, or in order that what is given is used for His purposes. I feel that many times when we are praying, the Bible says, "We don't always know how to pray as we ought" (Romans 8:26), and this is very true. We oftentimes pray for things that in our initial prayer, we're thinking about ourselves. James says, "You haven't received naught because you asked amiss that you might consume it upon your own lusts" (James 4:3). Much of our prayer is that of personal kind of requests to God, as we almost look at God as a Santa Claus kind of "I want this. I want that. I want this." We're thinking not really of God, but we are thinking of ourselves. What I want, rather than what does God want.

Now the Bible says, "If we ask anything according to His will, He hears us, and if He hears us, then we have received the petitions that we have asked of Him." Much of what we ask is not really according to God's will, it's according to my own desires. I'm thinking of myself, how I can use it for me.

Hannah no doubt was for a long time just thinking, "Lord, I want a son so that other wife will shut her mouth", tired of this business of being chided all the time. "Lord, I want a son that I can nurse. I want a son that I can take care of." She was thinking of herself. Now through the processes of God's working in her life, she was a godly woman, it is expressed as we get into the next chapter and we read of her rejoicing when God answered her prayer. We see that in the praise of Hannah, there are earmarks of a depth of spirituality. Now she's brought into harmony with the purposes of God. "God just give me a son, and I will give him back to You all the days of his life."

Now it came to pass, as she was continuing to pray before the Lord, that Eli the priest sitting there on the post was watching her. [He saw the grimaces on her face, and] he saw her mouth moving [and he listened], but he couldn't hear any words: and so he just concluded that she was drunk. And he said unto her, Hey woman why are you so drunk? put away your wine. And she answered, No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have poured out my soul before the Lord (1Sa 1:12-15).

Denied the accusations of the priest and just said, "I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit. I poured out my soul to the Lord."

Don't count your handmaid for a daughter of Belial: for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken unto the Lord. Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that you have asked of him. And she said, Let your handmaid find grace in thy sight. So the woman went her way, did eat, her countenance was no more sad (1Sa 1:16-18).

She believed the word of the Lord. Change of attitude. She didn't go around looking sad anymore. She didn't go around not eating. Her husband probably wondered the change in her whole attitude. But it was faith, believing the word of God through the priest. Believing that God was now gonna give her a son. It would be actually contrary to fact for her to go on with sadness and grieving, not eating. God has promised. He's going to answer.

Herein is of course one of the marks of faith, acting as though you have it, before you actually have it. It's an attitude. If God has promised to give it to me, why should I go around just moping, and sad, and sorrowful? Why should I go around worried and concerned if God has promised to give it to me? If I really believe the promises of God, I'm gonna start rejoicing. I'm gonna start, actually, my attitude, and my actions are gonna be in harmony with what I actually believe. So because she believed the promise of God, her countenance would change.

She started eating.

And so they rose up in the morning early, and after worship they headed back to their house at Ramah: [Which is just north of Jerusalem, the modern city of Ram Allah.] and Hannah became pregnant; the Lord remembered her. Therefore it came to pass, when the time was come after Hannah had conceived, that she bare a son, and called his name Samuel, [Which means "asked of God".] Because I asked him of the Lord. [So Samuel means "asked of God".] And the man Elkanah, and all of his house, went up to offer to the Lord yearly the sacrifice,

and to make his vow. But Hannah did not go up; for she said to her husband, I will not go up until I have weaned the child, and then I will take him to the house of God that he may abide there. So Elkanah her husband said unto her, Do what seems good; wait until you've weaned him; only the Lord establish his word. So the woman abode, and gave, and nursed her son [actually] until she had weaned him. And after Samuel had been weaned, she took him up with her, with three bullocks, a bushel of flour, a bottle of wine, and brought him to the house of the Lord in Shiloh: and the child was young. And they slew a bullock, and brought the child to Eli. And she said, Oh my lord, as thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman that was here, [I'm the woman if you'll remember that was lying there, and you thought I was drunk.] and I told you I was asking God for a son. And this is the son for whom I prayed (1Sa 1:19-27).

"Here he is, here's the proof, here's my little boy."

There have been many occasions here at Calvary Chapel where young couples have come up and have expressed their desire to have a child. Maybe they've been married four, or five, six years, some of them married ten, twelve years, and they come up and they express their desire for a child. "We've been married this long, and we've never been able to have a child. Oh, we're thinking about adopting, but we'd love to have a child." We have laid hands on them, and prayed for them, and a year or two later, they come up and say, "This is the baby that we prayed for. This is the child." We have these same kinds of experiences. A lot of little miracle babies around here. Where God has answered the prayer and has blessed the home with children.

She was excited, she said, "Oh my lord, I'm the woman. I'm the one that was here. It was for this child that I prayed. The Lord has given me my petition that I've asked of Him."

Therefore I am giving him back to the Lord; as long as he lives he shall be the Lord's. And he worshiped the Lord there (1Sa 1:28).

Now this is where we get the dedication of babies on Sunday morning. It is more or less following this same pattern of Hannah. We've asked God to bless, to give us children, recognizing that these children are gifts from God, we bring them back to God and say "God, you have given us this child, but we want to give this child to You, for Your purposes that the child might serve You all the days of their life. That Your purposes and Your will might be accomplished within the child." So the dedication of our babies unto the Lord.

Now I do not know of any scriptural basis for baptizing babies. I do not know of a single scriptural proof for the baptism of babies. I really believe that baptism is more the act of a conscious adult. There are two scriptures really that deal with baptism. The one is, "Repent and be baptized". Now I have yet to meet one of these little babies that has repented. In Mark's gospel it says, "He that believeth and is baptized," and they really don't have enough intelligence yet to believe.

