

1 Samuel Chapter 2 Continued

1 Samuel 2:16 "And [if] any man said unto him, Let them not fail to burn the fat presently, and [then] take [as much] as thy soul desireth; then he would answer him, [Nay]; but thou shalt give [it me] now: and if not, I will take [it] by force."

Or stay till they have offered the fat, as the Targum; let that be done in the first place, which may be quickly done, in a very little time, and let as much haste be made as can be to do it.

"And then take as much as thy soul desireth":

By which it appears that the men that brought the sacrifice had more religion at heart, and were more concerned for the honor and glory of God than the priest; being willing to suffer in their property, but could not bear that the LORD should be dishonored, and so rudely treated.

They were willing the priests should take what they pleased of theirs, though they had no right to any; only they desired the LORD might be served first, which was but reasonable.

"Then he would answer him, nay, but thou shall give it me now, and if not, I will take it by force":

Signifying, he would not stay till the fat was burnt, and the LORD had his portion, but he would have it directly.

And if he would not give it him freely, he would take it whether he would or not.

To such a height of insolence and impiety were the priests arrived, as to put it in the power of their servants to make such wicked demands.

And treat God, and those that brought their sacrifices to him, in such a contemptuous manner.

It appears, some of the people knew the law of God better than the priests did.

The people did not want to do this abominable thing. The priests (the people's leaders), were forcing them to do this terrible thing.

The people, it seemed, did not mind the priests taking even what belonged to the people.

They just did not want them taking what belonged to God.

Not only did these priests want to take what did not belong to them, but they wanted it before it was cooked in the proper way.

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

That is, the sons of Eli; for they were the ringleaders who set these bad examples, which other priests followed, and therefore the sin is ascribed to them; and which was sadly aggravated by taking what was not their own, and by taking it in a forcible manner, and before the LORD had his part in the offering.

All this was done in the tabernacle in the presence of God; which plainly showed that they had no fear of God before their eyes.

Nor any sense of his omniscience and omnipresence, any more than of his holiness and justice.

"For men abhorred the offering of the LORD":

It was irksome and disagreeable to them to bring their sacrifices, when they saw the law of God was not attended to, and the rules of sacrificing were not observed.

Such was such contempt of God and abuse of sacrifices and injury done to those who were sacrificing.

And such covetousness and sensuality in the priests, that it even set the people against sacrifices, and made them loath them, and neglect to bring them.

And this aggravated the sin of the young men, though the sacrificers were not excused hereby (1 Sam. 2:24).

Not only were the sons of Eli sinning in this, but they were causing the people to sin also.

This act of the priests symbolizes what is going on in our churches today.

This is such a shame when the leaders of the church lead their members into sin.

“Verses 18-26: In contrast to Eli’s sons, Samuel “ministered before the LORD, even as a child,” and “Grew ... in favor with both the LORD and men.”

This description echoes the words used to describe Jesus (in Luke 2:52), and serves to underscore the important role Samuel played in God’s redemption of Israel.

1 Samuel 2:18 "But Samuel ministered before the LORD, [being] a child, girded with a linen ephod."

“But Samuel”:

The faithful ministry of Samuel before the LORD was in sharp contrast to the disobedience of Eli’s sons.

“Linen ephod”:

A close fitting, sleeveless outer vest extending to the hips and worn by priests, especially when officiating before the altar (Exodus 28:6-14).

“Ephod” (compare verse 28 and the note on 23:6), means a “linen” covering worn customarily by those in priestly service.

Eli's sons were bringing disgrace to the worship in the tabernacle.

God had chosen for Himself a leader to do the things He taught him.

Samuel was chosen of God. He was just a child, and yet, he served the LORD in the ways of the LORD.

He even wore a linen garment, while he was serving the LORD.

Linen was the plain garment of someone dedicated to the LORD in service.

1 Samuel 2:19 "Moreover his mother made him a little coat, and brought [it] to him from year to year, when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice."

“Little coat”:

A sleeveless garment reaching to the knees, worn under the ephod (Exodus 28:31).

His mother still loved him as her firstborn.

She never complained that she had given him to the LORD, however.

A beautiful gesture of the mother's love is the fact that she made him a coat each year.

Young boys grow fast. He would need a larger size each year.

1 Samuel 2:20 "And Eli blessed Elkanah and his wife, and said, The LORD give thee seed of this woman for the loan which is lent to the LORD. And they went unto their own home."

“The LORD give thee seed”:

Eli's blessing was a reminder of Hannah's faithfulness to her vow to the LORD.

By providing Hannah with additional children, the LORD continued to be gracious to her.

1 Samuel 2:21 "And the LORD visited Hannah, so that she conceived, and bare three sons and two daughters. And the child Samuel grew before the LORD."

In a way of mercy, approving and confirming the blessing of Eli; or rather granting the blessing he prayed for, by giving her power to conceive, bear, and bring forth children, as the following words explain.

“So that she conceived and bare three sons and two daughters”:

Whereby the prophecy of Hannah was fulfilled (1 Sam. 2:5), and was no doubt matter of great joy to her, though of these children we nowhere else read, nor even of their names.

“And the child Samuel grew before the LORD”:

In age and stature, in grace and goodness, and improved much in the worship and service of God, both in the theory and practice of it.

Or became great with him, high in his esteem and favor, and was blessed with much of his presence, and with large gifts of his grace.

The beautiful thing in all of this is the fact that Samuel was never part of the world.

He was taught of the ways of God from infancy.

It is interesting to me, that Eli did not think of this very small child as a burden to take care of.

He realized from the very beginning that Samuel was of the LORD.

