

Guidelines for the exercise of the Lord's day Prophesying
Message Three : Spiritual Principles, Life Lessons, and Holy Warnings Seen in the History of Samuel

I. Overview:

Samuel was of the tribe of Levi but not of the house of Aaron, the family of the priests ordained by God; Samuel ministered to the Lord as one who was a priest by the Nazarite vow. God desires that all His people be Nazarites; being a Nazarite is sanctified, separated, absolutely and ultimately to God, to be for nothing other than God and for nothing other than His satisfaction. For a Nazarite, he needs to abstain from all kinds of earthly enjoyment, to not shave his head, to overcome natural affection, and to be separated from death. At the time of Eli, the priesthood of the house of Aaron was utterly fallen; God became poor as far as the priesthood was concerned, so there is the need for someone to voluntarily lend himself to the Lord. Samuel was one who turned the age into the age of the kingdom with the kingship, especially because his heart was a copy, a duplicate, of God's heart. Samuel, who was the acting God, ministered in five statuses; he ministered as a Nazarite, as a priest replacing the stale and degraded priesthood, as a prophet speaking the word of God, as a judge ruling God's people, and as a man of prayer praying for God's elect.

II. Truth and Enlightenment:

Day 1 —

A. Expound what things a Nazarite should observe.

A Nazarite could never cut his hair or drink wine. In the Bible, long hair signifies the headship, the authority. A Nazarite's keeping his hair long was a sign that just as a female takes her husband as her head, he takes God as the Head, considering God his Husband. Thus, a Nazarite is one who submits himself to God, taking God as the Head, the authority.

B. Explain what the supplement rules for the priests provided in Numbers 6.

The Lord had given Moses a supplement in Numbers 6. This was His special provision against the degradation of the priesthood. The Lord had appointed and ordained only the house of Aaron, of the tribe of Levi, to be the priests. But the house of Aaron eventually came to the point of being fully and utterly fallen at the time of Eli's sons. However, the Lord foresaw the situation, so He had made a supplement in Numbers 6.

Day 2 —

A. Explain the hearing of the spiritual significance in Song of Songs 8:13.

Song of Songs 8:13 says, "Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice: cause me to hear it." "Thou" refers to the Lord. The word "hearken" means that everyone is listening. All those who are seeking the Lord together with the lover adopt the same attitude. They have been dealt with, and they know the futility of speaking and the profit of hearkening.

B. Expound the life lessons Samuel had learned from the old Eli.

Samuel grew up under the custody of the old Eli, the last priest of the waning Aaronic priesthood; that was God's wisdom. Because God intended to replace the waning priesthood with Samuel, it was necessary for him to learn certain lessons while he was under Eli's custody. Samuel had the capacity to understand and apprehend what he saw in Eli's situation, and this became a constant warning to Samuel for the future.

Day 3 —

A. Why do we say that Samuel was the acting God on earth?

Samuel was faithful to God to do according to what was in God's heart and mind. His whole being and person, not just his doing, living, and work, were according to God. Samuel's being and God's heart were one. For this reason it is not too much to say that Samuel, a man according to God, was the acting God on earth. As a consequence, Samuel was one who turned the age.

B. Explain that Samuel's changing of the age was a matter of the revelation.

As a priest Samuel replaced and terminated, in a sense, the stale Aaronic priesthood. He did not rebel against the house of Aaron, and he did not usurp anything of the house of Aaron. There was no revolution; there was only revelation. As Samuel was growing, God arranged the environment to perfect him and to build up his capacity to do everything that was needed for God to change the age.

Day 4 —

A. Expound the first thing that a priest should do in his priesthood.

Samuel was established by God to speak the word of God to replace the teaching of the word of God by the old priesthood. The first thing that a priest should do is to speak for God. God needed to raise up a living person, a prophet, to speak for Him. Samuel turned the age in God's administration from the age of the priesthood to the age of the prophethood with the kingship.

B. Explain being a prophet how to fulfill his functions in the church life.

The proper prophethood is always an assistant to the kingship. This should be a lesson to us. In the church life today, if you are not one of the elders, you need to be a prophet by praying to the Lord to receive a word from Him. If you do not receive a word from the Lord, you should not say anything. But if, in His mercy to His church, the Lord gives you a word, a prophecy, then you should go to the elders and prophesy to them.

Day 5 —

A. Expound that Samuel is the acting God on earth.

By the time that Saul was raised up to be the king in Israel, Samuel had reached the highest position. We may say that Samuel was the representative of the very God in heaven to rule over His people on earth. God intended to move, to act, yet He needed a representative. Samuel thus became a prophet, a priest, and a judge. He was God's oracle and God's administration. As such, he was the acting God on earth.

B. Explain that Samuel ministered as a Nazarite absolutely consecrated to God.

Samuel ministered as a Nazarite consecrated to God absolutely for God's fulfillment of His economy, a volunteer to replace any official and formal serving ones of God. Samuel was a person full of insight concerning God's economy and concerning the environmental situation. Eventually, God did something to match him, and there was a change among the people of Israel.

Day 6 —

A. Explain at what time Samuel's prophesying was.

Samuel's prophesying was at the time when the word of Jehovah was rare and visions were not widespread. Samuel's first prophesying was also at a time when the waning Eli's eyesight was so dim that he could not see. Furthermore, Samuel began to prophesy at a time when the lamp of God had not yet gone out in the temple. God's speaking had stopped, but there was still some light.

B. Expound how Samuel ministered when he was established as a judge.

Samuel was established as a judge to replace the judging of the people by the old priesthood. The judgeship actually belonged to the priesthood. But because the old Aaronic priesthood was waning, God raised up Samuel to be a new priest, a new prophet, and a new judge. Through Samuel and his threefold responsibility in the priesthood, prophethood, and judgeship, a good order was brought in.

III. Conclusion:

Samuel was one who turned the age into the age of the kingdom with the kingship; as a priest Samuel replaced and terminated the stale and degraded Aaronic priesthood. Samuel was a man according to God's heart—a copy, a duplicate, of God's heart. Therefore, his being and God's heart were one that Samuel was the acting God on earth. For many years God had been perfecting him uniquely for His economy. Samuel learned a lot of life lessons; he observed the deterioration of the degraded Aaronic priesthood, he saw the Ark of God being usurped by the elders of the people and captured by the Philistines with the glory of God departing from Israel, and he realized God's severe judgment on the house of Eli, that helped him to remain pure in his service to God for his entire life. Samuel ministered in five statuses; as a man of prayer, a priest, a Nazarite, a judge, and a prophet.