Now it doesn't mean that the child would be lost if it dies. I believe that a child within a Christian home is saved if it dies before an age of accountability. I believe that I Corinthians, the second chapter teaches this. That, "The believing wife, or husband, either of them being a believer, the child is covered by the believing parents, else would your children be unclean. But now," Paul said, "they are holy." So the faith of a believing parent covers for that child. You say, "But what about an unbelieving parent?" That I don't know, the Bible is silent. I must be silent.

You say, "But would it be fair," well, God will do whatever's fair. But the Bible doesn't say specifically, I can't say specifically. I believe that God will be fair. I'm sure that He'll be fair. I know He'll be fair and I rest my case there in the righteousness and the fairness of God. God will be absolutely fair in all His judgments. There's not one person gonna get a bad deal before the judgment bar of God. There's not one person's gonna be a walk away, gonna be able to walk away and say, "That isn't fair". God will deal justly with every case and every extenuation in each case. The justice of God is something that I am absolutely convinced of. The absolute righteousness of the judgments of God.

The justice of man is something I have little belief in. I cry with the crowd, "There ain't no justice," but that's only speaking from a human standpoint. But from the divine standpoint the absolute righteousness of the judgment of God is something that I have no question about whatsoever. Thus, I'm not really worried about those people that have never heard of Jesus Christ or the babies who die, or whatever. I know that God is gonna be absolutely righteous and fair in His judgments. So I just rest it there. But babies can be scripturally, can be dedicated or presented to God.

Now in the New Testament when Jesus was born, they came and offered the sacrifices for the firstborn child

and they presented Him unto the Lord. The priests lifted Him up in his hands and blessed Him, and said, "Now Lord let thy servant die in peace for You've allowed me to see Your salvation." But again the idea of, "Here's my child Lord. I present it to You that You might use this life for whatever purposes, that Your influences might come upon this child and lead and guide him as he grows, and develops. And Lord, I give him back to You all the days of his life." I think that it's a marvelous gesture on the part of a parent. We dedicated all of our children to the Lord, actually between us dedicated them to the Lord before they were ever born.

Now it is true that when they're old enough they've got to make their own commitments, and their own decisions. The fact that we dedicated them to the Lord doesn't follow that they are going to consent to that dedication when they get old enough to do what they want. But hopefully by that time we will have given enough spiritual input and all that when they are older, they will not depart from that faith that they have gained while growing up under our tutorage. So it is more than just dedicating; there is a responsibility as parents to train up the child, or to catechize the child in the ways of the Lord. To teach them, to instruct them in the ways of the Lord, so that as they grow older these will be things that have been planted in their hearts and minds deeply, become a very part of their very thinking processes.

## Chapter 2

Now the prayer of Hannah does express a depth of spirituality.

And Hannah prayed, and said, My heart rejoiceth in the Lord (1Sa 2:1),

Evidently Mary was familiar with this prayer of Hannah because actually the rejoicing of Mary when she came to her cousin Elisabeth, when she was expecting Jesus, is much the same pattern as this of Hannah. Mary said, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit doth rejoice for He has regarded the low estate of His handmaid." And she goes on and you might want to compare the third chapter, or the second chapter of Luke there. The rejoicing of Mary called the Magnificat with this praising of Hannah. Hannah prayed and said, "My heart rejoices in the Lord."

my horn is exalted in the Lord: my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; because I rejoice in thy salvation. There is none holy as the Lord: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God. Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogancy come out of your mouth: for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed (1Sa 2:1-3).

Heavy statement. "By God actions are weighed." It isn't enough to do the right thing. You can do the right thing with the wrong attitude and it counts for nothing, because God weighs your actions. That is, what motivates your actions? Jesus said, "Take heed to yourself that you do not your righteousness before men, to be seen of men, for I say unto you, Ye have your reward". We are told that one day the secrets of the hearts are gonna be judged or weighed. God knows why you have done a certain thing.

Now there are people who pray, but they only pray in order to be seen of men, and thus their prayers really don't count as far as God is concerned. They have their reward. There are some people who give with such an ostentatious way so that their name will be on a placard or something. Well, I won't say it, but so that they might have their name up here. You know, "Up here that's my pew that I bought" or "my chair" or whatever. They give in order to advertise their name.

Now when you get to heaven and you come before the Lord and the Lord goes through the books you say, "Wait a minute, Lord, You're forgetting something. My name was on that stained glass window. We paid a lot of money for that stained glass window, Lord. I don't see it on Your records here."

He'll say, "Nope, it isn't on the records here."

"Why not Lord, I-man that cost me a pretty penny."

He'll say, "You had your reward. Everybody that passed by that window saw your name. They said, Oh, isn't that marvelous he gave a stained glass window to the church." Now some people give in order to be seen of men. Your motive is wrong.

God weighs the actions. "Why did I do it?" is really more important than what I do. Your attitude is far more important than your actions. So acknowledging that by Him are all of our actions weighed.

The bows of the mighty men are broken, and they that stumbled are girded with strength. They that were full have hired themselves out for bread; and they that were hungry ceased: so that the barren hath born seven; and she that hath many children is waxed feeble. [Now I do detect in Hannah's prayer here a little bit of gloating over that woman that troubled her for so long.] The Lord killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. The Lord maketh the poor, and he maketh the rich: he bringeth low, and he fiftieth up. He roister up the poor out of the dust, he lifts the beggar from the dunghill, and sets him among princes, to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and he hath set the world upon them (1Sa 2:4-8).

Now it is foolish to take this picturesque speech of Hannah and say that the Bible teaches the ancient theory that the earth was set upon pillars. Because she uses this figure of speech, and speaks of the pillars of the earth, and the world set upon them. It's only picturesque figures of speech and it is not a kind of a divine revelation at all.

He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail (1Sa 2:9).

