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CORRUPT MAN

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1 Samuel 2:12 *"Now the sons of Eli were corrupt; they did not know the LORD."*

When we talk with certain people, in an effort to share with them from a self-righteous perspective, we often talk about others sharing the good and the bad, giving them our perspective of what is "spiritual" and "fleshly". However, most often we fail to see the way God sees. Most of our judgments are based on outward appearances. God's Word however, looking past what the naked eye can see, reveals to us what a corrupt man is – one who does not heed God! Corrupt or rotten, it all depends on which translation you read.

The Word tells us that Eli's sons were corrupt. The Hebrew word for corrupt is *Belial* (as in *sons of Belial*), and comes from two words – *beli* and *yaal* meaning worthless, rotten. With time this word *Belial* evolved into a word used for Satan. For example, in **2 Corinthians 6:15** the Apostle Paul used the word *Belial* when writing about Satan and said that those who impart the light of God cannot have fellowship with or compromise with darkness: *"And what accord*

★ **God divides people into two categories: those who are for Christ and those who are not, those who do His will and those who do their own selfish will.**



has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?"

In other words, God divides people into two categories: those who are for Christ and those who are not, those who do His will and those who do their own selfish will; those who are obedient to Him and those who are disobedient. Those who are faithful and those who are corrupt!

Eli's sons, Hophni and Phinehas had an honorable position but were ungodly, corrupt, and full of compromise; while they were priests of God they were not obedient to God.

I hope that God will open our eyes through His Word. Many suppose that everything is alright because they know deep inside that they are not of this world and know that God has redeemed them with His blood and that they are saved. The apostle Paul says: *"But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."* (1 Peter 2:9)

★ **Our passion to share the gospel with the unsaved is one of the fundamental ways we show our love for God. When we are united with Christ and His body we are a part of the ministry of reconciliation in Christ.**

In the Old Testament the Israelites were not allowed to come directly before God so the priests served as servants between God and the people, but with Christ's victory on the cross everything changed. Now we can approach Him without fear, yet it is also our responsibility to lead as many to God as we can. Our passion to share the gospel with the unsaved is one of the fundamental ways we show our love for God. When we are united with Christ and His body we are a part of the ministry of reconciliation in Christ. *"Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God."* (2 Corinthians 5:18-20)

Believers are His representatives and have a great responsibility, which we cannot take lightly as did Eli's sons - Hofni and Phinehas.

1 Samuel 2:12 explains for us why they were corrupt; *"...they did not know the LORD." They were not satisfied with that which belonged to them as priests and took for themselves more than their share. "And the priests' custom with the people was that when any man offered a sacrifice, the priest's servant would come with a three-pronged fleshhook in his hand while the meat was boiling. Then he would thrust it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; and the priest would take for himself all that the*

fleshhook brought up. So they did in Shiloh to all the Israelites who came there. **(1 Samuel 2:13-14)** Furthermore, they sought “raw meat”. They did not even wait for the fat to burn first (**verse 16**), which was against the Law. They wanted that which did not even belong to them before the Lord received that which did belong to Him. And their rebellion and impatience was a great sin. *“Therefore the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD, for men abhorred the offering of the LORD. (1 Samuel 2:17) They did not heed the things of the Lord, they did not have patience, and they took the Lord’s sacrifice lightly without fear so much so that others even began despising the sacrifices brought before the Lord. They were negligent. The sacrifices that were brought in honor and devotion to God, while at the same time were given for forgiveness of sin, were given in negligence, cynicism, levity and disrespect. Eli’s sons sinned while bringing the sacrifice. In addition to all of this they were immoral: “they lay with the women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle of meeting” (1 Samuel 2:22)*

Sometimes we think that our sins will not affect others, but this is not so! This is precisely why our God always holds us responsible. Our laziness, negligence, our cynicism, and levity can influence others. We cannot live only for ourselves.

