

Eli's Evil Sons

Text: I Samuel 2:1-36

Introduction:

- We should be reminded that the personal history of Samuel was only a link (last judge, first prophet) to connect DAVID with the Patriarchs, just as the later history connects David himself with our Lord JESUS CHRIST.
- Samuel was raised by God to end the period of the judges and begin the era of the kings. He lived in a day that saw the failure of the priesthood- represented by Eli and his sons, and the introduction of the ministry of prophets.
- The Lord visited Hannah: He certainly did – three more sons, and two daughters. God will never be a debtor to anyone. Hannah could never say to the Lord, “I gave you my son, but what did you give me?” because God gave her much more in return.

I. Hannah's song of worship

- a. Hannah prayed and said: 1 Samuel 1:28 ended, So they worshipped the Lord there. This song records the worship Hannah offered on the very day she left her little boy – her only child – at the tabernacle, never for him to live in her home again.
- b. My heart rejoices in the Lord: Hannah showed a depth of commitment and love for God that may humble us. On the day she made the biggest sacrifice of her life she rejoices in the Lord.
- c. My mouth- is boasting, or deriding my enemies- I smile at my enemies: Hannah had a strong sense of vindication over her rival, Elkanah's other wife named Peninnah. Peninnah cruelly brought Hannah low (1 Samuel 1:6-7), but now Hannah rejoiced because the Lord lifted her up.

- d. Themes: God opposes the proud and exalts the humble; God is at work, despite human evil
- e. The Rock- Common reference to the Lord in the O.T. In the N.T. Christ the Chief Cornerstone- I Peter 2:6, and is the Rock and foundation of the Church (Matt 16:18)
- f. God will raise an anointed king (Messiah)
- g. V. 10- the first verse in Scripture to use the name “Messiah” the word anointed in Hebrew. Translates to Christos in Greek and Christ in English- a title
- h. God was getting ready to establish a kingdom in Israel, and one day He will appoint His King- Jesus!
- i. Zecharias, the father of John the Baptist, quoted Hannah in Luke 1:69 when he prophetically called Jesus a horn of salvation, quoting from 1 Samuel 2:10. Mary the mother of Jesus quoted Hannah’s song often (Luke 1:46-55)

II. THE WICKEDNESS OF ELI’S SONS

- a. The phrase sons of Belial refers to worthless and wicked men. They were corrupt! This was a significant problem, because the sons of Eli were in line to succeed him as high priest and they already functioned in the priesthood.
- b. They did not know the Lord- Eli did not do a good job raising his boys
- c. The priests’ custom with the people: With many of the sacrifices brought to the tabernacle, a portion was given to God, a portion was given to the priest, and a portion was kept by the one who brought the offering. According to other passages in the Old Testament, the priest received a portion of the breast and the shoulder. But now, some 400 years after the Law of Moses came, the priestly custom changed – they did not take the prescribed portion of the breast and shoulder, but took whatever the fork (fleshhook) brought up out of the pot.
 - i. Before they burned the fat: God’s portion was always given first, so it was wrong to take the priest’s portion before they burned the fat.
 - ii. The fat was thought to be the most luxurious, best part of the animal, so they gave it to God. The idea was that God should always get the best,

and God should get His portion first. But in their pride the sons of Eli took their portion before they burned the fat.

iii. No, but you must give it to me now; and if not, I will take it by force: The greed of Eli's sons was so bad that they did not hesitate to use violence and the threat of violence to get what they wanted.