Here again is I think a very important scripture, "He will keep the feet of His saints." In the Psalms a lot is said about keeping the feet of His saints. The seventy-first Psalm, "My feet almost slipped, I almost had it." The walking in slippery places, "Keeping the feet of His saints," keeping me from falling, actually.

"For by strength shall no man prevail." What a valuable truth. "For by strength" that is by a man's own strength, you will never prevail. I am strongest when I am aware of my weakness. I am at my weakest point when I think I am strong. When I think, "I've got this wired, Lord, I don't need any help from You. I'm able to make it just by myself. You don't need to hold my hand, Lord. Just let me do it on my own. There's no problems here." That's when I'm at my most vulnerable position. When I'm standing there and saying, "Lord I don't think I can, Lord I know I can't make it. Lord help me I know that I'm not gonna be able to make it through this one. I need Your help." That's when I'm at my strongest position. "For by strength shall no man prevail." By your own strength you'll never know real victory. It is only as we learn to rely and trust in the strength of the Lord that we are really strong.

Now we go into a little bit of history of Eli's sons, and they were real rats. Eli was the high priest and his sons were greedy. They were priests representing God, but they were bad representatives.

Now it was a custom in those days when you would offer your sacrifice to the Lord you would be-it was actually-they were feasts. You would sacrifice the lamb, they would cut it up, they'd burn the fat as a burnt offering; the smoke would ascend up to God. Then they would oftentimes then boil the meat and then you'd eat it. You'd sit down and more or less eat it with God. But as the meat was being boiled, the priests would come along and they had little hooks, little forks with three hooks, and they'd reach in, and pull out and whatever they got out was theirs. That became the priests' pay almost. It was sort of the salary for the priests. They'd just put their forks in and pull out from the food that was cooking, and whatever came out they had.

But Eli's sons would come to them when they were just cutting up, butchering the meat. They'd say, "We don't want boiled meat, we want to roast ours. We want to take ours now."

The people would say, "Well, be sure and take the fat and offer it to the Lord."

They said, "Hey don't give us a bad time. You don't want to give it to us now? We'll take it by force." So they were bullying the people. The effect of it was that men began to abhor the offering of the Lord.

Down in verse seventeen,

Thou the sin of the young men were great: because it caused people to begin to resent their offerings to the Lord (1Sa 2:17).

What a horrible sin that actually is, where you turn people off from God because of your attitude, because of greed and your own greed, you cause people to blaspheme. I really don't know who got me started on these evangelist's lists. But these evangelists sell their lists to each other. So you get on one, and pretty soon you get on all, because they'll sell their lists to each other. They'll do anything for a buck. So it seems that I'm getting more and more letters.



"Dear brother, a mutual friend told me about you, and I felt led of the Lord to write, and to share with you my needs. Now I'm enclosing a page of the Bible because the word of God is so powerful. If you'll just write your request on this page, and wrap it up, and send it back to me, enclose your offering in the page also. I'll take your request before the Lord, and I'll pray for you because the Lord tells me there's something wrong. You've got a problem in your life, just something that's not quite right. What is it, brother? Share it with me."

The other day a telegram came, "Urgent: Please send ten dollars immediately, I'll explain everything later."

"I've built a cross. Send me the names of four people that you want nailed to that cross."

"And enclose an offering of fifteen to twenty dollars." Can you believe it? It's unreal.

Now these men, their sin is really terrible. It's awful because they cause people to blaspheme God. They are deceivers. They prey upon people who have become more or less senile, living on pensions. They're nothing but rip-off artists. Their sin is as the sins of the sons of Eli, who caused people to abhor the sacrifice and the worship of God.

Now Samuel began to do little errands around the temple, and his mother made him a little linen robe like the priests. Though he was just a little tyke, yet he began to wear the robes of the priests, and began to do the errands around there. I imagine he was just a cute little guy there to see. There in his little linen robe and going around and doing some of the little duties around there. I imagine it was really quite a sight.

And every year his mother would make a little coat for him, and when she would come up each year to sacrifice she would bring him a new coat, [A little bit bigger naturally than the year before.] and visit with him there. So Eli the priest blessed Elkanah his father [That is Samuel's father] with his wife, and said, The Lord give thee seed of this woman for the loan which is lent to the Lord. And they went to their own home. And then God blessed Hannah, and she conceived, and had three other sons, and two daughters. And the child Samuel grew before the Lord. Now Eli was an old man, and he heard the things that his sons did; how that actually they were lying with the women right there at the gate of the temple (1Sa 2:19-22).

They were just perverse, though they were supposedly representing God as the priests. Yet they were immoral; they were crooked, they were real rats.

And so their dad said, Why do you do such things? I hear of your evil dealings from all of these people. My sons; it's not a good report that I hear: you make the Lord's people to transgress. If one man sins against another, the judge shall judge him: but if a man sins against the Lord, who's gonna pray for him? Notwithstanding they did not hearken unto the voice of their father, because the Lord would slay them (1Sa 2:23-25).

In other words, they had gone so far the Lord was wanting to wipe them out. Therefore they just didn't listen to their dad.

But the child Samuel grew on, and was in favour both with the Lord, and also with men. Now there came a man of God to Eli, and prophesied to him how that God had promised to place the high priesthood into the house of Aaron for ever (1Sa 2:26-28).

However because of Eli and his sons who would not honor the Lord, God said,

For them that honor me, I will honor; but them that despise me shall be lightly esteemed. Behold, the days come, that I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father's house, and there shall not be an old man in your house. And you will see an enemy in my habitation, in all the wealth which God shall give Israel: there shall not be an old man in your house for ever (1Sa 2:30-32).

And then the prophecy of verse thirty-five,

Thou shalt raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in mine heart and in my mind: and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever (1Sa 2:35).