We can become like Eli’s sons, we can scorn others’ faith, we can laugh at them, take lightly the sacrifices they bring to the Lord or even look at them with disdain. But we need to know that

God pointedly judges all who lead his people astray and who mock those surrendered to Him. God judges the churches that take Him lightly. In **Numbers 18:32** we read that His part was holy: *“...when you have lifted up the best of it. But you shall not profane the holy gifts of the children of Israel, lest you die.”*

Spiritual leaders who do not care for God’s house often despise the simplicity of faith mocking rapturous prayer and the simple display of faith. They mock the unfamiliar, scorning those who have a revelation and who are pleasing to God. While neglecting the reading of God’s Word, prayer, and sharing the gospel they bring on themselves the judgment of God. It would be better for them that they were never converted, because if they gain a knowledge of the truth and continue neglecting the Lord a terrible judgment awaits; a judgment which is more terrible than that which awaits those who are not saved!

THESE BELIEVERS WILL BE ASHAMED IN MANY WAYS!

In **1 Samuel 2:30b** we read how God spoke through his servant Eli: *“...for those who honor*

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Me I will honor, and those who despise Me shall be lightly esteemed.” The Hebrew word for “lightly esteemed” is *qalal* which means to reduce, to be shaken, to be of little value, cursed.

Do we think that we can play with God and the ministry by condemning His church and still not be judged? Our degrees, our theological accomplishments, and all our money will not be able to help us when judgment comes. People may have degrees, they may know how to properly exegete scripture or hold a position in the church but if their lifestyle shows that they take the sacrifices brought to the Lord lightly, I tell you, God will not have mercy. Those who condemn Him, “*will be ashamed, will be cursed*” says *Eli the man of God!*

► **1. THE FIRST AREA THEY WILL BE ASHAMED IN IS THEIR STRENGTH.**

In **1 Samuel 2:31** the prophet spoke to Eli and said, “*Behold, the days come, that I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father’s house, that there shall not be an old man in thine house.*”

God will cut off the strength of those who scorn Him. They will not be able to reject their

★ **God will cut off the strength of those who scorn Him. They will not be able to reject their sin or serve Him with power.**

sin or serve Him with power. This is God’s judgment. The only thing they will be able to do is to support their own religious position and selfish desires.

When Paul warned his disciple Timothy about heretical faith and false teachers he said: “*BUT know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!*” (**2 Timothy 3:1-5**)

Many in these last days will look only on the outward form of godliness ignoring God’s judgment! The Greek word for form is *morphosis* – active forming; a mere mask of the form of godliness yet behind the mask is found decay, insubordination, self-will, cynicism, worldliness; a sleeping, half-converted, dead church of believers with big bellies who reveal that their heart is no longer with the Lord. However, this image would be completely opposite if they would fast more than feast.

Please allow me to read a footnote from the “Life Application Bible” in relation to this verse: “*The form or appearance of godliness includes going to church, knowing Christian doctrine, using Christian clichés, and following a community’s Christian traditions. Such practices can make*

a person look good, but if the inner attitudes of belief, love, and worship are lacking, the outer appearance is meaningless."

Paul warned us to watch out for those who only look like Christians; those whose behavior proves faithless yet remain faithful in their own eyes. Actually, these tolerate every kind of immorality in the church and support the things we read in 2 Timothy. Like Eli's sons, who did not care for the things of the Lord, they do not think to be concerned about their position; they are religious because they are God's priests, pastors, or theologians. But all who disdain God will suffer a loss of strength. Many will be judged by God; He will expose them to the world for what they are. One day well-known pastors will be exposed in their fornication, lies, frauds, affairs, and homosexuality!

We know what Delilah did to Sampson when he grew careless with the things of God. His strength was taken away from him because of sin. In **Judges 16:20** we read: And she said, *"The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" So he awoke from his sleep, and said, 'I will go out as before, at other times, and shake myself free!' But he did not know that the LORD had departed from him."*

The corrupted priests thought they had strength yet the Lord repaid their sin and wiped them out in battle against the Philistines. After having been defeated already, the Israelites went to battle again taking with them the Ark of the Covenant escorted by *"the two sons of*

*Eli, Hophni and Phinehas" (1 Samuel 4:4) and after the battle Israel was defeated "... the ark of God was captured; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, died." (1 Samuel 4:11) God had turned away from them and judged them with weakness, in that he gave them over to their enemies. God's prophecy from **1 Samuel 2:34** was fulfilled; *"Now this shall be a sign to you that will come upon your two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas: in one day they shall die, both of them."**

The first thing which will happen is that we will lose God's strength and be defeated by our enemies!