iv. For men abhorred the offering of the Lord: The greatness of the sin of Eli's sons was clear because through their greed, violence, and intimidation they made others not want to come and bring offerings to the Lord. It was bad enough what they themselves did; but the greater sin of Eli's sons was in how they hurt other people.- That is the sad thing when spiritual leaders fall into sin

d. V. 22- The second offense of Eli's sons was sexual immorality

e. (1Sa 2:23-26) The vain, ineffective rebuke of Eli to his sons. Too little, too late- Eli rebukes and asks, who will intreat? Intercede/mediate? That question is answered in I John 2:1

f. One Bible teacher eloquently stated, "It is often very difficult to explain how it comes to pass that godly men have had ungodly children. There is little difficulty in accounting for this on the present occasion. There was a fatal defect in the method of Eli. His remonstrance with his sons is not made at the proper time. It is not made in the fitting tone When disregarded, it is not followed up by the proper consequences. We must not forget that, however inexcusable their father was, the great guilt of the proceeding was theirs. How must they have hardened their hearts against the example of Eli, against the solemn claims of God, against the holy traditions of the service, against the interests and claims of those whom they ruined, against the welfare of God's chosen people! Could anything come nearer to the sin against the Holy Ghost? No wonder though their doom was that of persons judicially blinded and hardened. They were given up to a reprobate mind, to do those things that were not convenient."

i. The natural tendency of men to religious carelessness and indifference.

ii. The effect of insincerity upon doctrine

III. SAMUEL, THE BOY, MINISTERS UNTO THE LORD

- a. But the child ministered to Lord before Eli the priest: Young as he was, Samuel had a ministry to the Lord. Could even be phrased- the child became the Lord's helper
 - i. Young people are not just the future, they are the present!
 - ii. They should learn how to serve God even now in their youth. Can never be too young!
- b. But Samuel: As bad as Eli's sons were, Samuel was different. We can say that this is why God raised up Samuel, because of the corruption of Eli's sons.
- c. (1Sa 2:18-21) The purity and service of Samuel is a contrast to the evil character of Eli's sons.

IV. THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF GOD'S JUDGMENT AGAINST ELI'S HOUSE.

- a. (1Sa 2:27-33) An unknown man of God pronounces judgment to Eli: his family will be cut off from the office of high priest.
- b. We don't know who this was; this man of God is one of the wonderful anonymous characters of the Bible.
- c. And honor your sons more than Me: Since Eli did not correct his sons the way he should, he essentially preferred them to the Lord. If Eli were more afraid of offending God and less afraid of offending his sons he would have corrected them as he should have.
- d. Eric Liddell was one of Britain's great athletes, and later he gave his life for Jesus on the mission field. In 1924 he was to run for Britain in the Olympics when it was discovered that the preliminary heats of his best event – the 100 meters – would be run on a Sunday. Quietly but firmly, Liddell refused to run. The day of 400 meters race came, and as Liddell went to the starting blocks, an unknown man slipped a piece of paper in his hand with a quotation from 1 Samuel 2:30: Those who honor Me I will honor. That day Eric Liddell set a world's record in the 400 meters.

- e. God promised that the priestly line would not stay with Eli and his descendants, but would pass to another line of descendants from Aaron. This was fulfilled many years later, in Solomon's day. Abiathar (from Eli's family) was deposed as high priest and replaced with Zadok (who was from another family).
- f. Now this shall be a sign to you: Since the fulfillment of the judgment would be many years away (in the days of Solomon), God gave Eli an immediate sign to demonstrate His truthfulness. Eli's sons will die in one day; Eli will see this and know the judgment of God has come against his house (1 Samuel 4)
- g. Then I will raise up for Myself a faithful priest: Who is the faithful priest predicted here? He was a great priest, because he did according to what is in [God's] heart and in [God's] mind. He was a blessed priest, because God said of him, I will build him a sure house, and he will walk before My anointed forever.
 - i. This promise was partially fulfilled in Samuel, because he functioned as a godly priest, effectively replacing the ungodly sons of Eli
 - ii. The promise was partially fulfilled in Zadok, in the days of Solomon, because he replaced Eli's family line in the priesthood
 - iii. The promise was ultimately fulfilled in Jesus Christ, because He is a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek (Hebrews 7:12-17)
- h. points to the Lord's Christ, in whom the royal and priestly offices are united (Zech 6:11-15)
 - i. Only the Lord is Prophet, Priest, and King

Conclusion: Let us remember those important words from the man of God, "...for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." Choose to honor God, otherwise we are in danger of facing his judgment!