So the prophecy there of the new priesthood, Jesus Christ, the High Priest after the order of Melchizedek.

Chapter 3

### Chapter three,

The child Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli. And the word of the Lord was precious [or scarce] in those days; there was no open vision. [God just wasn't speaking to man.] And it came to pass, when Eli would lie down in bed at night,... Samuel went into his bedroom; And Samuel heard a voice calling him, and he said, Here am I. And he ran into Eli, and he said, Did you call me? And Eli said, No, I didn't call you; go back to bed. Samuel went back to bed again. And he heard the voice, Samuel, Samuel. And he went running in, he said, Here I am what do you want? He said, I didn't call you go back to bed, kid. Samuel went back to bed again and again he heard the voice saying, Samuel, Samuel, he went running in and said, Surely you called me what do you want? [The old man began to get the picture at this point and he figured that, "Hey maybe God is speaking to this boy."] So he said, Go back to bed, if you hear your name being called again, say, Speak, my Lord; for your servant heareth. So Samuel went back to bed. And he heard the voice, Samuel, Samuel. And he said, Speak my Lord; for thy servant heareth. And the Lord said to Samuel, I'm gonna do a work in Israel, [that when the people see it,] or hear it their ears are going to tingle. In that day I'm gonna perform against Eli all of the things which I have spoken concerning his house: and when I begin, I'm gonna finish. For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knows; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not (1Sa 2:1-13).

Here is something to me that is very interesting, something that we had better take note of. It was his refusal to discipline his sons that brought the judgment of God upon his house. His refusal to discipline them in their actions. Fathers, you have a responsibility in the disciplining of your children. Don't shirk that responsibility. Eli did not discipline his sons. He allowed them to go on with these actions, and thus God promised that He was gonna judge the house.

And therefore I have sworn to the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifices nor offerings for ever. [They can't offer any sacrifice to cleanse them.] Samuel lay until the morning, and he opened the doors of the house of the Lord. But he was afraid to tell Eli the vision. And Eli called Samuel, and he said, Samuel, my son. And he answered, Here am I. And he said, What is the thing that the Lord said unto you? I pray that you will not hide it from me: for God do so to thee, and more also, if you hide any thing from all of the things which God said. [Boy, that isn't fair, you know lay something like that on you, "Tell me and God do the same to you and more also if you don't tell me every thing that God said."] So Samuel told him every thing, did not hide any thing from him. And he said, It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good (1Sa 2:14-18).

Now this is quite an attitude for the old man, a submission unto the judgment of God. "It is the Lord: let Him do what seems right." A commitment of himself to that judgment, that promised judgment of God.

So Samuel grew, the Lord was with him. And all of Israel from Dan to Beersheba realized that Samuel was established to be the prophet of the Lord. And the Lord appeared again in Shiloh: and the Lord revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the Lord (1Sa 2:19-21).

### Chapter 4

Now in chapter four we find the Philistines had come against the Israelites and they met them in battle and defeated them. Four thousand of the men of Israel were slain. So the Philistines were getting ready to attack again, and the people said, "Let us bring the Ark of the Covenant into the camp in order that the Philistines cannot defeat us."

Now they were beginning to look at the Ark of the Covenant as sort of an amulet, a good luck piece in a kind of a thing. "Well if the Ark of the Covenant is here, it will bring us good luck over the Philistines." Making it almost a fetish kind of a thing, bringing it into the camp. It was wrong, but they did it anyhow.

When the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, came with the ark of the covenant, all of the men began to shout and, [a big cheer went up, and a lot of shouting]. And the Philistines said, What's going on over there? And so when they found out that they had brought the ark of the covenant, the Philistines said, Oh that's not fair it never happened in battle that the people brought their gods into battle with them. These are the Gods that wiped out the Egyptians and the Amorites and all, what chance do we have (1Sa 4:4-8).

The Philistines, it had a reverse effect actually, they said, "Men fight with everything you got or else you're gonna be their slaves. Even as they have been our slaves." It so inspired the Philistines that they attacked. They defeated the men of Israel, and they took the Ark of the Covenant back to their own city. They captured the Ark

of the Covenant and took it back to their Philistine cities.

So the two sons of Eli were slain in that battle. A young man came running to tell the news, and Eli was sitting in a chair by the road, and the young man came. And Eli said, What's the meaning of all this noise, the tumult? [Now Eli at this point was ninety-eight years old, his eyes were dim, he could barely see.] and this young fellow said, I came out of the camp of the army, and he said, Israel is fled before the Philistines, and your two sons were killed, and the Ark of the Covenant was taken. When the old man heard that the Ark of the Covenant was taken, he fell over backwards, broke his neck [Because he was a very heavy man.] and he died: Now his daughter in law, the wife of Phinehas his son, at that time was expecting a child: when she heard that her husband had died, she went into labor pains. The women were standing around her to help her, and they said, Fear not for you have had a son. But she answered not, neither did she regard it. But she named the child Ichabod, saying, The glory is departed from Israel: because the ark of God had been taken by their enemies (1Sa 4:11-22).

Ichabod means "no glory", or "the glory is departed." So this child of course is stuck with this name Ichabod. She died in the birth of the child.

## Chapter 5

Now the Philistines took this ark of the covenant, and they brought it to one of their cities on the coast the city of Ashdod. And they put the ark of the covenant in their temple of their god Dagon, next to the idol of Dagon. And in the morning, when they came in to worship their god Dagon, they found that the idol was fallen on its face on the floor. So they set him up on the pedestal again. And the next morning when they came in, their god Dagon was lying on the floor but both of his hands had been snapped off, and his neck, his head is rolled out and away from him. So they, and then all of the many men in Ashdod began to break out with boils all over them. [So they began to relate these things to the Ark of the Covenant being with them.] And so they carried the ark of the covenant to another Philistine city, the city of Gath. They said, Here you fellows keep this thing. And then the men of Gath began to break out in boils all over them and so they gathered together with the lords of the Philistines and said, What shall we do with this thing? And they said, Well let's take it to Ekron. And the men of Ekron said, Oh no, you're not bringing that thing here. We don't want it (1Sa 5:1-11).