▶ **2. WE WILL BECOME ENVIOUS OF OTHERS' BLESSINGS**

In **1 Samuel 2:32** we see that God's prophet said to Eli: *"And you will see an enemy in My dwelling place, despite all the good which God does for Israel."*

In other words, believers who disregard the things of God will become jealous of the blessings and spiritual growth in others because they themselves cannot grow spiritually. When we show a disregard for God we will suffer fear because we see others who are blessed with spiritual growth, yet we remain spiritually

★ **Many in these last days will look only on the outward form of godliness ignoring God's judgment!**



immature and become a hindrance to every one who has a passion to serve the Lord. We will begin to persecute the righteous and resist revival. We will repeatedly accuse people of ministering too much and for being too zealous; we will tell others that it's unnecessary to attend prayer meetings every week. We will begin to gossip with people over coffee and organize times of fellowship with the purpose of avoiding church services because we don't want others to progress; rather we want them to stay where they are spiritually. We will become a stumbling block in the house of God and He will have to remove us.

Finally, we will become bitter! Envy is one of the most dangerous things in the house of God. We can, like Joseph's brothers, wish to stop the work of God or slow it down by not supporting it or by openly opposing it. In **Genesis 37:4** we read that Joseph's brothers "saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him."

You see, when we are resentful we can no longer be thankful people, useful for God's

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kingdom; we will be unkind, proud, jealous, and resentful for the blessings of others. Joseph's brothers were corrupt, they didn't heed the things of God, and actually they despised the spirituality of Joseph and his dreams. They had a fear of him because they knew that one day they would have to bow to him. That's why they wanted to kill him, their very own brother! Unfortunately the greatest opposition comes about in spiritual revival through envious and fleshly Christians.

Similar to this were the men of Ephraim who were envious of Gideon because he did not invite them to war against the Midianites. *"NOW the men of Ephraim said to him, 'Why have you done this to us by not calling us when you went to fight with the Midianites?' And they reprimanded him sharply. So he said to them, 'What have I done now in comparison with you? Is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer?'"* (**Judges 8:1-2**)

We can be resentful because we were not invited to a spiritual event and therefore grow cynical ceasing to care for the things of God after which spiritual people will naturally avoid us because we are a hindrance to them. Look at what the prophet said to Eli: *"You will be resentful, full of fear of the blessings because you did not control your corrupted sons."*

This is why fallen churches and denominations will grow resentful of those churches that are going forward spiritually because they will be a thorn in their side. They will stand aside

avoiding fellowship with them because of the devotion of the godly; hardening their hearts against that which brings fruit. They will become as Ephraim's men; resentful and envious because they didn't engage in battle for the Lord and therefore became fallen and religious. I believe that in these last days the fallen church will persecute the righteous.

We remember jealous King Saul in **1 Samuel 18:8** after David returned from battle *"Then Saul was very angry, and the saying displeased him" because they sang: "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands."*(**verse 7**) *"...and he said, "They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed only thousands. Now what more can he have but the kingdom? So Saul eyed David from that day forward."* (**verses 8-9**)

Because of envy and fear *"you will see an enemy in My dwelling place, despite all the good which God does for Israel."* (**1 Samuel 2:32a**) This is why they will not be able to be joyful in the successes of others; instead they will remain cynical, jealous, back-biting, and unfortunately a hindrance to the Lord.

▶ 3. GOD WILL REMOVE US FROM HIS DWELLING PLACE

We will no longer be priests unto our God. The prophet spoke to Eli in **1 Samuel 2:32b** and told him: *"And there shall not be an old man in your house forever."*

God will always bring his judgment on these

churches. He will not go beyond the leadership of the church that neglects Him while justifying their sin.

In that they despised God, Eli's sons were sentenced to death because they only thought of themselves while neglecting the things of God. They took the best for themselves and gave God the least. They symbolize believers who go to church with the sole notion of getting something for themselves, but with no thought of giving to others. This is why God removed Eli's priesthood; his descendents were no longer in the priesthood, except for Abiathar who was later removed: *"And to Abiathar the priest the king said, 'Go to Anathoth, to your own fields, for you are deserving of death; but I will not put you to death at this time, because you carried the ark of the Lord GOD before my father David, and because you were afflicted every time my father was afflicted.' So Solomon removed Abiathar from being priest to the LORD, that he might fulfill the word of*

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the LORD which He spoke concerning the house of Eli at Shiloh.” (1 Kings2:26-27)

Careless believers will lose their ministries, they will hide behind the excuse of weariness while on the other hand they will watch TV for hours on end, go to coffee with friends; yet have no time for prayer or evangelism. The fact is that they do not care for God’s house, only for themselves! They take the best blessings for themselves and are contented with that. The lost are of no interest to them; they don’t wish to truly serve rather to simply use the ministry for their own gain.