So here they were plagued with this thing, they didn't know exactly what to do with it.

## Chapter 6

So they called some of their diviners and seers and all, and they said, "What shall we do with this thing? So they said, Well the thing is, send it back to the people of Israel. But don't send it back without an offering. So make some golden things like boils, because of the boils that broke out, and make little mice, golden mice also and put it with the ark of the covenant. And take two cows, and take a new cart, and put it on the cart. And let these two cows take the young away from them. And let these two cows go, and let them take it back to the children of Israel. Now if the cows make a direct line for the camp of Israel, then you know that it was the Lord in all this thing. But if the cows just don't seem to know where to go, and start to wander in the fields, or turn back for their calves, then you'll know that it was just an accident, [some kind of a weird coincidence that it happened]. And so they made this cart, and they got these two cows, and they took them from their calves, and harnessed them to this cart with the little golden emerods, or boils, and the little golden mice as an offering unto the Lord. And they set them loose and the cows made a direct line for the camp of Israel, just sort of mooing all the way. And so the lords of the Philistines followed to see the thing [and of course] as the ark came and approached the camp of Israel again the people shouted for joy there around Bethshemesh, where the ark was returning... So when the lords of the Philistines saw it, [they went back and they said, Boy it was, they went right there. And they recognized that it was the hand of the Lord that was against them.] Now the men of Bethshemesh were curious and they began to look into the ark (1Sa 6:1-19).

Now this is something that was strictly forbidden under the law of God to look into the ark of God. Only the priests were allowed to see the ark of God, and before they would remove it out of the Holy of Holies they would cover it with these blankets. But these men, out of curiosity began to peer at it, and actually seventy of them died who curiously were looking at the ark of God. Now there is a statement here which is a difficult translation in verse nineteen.

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 (1Sa 6:19):



Actually it should read, "Of the city, or of the people of fifty thousand, seventy were slain, seventy men were slain." In other words, of that population of the area, approximately fifty thousand people, seventy of them were slain.

and the people lamented, because the Lord had smitten the people with this great slaughter. And the men of Bethshemesh said, Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God? and to whom shall he go up from us (1Sa 6:19-20)?

In other words, "We gotta get rid of this thing, who of us can stand before the holiness of God?" Interesting question and one that we should be interested in. We should recognize first of all the holiness of God. That absolute holiness of God is actually deadly for sinful man to approach. We, none of us dare try to stand before a holy God in our own righteousness. We remember on the mount when God gave the law, He said, "Now put a fence around. Don't let anybody approach lest they be slain by the presence of God."

Access to God in the Old Testament was not a simple thing. The high priest could only approach once a year, and that after many sacrifices. When he approached God he had bells on the borders of his garments, a rope tied around his ankle. As he was in the Holy of Holies, they would stand without listening for the bells. If the bells would stop ringing they knew that there was some flaw in the priest or in the offering, and they'd been smitten dead before the holiness of God. They'd pull him out with a rope. They wouldn't dare go in to fetch him. The holiness of God was something that they highly respected in those days. Tragically we don't really respect the holiness of God that much today.

In the early church when there was such great purity, when Ananias and Sapphira decided that they were going to pull off their little scam and pretend that they were giving everything to God, when in reality they were holding back from God, because of the purity of the early church, there was such purity that this sin could not abide. When Ananias laid it down, Peter says, "That's what you sold it for?"

He said, "Yep."

He said, "Why have you decided to lie against God?" And, Ananias fell over dead. The holiness of God. He dared to come into the purity of the assembly with this scam. His wife being a party to the whole thing, not knowing what happened to her husband, came in a little later, put down her half, and he said, "Did you sell the property for that much?"

"Yep."

He said, "Look, you and your husband have agreed together to lie against the Holy Spirit. You've not lied to man; you've lied to God. Behold, the feet of those who carried your husband out, are gonna carry you out." She fell over dead.

Now some people say, "Oh God, return purity to your church." Well you better be careful how you pray. You might not last if God will return such purity to the church. That holiness of God, something that they highly respected, especially when they saw these guys dropping over dead who dared to presume to look at the ark of God, and so they said, "Who amongst us can dwell amongst this holy God? Who of us can stand amongst this holy God?" You know, "Where are we gonna send this thing? Let's get rid of it."

## Chapter 7

And so the men of Kirjathjearim came, and they took the ark of the Lord; and they brought it to the house of Abinadab on the hill, and sanctified Eleazar the son to keep the ark of the Lord. And it came to pass, while the ark was there at Kirjathjearim, it was there for a long time; for twenty years: and all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord. And Samuel spake to all the house of Israel, saying, If you do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth [Now Ashtaroth was the goddess of sexual love, and the fertility goddess, and they were, the children of Israel worshiping Ashtaroth, and he said, "Put away the gods and Ashtaroth,"] from among you, and prepare your hearts to the Lord, serve him only: and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines. So the children of Israel put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and they served the Lord only. And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpeh, and I will pray for you unto the Lord. And so they gathered together at Mizpeh, and they drew water, and poured it out before the Lord, and he fasted on that day, and said, We have sinned against the Lord. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh. Now when the Philistines heard that they had gathered to Mizpeh, they set up the army against them. And the children of Israel were afraid of the Philistines. And they 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. And Samuel took a suckling lamb, and offered it as a burnt offering wholly unto the Lord: and Samuel cried unto the Lord for Israel; and the Lord heard him. [Now Samuel beginning to exercise his ministry of intercessory prayer.] 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 on the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel. And the men of Israel went out of Mizpeh, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them, until they came to Bethcar. And then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called it Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us (1Sa 7:1-12).

The Ebenezer stone. The word means "the stone of help". Now we sing the song, "Come the fount of every blessing to my heart to sing thy praise. Streams of mercy never ceasing, call for songs of loudest praise." Second verse, "Here I raise mine Ebenezer", and you've probably been singing that all your life. What in the world are you raising? "Here I raise mine Ebenezer, hither by Thy help that comes." Actually, it's a stone of memorial, it's a memory kind of a stone. Here I set the stone. God has helped me thus far. God has brought me this far along.

Now actually that's something we can set up every day. You set up Ebenezer, "Well, God brought me this far." Now in that there is always encouragement and hope. For God brought me this far not to dump me. If He wanted to dump me, He would've dumped me a long time ago. Hitherto hath the Lord helped me. The help of the Lord in the past is a prophecy of the help of the Lord in the future. The fact that God has helped me up to this point, gives me assurance He's gonna see me all the way. For the Lord will complete that which concerns you, having begun a good work in your life, He is going to finish it, He's going to complete it. So it is healthy sometimes to set up that memorial "Well God has brought me this far, surely He's not gonna leave me now. He's not gonna forsake me now. Hitherto hath the Lord helped us."

So this was the beginning of the turn of the tide against the Philistines. Up to this point the Philistines had been beating them at every turn, every battle. Now this is the first turn of the tide against the Philistines, and as they came out he set up that stone, he said, "All right the Lord has helped us this far." The first of the beginning of God's work in bringing them victory over their enemies.

So as God brings victories in your lives, set up your Ebenezer stone, "Well, praise the Lord He helped me this far." Stones that mark the places of victory and God's work in my life.

So the Philistines were subdued, they came no more into the coast of Israel: during all the days of Samuel. And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored, from Ekron even to Gath; there was peace between Israel and the Amorites. And Samuel judged all the days of his life, judged Israel. And then he went from year to year in a circuit [So he was sort of a circuit prophet.] and he would go from Bethel, to Gilgal, to Mizpeh, and then return to his home in Ramah (1Sa 7:13-17);

Which is the modern city of Ram Allah just north of Israel.

## Chapter 8

Now it came to pass, when Samuel was old, he made his sons the judges over Israel. And the name of his firstborn was Joel; the second was Abiah: and they were judges in Beersheba. [Which is in the south.] But his sons did not walk in his ways, but they turned aside after lucre, they took bribes, and perverted judgment (1Sa 8:1-3).

So here's an unfortunate thing. A godly man Samuel, and yet his sons were crooked. These guys were taking bribes, they had coveted after money, they would pervert judgment for bribes.

So all the elders of Israel came to Samuel there at Ramah, And they said, Behold, you are old, but your sons are not walking in your ways: so make us a king to judge us like all the nations. [So now the demand of all of the elders of Israel in order that they might have a king like the rest of the nations.] The thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the Lord. The Lord said to Samuel, Harken unto the voice of the people: for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me, from being king over them (1Sa 8:4-7).

Now a nation that is governed by God is a theocracy. These people were rejecting now a theocratic form of government and they were demanding now a monarchy. "We want a king like the other nations." It is a sad step down in their history when they rejected God from being king. However it was because God was not being

faithfully represented to them by their rulers, that they were demanding a king like the other nations. The Lord said, "You tell them what a monarchy is going to entail."

So Samuel told the people all the words of the Lord. When you have a king that reign over you: He's gonna take your sons, he's gonna draft them, and appoint them for himself, and for his chariots, that they might be his horsemen; some shall run before his chariots. He's gonna appoint captains over the thousands, and over the fifties; and he will set them to ear his ground, or to till his soil, to reap his harvest, to make him instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots. And he will take your daughters that they might be his bakers, and cooks, and confectionaries. And he will take your fields, your vineyards, your oliveyards, and the best of them, and he will give them to his servants. You'll have to start paying taxes of ten percent. [They had it pretty good.] And he will take your menservants, and your maidservants, and your finest young men, your donkeys, and put them to his work. And he'll take a tenth of your sheep: you'll be his servants. And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen; and the Lord will not hear you in that day. Nevertheless the people said, Fine we want a king that we might be like all the nations; that our king might judge us, go out before us, and fight our battles. So Samuel heard the people, he went back and he said, Lord they still want a king. So the Lord said, Harken to their voice, and make them a king. And Samuel said to the men of Israel, Go your way every man to his own city (1Sa 8:10-22).

## Chapter 9

Now there was a man of the tribe of Benjamin, whose name was Kish, he was the son of Abiel,... and he had a son, whose name was Saul, a choice young man, and [the word] goodly: [is handsome] and there was not among the children of Israel a more handsome person than he: he was head and shoulders taller than anyone else (1Sa 9:1-2).

Just a big, handsome fellow, Saul the son of Kish. In fact, he was just the most good-looking guy in all of Israel, big, handsome, natural benefits and characteristics.

Now Kish's donkeys were lost. And he said to Saul, Take one of the servants, and go and look for the donkeys. And so Saul passed through mount Ephraim, passed through the land of Shalisha, but they did not find them: they passed through the land of Shalim, and they did not find them there: so they passed through the land of the Benjamites, they did not find them. When they were come to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant that was with him, We better get back home, because my father is gonna quit worrying about the donkeys, he's gonna start worrying about us. So they said, How in the world do we get home from here? we're lost. [More or less.] So he said, I hear that there is an honourable man; a prophet in this city; let's go; maybe he can shew us the way we should go. Then Saul said to the servant, But, look, if we go to the prophet we don't have anything to give him. We've spent everything that we have and we have no present to give to the man of God. And the servant answered Saul, and he said, I have here a fourth part of a shekel of silver: and we'll give that to the man of God, to tell us our way. Now (Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, thus he spake, Come, and let us go to the seer: they called the Prophets in those days Seers (1Sa 9:3-9).