Christianity is fraught with those who seek for spiritual places of authority only to build their own ego. They pastor one church for years yet have the same number of people (those who have been removed from other congregations because of sin); people who do not care for the Lord; they care only for themselves! The church has a great need for revival!

As in the book of Revelation, God will remove their candlestick because they have lost their first love: *“Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. “Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you*

★ **He will not go beyond the leadership of the church that neglects Him while justifying their sin.**

quickly and remove your lampstand from its place--unless you repent. (Revelation 2:4-5)

If Jesus removes the candlestick from a church it means that the church ceases to be a disciple; it is as if the candlestick gives light in the temple in order that the church be a light to those around her. This is precisely why Jesus warns us about our light saying that He will remove the light from those not filled with His purpose. Our light will cease to shine if we do not care for the things of God; He will remove our light and we will disappear in the darkness of sin, bitterness, unforgiveness, while, of course searching for a “better church” in which Jesus cannot be found.

Often those lacking light suppose the church cannot get along without them; Christianity can’t get along with out them because they are such an important factor; however, the disappointing news is that this is not true! God can finish His work without them, but without Him they cannot go forward!

God said, through His prophets *“Then I will raise up for Myself a faithful priest who shall do according to what is in My heart and in My mind. I will build him a sure house, and he shall walk before My anointed forever. And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left in your house will come and bow down to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, and say, “Please, put me in one of the priestly positions, that I may eat a piece of bread.” (1 Samuel 2:35-36)*

God will raise up His own holy, eternal people. God will raise up in these last days a holy, righteous church to which people will come and be fed and give Him glory. These will hunger and thirst for God's Word. He will remove the fallen church in which cannot be found fresh food and the presence of God and will raise up new priests – "faithful priests"!

The Hebrew word for faithful is *aman*, which means "firm". These faithful priests will be the ones supporting God's work: they will persevere, be faithful and obedient! You can a faithful priest if you so desire to be! We can all become like Samuel – a faithful priest! God is seeking a faithful people!

Jesus Christ said: *"I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"* **(Luke 18:8)** As we draw closer to the end of history we are left with the question: Are we persevering in faith; are we continuing in faithful prayer, seeking His kingdom and fulfilling His will? Or perhaps we are preoccupied with ourselves, with the things [gods] of this world so much so that we no longer anticipate the soon return of our Lord?

God is seeking for Himself a new faithful priesthood. After God removed Eli's corrupt sons He raised up for Himself Samuel, a faithful priest.

The following three points are lasting principles of a faithful priesthood. The following text shows us those things that every believer must

go through in order to spiritually advance from a corrupt people to a faithful people.

a. If God's children wish to be faithful they must humble themselves and grow under God's authority.

Today many desire to be used by God but do not want to be led or instructed, they are not teachable, not accountable to anyone, and they don't want to attend a local church (Christians without a church are not Christians) rather they are rebellious and self-made, but this was never God's plan for spiritually mature Christians. In **1 Samuel 3:1** we read *"NOW the boy Samuel ministered to the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was rare in those days; there was no widespread revelation."*

Many today simply say that God speaks to them and because of their personal relationship with Jesus they do not need to

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listen to anyone else. However, because of their rejection of authority they will never grow to spiritual maturity. You will not be able to go forward spiritually if you are not under authority. Many, as I mentioned before, don't go to church where they can be taught because they assume they have already heard it all; perhaps they don't wish to be led because they are arrogant and hard-hearted. We cannot reject our leadership thinking that we know it all! The Apostle Peter said: *"Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble."* **(1 Peter 5:5)**

The Greek word for submit is *hupostaso* – and comes from the word *hupo* meaning "under" and *taso* meaning "rank". This word points out superiority, will or a force - depending on its position in relation to a person.