The word "seer" is that which it implies it's a man that is able to see into the spiritual things, or a man who has spiritual perception, and they were called "seers", that was the original word for the prophets. Later on they called them prophets. But in the earlier days they were called seers.

Then Saul said to his servant,

Come on that's good enough, let's go. So they went to the city where the man of God was. And they went up to the hill to the city, and they found some young maidens going out to draw water, and they said, Is the seer here (1Sa 9:10-11)?

Now can you picture this handsome Saul, big, nobody is more handsome than he and he's asking these young maidens where the seer is. They are careful to answer him.

And they answered and said, He is; behold, he's before you: make haste now, for he came today to the city; for there's a sacrifice of the people today in the high place: As soon as you come into the city, you shall straightway find him, behold he goes up to the high place to eat: for the people will not eat until he comes, for he doth bless the sacrifice; and afterwards they eat those that are bidden. Now if you'll get up; for about this time you'll find him. [Hurry.] And so they went up into the city: and when they were come to the city, behold, Samuel came out against them, to go up to the high place. Now the Lord had told Samuel in his ear a day before Saul came, [Isn't that neat the Lord's able to talk to Samuel like that? He spoke in his ear.] and said, Hey

tomorrow about this time I'm gonna send you a man out of the land of Benjamin, and you are to anoint him to be captain over my people Israel, that he may save my people out of the hand of the Philistines: for I have looked upon my people, because their cry has come up to me. And so when Samuel saw Saul, the Lord said unto him, Behold the man whom I spake to thee of. this same shall reign over my people. Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate, and he said, Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer's house is. And Samuel answered Saul, and said, I am the seer: go up before me to the high place; for ye shall eat with me today, and tomorrow I will let thee go, and tell thee all that is in thy heart. And as for the donkeys that were lost three days ago, don't worry about them; they've already been found. And on whom is all the desire of Israel? Is it not on thee, and on your father's house (1Sa 9:12-20)?

Now he finds the prophet, and the prophet starts saying some weird things. He says, "Now don't worry about those donkeys, they've already been found. But upon whom is the desire of all Israel?" Israel is desiring a king. "Upon whom is the desire of all Israel, is it not upon you and your father's house?"

And Saul said, Hey wait a minute don't lay that on me, I'm a Benjamite, we're the smallest tribe in Israel? my family is the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin. What are you saying to me man? And Samuel took Saul and his servant, and brought them into the parlour, and made them sit in the chiefest place among those that were bidden, which were about thirty persons. And Samuel said to the cook, Bring the portions that I gave thee, of which I said unto thee, Set it by thee. And the cook took up the shoulder, and that which was upon it, and set it before Saul. And Samuel said, Behold that which is left. set it before thee, and eat: for unto this time hath it been kept for thee since I've invited the people. So Saul did eat with Samuel that day. And when they were come down from the high place into that city, Samuel communed with Saul upon the top of the house. And they arose early: and it came to pass about the spring of that day, that Samuel called Saul to the top of the house, saying, Up, that I may send thee away. Saul arose, and went both of them, and Samuel, abroad. And as they went down to the end of the city, Samuel said to Saul, Bid your servant to go on in front of us, and stand here for awhile, that I might shew you the word of the Lord (1Sa 9:21-27).

So Samuel now is getting ready to reveal to Saul the things of God. "Send your servant away."

## Chapter 10

Samuel took a vial of oil, and he poured it over Saul, over his head, and he kissed him, and he said, Is it not because the Lord has anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance? Now when you depart from me today, when you get by Rachel's tomb, you're going to see two men; and they will say to you, The donkeys that you were looking for have been found: and, your father's no longer worried about the donkeys, but he's worried about you. Then as you go on forward from there, you're gonna come to the plain of Tabor, and there you're gonna meet three men that are going up to God to Bethel, and one is carrying three kids, and another's carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a bottle of wine: They're gonna greet you, they're gonna give you to loaves of bread; which you shall receive. And then when you come to the hill of God, where the garrison of the Philistines are: it shall come to pass, that when you're come near the city, that you shall meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a harp, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and they shall prophesy: And the spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shall be turned into another man. And so let it be, when these signs are come to thee, that you do as occasion serve thee; for God is with thee (1Sa 10:1-7).

So here the prophet is laying out, it's the trip for him. "When you go out, when you get to Rachel's tomb, there will be a couple fellows there that are gonna tell you, 'Hey man the donkeys that you're looking for were found. Your dad's really worried about you. He doesn't know what's happened to you.' As you go on a little further, you're gonna meet three men that are going up to Bethel to worship God. One will have three goats, one will have three loaves of bread, and the other will have a jug of wine. They're gonna offer you a couple loaves of bread, take them. Then when you go just a little further, when you get near the city, there's gonna be a bunch of prophets coming down. They're gonna have some instruments, they're gonna be playing and singing. As you join them God's Spirit is going to come upon you. You're gonna be changed into another man. So at that time do as the occasion seems best, for the Lord is with you."

And you will go down before me to Gilgal; to offer the burnt offerings, and to sacrifice offerings and the peace offerings: and seven days shalt you wait, till I come to thee, and shew thee what you're to do. And so it was, that when he had turned his from Samuel, God gave him another heart: and all of those signs came to pass that day. And when they came near the hill, behold, a company of prophets met him; and the spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them. And it came to pass, when all that knew him beforetime saw that, behold, he was prophesying before the prophets, the people said one to another, What is this that's come to the

son of Kish? is Saul among the prophets? And one of the same place answered and said, But who is their father? Therefore it became proverb, Is Saul among the prophets? And when he had made an end of prophesying, he came to the high place. And Saul's uncle said to him, and to his servant, Where in the world did you go? And he said, To seek the donkeys: and when we saw that they were no where, we came to Samuel. And Saul's uncle said, Tell me, what did Samuel say to you. And Saul said to his uncle, He told us plainly that the donkeys had been found. But Saul didn't reveal to his uncle the other things that Samuel had said about him being the choice of God and the people, to be the king. And so Samuel called the people together before the Lord there at Mizpeh; And he said to the children of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I brought up Israel out of Egypt, delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, out of the hand of all of the kingdoms, of those that oppressed you: And you have this day rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations; and you have said unto him, Nay, but set a king over us. Now therefore present yourselves before the Lord by your tribes, and by your thousands. And when Samuel had caused all the tribes of Israel to come near, the tribe of Benjamin was taken. When he caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families, the families of Matri were taken, and Saul the son of Kish was taken: and when they sought him, he could not be found. Therefore he inquired of the Lord further, if the man should yet come thither. And the Lord answered, Behold, he's hid himself over there in the stuff (1Sa 10:8-22).

Now the time has come to present to Israel their king. All of the children of Israel are gathered at Mizpeh, this great day, the coronation of the king. And so Samuel is out there, big ceremonies, and he has the various tribes pass forth. And he takes the tribe of Benjamin. He has the families of Benjamin pass forth. He takes the family of Matri. Then out of the family of Matri, he takes Saul, and he says, "All right you're king. Where is he?"

So he says, "Lord what's going on here? What's happening?"

Lord said, "Oh the guy's hid himself over there in the stuff."

So they went over there in the stuff and they got Saul out: and they fetched him: and when he stood among the people, he was higher than any of the people from his shoulders upward. [He just stood out in the crowd.] And Samuel said to all the people, See ye him whom the Lord hath chosen, that there is none like unto him among all the people? And the people shouted, and said, God save the king. Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the Lord. And Samuel sent all the people away every man to his house. And Saul went home to Gibeah; and there went with him a band of men, whose hearts God had touched. But the children of Belial said, How shall this man save us? And they despised him, and did not bring him any presents. But he held his peace (1Sa 10:23-27).

Now there are a couple of things here in this latter portion that interest me and fascinate me. Number one is that anointing of Saul where the Spirit of God came upon him, and he turned into another man, a real kind of conversion kind of an experience. God's Spirit upon him, and his prophesying, and the heart was changed, a real work of God within his life.

The second thing that interests me is that there went with him a band of men whose hearts God had touched. This scripture always excites me because of its potential. Not that I'm a chauvinist, but I think that there's nothing more exciting and fraught with possibility than to get a bunch of men whose hearts have been touched by God. To me the potential of a band of men, hearts touched by God, is just incomprehensible. What God can do when He touches the hearts of men!

Now for a long time, Christianity was looked on as almost a sissy, effeminate thing. The women were usually those who were committed to the Lord and trying to drag their husbands along. But that isn't God's order. God intended that the man be the head and spiritual leader in the house, of spiritual things. Now if the man isn't then I believe that the woman needs to take that place. But that is not God's divine order. It is God's divine order that the man lead the house in spiritual things. How strong and how blessed is the house where the man assumes the spiritual role of leadership.

But with the church there was sort of an effeminate idea involved in Christianity. Even the ministers talked and acted like a bunch of sissies. You know they sought to be so proper and sweet, and sissified, that it gave Christianity sort of an effeminate kind of a feel to it.

I believe that Jesus Christ challenges the manhood of a man. I think that one of the greatest challenges to any man to really assert the fullness of his manhood is to commit your life completely and fully to following Jesus Christ. I think that's one of the most manly things you can do. I think it's powerful. I think it's dynamic. When you get a bunch of fellows together, who have really committed their lives to Jesus Christ, whose hearts have



really been touched by God, you've got a potential of turning the world upside down. Men fully committed unto the Lord, unto Jesus Christ, what an exciting potential.

Thus, we see that Saul has many advantages. Comes from a good home, security, love, he knows his dad's gonna be worried about him when he doesn't show up. The natural physique, handsome, big all means nothing compared with the Spirit of God coming upon his life, and anointing him, changing his heart, turning him into another man. Then God puts around him a bunch of fellows who are just turned on for God. A band of men whose hearts God had touched. You have now here the potential of marvelous things for God. You've got all the ingredients that you need for a real spiritual explosion. But we'll go on and see how it fizzled and why it fizzled.

When we were kids it used to be we could have legalized firecrackers here in California. We used to light the Black Panthers because they were good loud ones. But every once in awhile, you know, you set the firecracker in the tin can, and you light the fuse, and you go back and you'd wait, and you'd wait, and you'd wait, no explosion, a fizzler. Course we learned when we were kids that you can take the fizzler, break it in two, pour the powder out, light the powder and as it starts to shoot out, if you stop it, gets your foot ajar, but you can really make the thing explode. But we used to always be disappointed with those fizzlers, had the potential, they'd blow and that tin can didn't do anything, fizzled out.

I look at some people's lives again, and you see that potential. You see all the ingredients are there, fizzlers. They never make it. What a disappointment the fizzlers are. God help us not to be fizzlers. That's your lesson for tonight.

Shall we stand?

I pray that God will be with you this week, bless you at your work, that He'll give you wisdom and guidance. That His love will just really flow through your life in those difficult and adverse circumstances. May the Spirit of God rest upon you, the anointing of His Spirit and power. May you become the man God wants you to be, doing the work God wants you to do for the glory of Jesus Christ.