In Christ's body there is no independence or self-made man. Authority is foundational to spiritual growth. Samuel was under Eli, Elisha under Elijah, Timothy under Paul, Jesus under the Father; this is the foundation for a

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true righteous priesthood. I know that today just about anything is acceptable in the body of Christ; however we should not allow this to affect our own understanding of godly authority. It is foundational to becoming a faithful people.

b. If God's children wish to be faithful they must be obedient.

One day while Samuel was sleeping, God called to him. The Word tells us that Samuel *"...did not know the Lord, neither was the word of the Lord yet revealed to him."* **(1 Samuel 3:7)** Samuel was obedient to Eli who instructed him to answer the Lord when He spoke, and he was obedient to God when He called to him: *"Now the LORD came and stood and called as at other times, 'Samuel! Samuel!' And Samuel answered, 'Speak, for Your servant hears."*

(1 Samuel 3:10)

Wise Solomon said: *"Blessed is the man who listens to me, Watching daily at my gates, Waiting at the posts of my doors."* **(Proverbs 8:34)** *WALK prudently when you go to the house of God; and draw near to hear rather than to give the sacrifice of fools, for they do not know that they do evil.* **(Ecclesiastes 5:1)**

Obedience is more important than knowledge or sacrifice. Jesus Christ said, *"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven."* **(Matthew 7:21)** We can do many things for Jesus and still walk in disobedience because it's not about how much we sacrifice

for it's about whether or not what we are doing is His will and if we are obedient in the things which he has already told us to do through the revelation of His Word.

Not everyone who speaks about Him or goes to church belongs to His kingdom. Many in churches today think that they are converted, that's why they go to church, but Jesus is more interested in our walk, our obedience to Him more than if we go to church or not. Our degrees are not important to Him neither are our titles, rather an obedient heart! When God spoke to Samuel, he didn't tell Him give him a bit of time to examine the Hebrew meaning His words in the theological dictionary, he didn't say, "Come on, that's over-spiritual", rather he immediately obeyed! Our faith is revealed through our obedience, not through our intellectual understanding of what God has said.

God's true priests are faithful people who hear God's voice! This is why Jesus said, "*He who has heard let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches!*" (**Revelation 2:7**)

c. If God's children wish to be faithful they need to be ready to speak the truth.

Samuel was ready to listen and fulfill that which he heard! Perhaps he thought God was speaking to him in order to bless him with something. However, God told him to pronounce judgment "*In that day I will perform against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his*

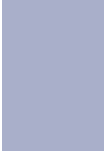
house, from beginning to end. For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knows, because his sons made themselves vile, and he did not restrain them."

(1 Samuel 3:12-13) Some believers would say, "What a negative message!"

The Apostle Peter, while preaching at Cornelius' house, said that God "...commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead." (**Acts 10:42**) If we want to be faithful believers we need to be ready to speak out and do that which the Lord tells us, to be willing to pay the price, to be mocked or condemned. This is what brings His favor! Pastors, do not be afraid to speak the truth, even if it's a "hard message"; don't fall under the manipulation of money and don't be afraid to speak the Word because this is the only way to have revival in the church. The truth is that some leave when you speak the truth, but it is better to have truth than to have masses of half-saved, uninterested people with whom God can do nothing.

This is the only way to grow like the faithful priest Samuel: "*So Samuel grew, and the LORD*

★ **Are we persevering in faith; are we continuing in faithful prayer, seeking His kingdom and fulfilling His will?**



was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground.” (1 Samuel 3:19)

You will grow in every way; people may protest but God will be with you and He will not let your efforts fail. Actually, this is when you will have true results. You will be like Jesus who also, “...increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.” (Luke 2:52)

Today the choice is once again before us. Today we can repent of our disobedience; seek for God’s renewal so as to become a faithful people – a true priesthood.

Where does this moment find you? Have you fallen away, is your heart cold? Do you wish to

walk the righteous path or continue on your own? Do you wish to renew your covenant with Him and be faithful? If you have decided to turn once again to God, He promises that He will give you a newly revived heart. Earnestly cry out to Him and he will once again be our God and we will be His people. “Then I will give them a heart to know Me, that I am the LORD; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God, for they shall return to Me with their whole heart.” (Jeremiah 24:7)

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