He perhaps saw the traits in Samuel, that he wished were in his own sons.

Eli speaks a blessing from God on Hannah and Elkanah for their unselfishness in giving their firstborn to the LORD.

Notice (in verse 21), the children Hannah has, is because the LORD visited her.

They were miracle children from God.

1 Samuel 2:22 "Now Eli was very old, and heard all that his sons did unto all Israel; and how they lay with the women that assembled [at] the door of the tabernacle of the congregation."

“Lay with the women”:

Eli’s sons included in their vile behavior having sexual relationships with the women who served at the tabernacle (see Exodus 38:8).

Such religious prostitution was common among Israel’s Canaanite neighbors.

This is a terrible sin before the LORD.

The sad thing is that this very thing still exists in our churches today.

We can even try to excuse it by saying men and women were in a private place together and things just got out of hand.

There is no excuse acceptable for this type of behavior.

Call it what it is, sin.

Eli's sons were sinful men.

Whether these women worked in the tabernacle, or were just there to worship, makes no difference. Sin is sin.

1 Samuel 2:23 "And he said unto them, Why do ye such things? For I hear of your evil dealings by all this people."

He reproved them, but far too gently, as these and the following words manifest.

This might proceed partly from the coldness of old age, but it arose chiefly from his too great indulgence to his children.

"I hear of your evil dealings by all this people":

Their wickedness was so notorious that there was a general complaint of it, which should have moved him to much greater severity than merely to reprove and chide them.

He ought to have restrained them, and if he could not otherwise have done it.

To have inflicted those punishments upon them which such high crimes deserved, according to God's law, and which he, as high-priest and judge, was in duty bound to inflict without respect of person.

1 Samuel 2:24 "Nay, my sons; for [it is] no good report that I hear: ye make the LORD'S people to transgress."

"Ye make the Lord's people to transgress":

The life led by the priests publicly in the sanctuary, with their evident scornful unbelief in the divinely established holy ordinances on the one hand, and their unblushing immorality on the other, corrupted the inner religious life of the whole people.

At this time, the High Priest and the priests had certain control of the people.

The greater sin lay at the feet of these priests, because of this control.

Notice the statement "Ye make the LORD'S people to transgress".

Even today, it is a tendency of the congregation to elevate the minister to a position of importance.

Leaders, whether in the church or outside the church; should greatly guard their conduct.

They are leading others and that carries with it a great responsibility.

1 Samuel 2:25 "If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against the LORD, who shall entreat for him? Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because the LORD would slay them." This sin is a sin against God.

“Who shall entreat for him”:

Eli’s point to his sons was that if God would surely judge when one sinned against another man, how much more would He bring judgment against those who sinned against Him.

“The LORD would slay them”:

Because Eli’s sons had persisted in their evil ways; God had already determined to judge them.

This divine, judicial hardening, the result of defiant refusal to repent in the past, was the reason Hophni and Phinehas refused to heed Eli’s warnings.

The sins of Eli’s sons were not only crimes against their fellowmen (verses 13 to 17, 22), but against God Himself.

Such conduct could only draw severe judgment (compare verse 34 with 4:11).

The case of Eli’s sons demonstrates the need for firm parental instruction and supervision, especially in the home of one who ministers in the name of the “LORD” (verse 29; compare 3:13; 1 Tim. 3:4-5).

1 Samuel 2:26 "And the child Samuel grew on, and was in favor both with the LORD, and also with men."

“The child Samuel grew on”:

In contrast to the apostate sons of Eli, Samuel was maturing both spiritually and socially (Luke 2:52).

In the midst of the sins of Eli, Samuel was growing upright in the LORD.

God did not overlook Samuel's loyalty to Him.

The people appreciated Samuel's loyalty to God as well.

Verses 27-30:

Eli and his house would be excluded from the privilege of serving as priests.

Spiritual privileges are not irrevocable rights but by important responsibilities to be taken seriously and performed with care.

“Thy father” is a reference to Aaron, the first High Priest of Israel (Exodus 4:14-16; see Numbers 3:1-4).

1 Samuel 2:27 "And there came a man of God unto Eli, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Did I plainly appear unto the house of thy father, when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh's house?"

“Man of God” is one of several terms used in the Old Testament for a prophet.

It stresses the nature of his relationship to God: he is, above all, God’s man.

“House of thy father ... in Egypt”:

Although Eli’s genealogy was not recorded in the Old Testament, he was a descendant of Aaron.

The LORD had revealed Himself to Aaron in Egypt before the Exodus (see Exodus 4:4-16).

Aaron had been divinely chosen to serve the LORD as the first in a long line of priests (see Exodus 28:1-4).

A "man of God" generally means a prophet.

It does not tell us his name, but that is probably, who is intended here.

Whoever he is, the message is from the LORD.

God immediately reminds Eli that it was the LORD who brought them out of Egypt.

1 Samuel 2:28 "And did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel [to be] my priest, to offer upon mine altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? and did I give unto the house of thy father all the offerings made by fire of the children of Israel?"

“To be my priest”:

The chief duties of the priests were:

- (1) To place the offerings upon the altar;
- (2) To burn the incense in the holy place; and
- (3) To wear the linen ephod (see verse 18).

1 Samuel 2:29 "Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice and at mine offering, which I have commanded [in my] habitation; and honorest thy sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people?"

“Mine offering”:

In recognition of their service to God and His people, the priests were allocated specific parts of the offering which were brought to the sanctuary (see Lev. 2:3, 10; 7:31-36).

“Honorest”:

By condoning the sin of Hophni and Phinehas, Eli had shown preference for his sons above the LORD.

Therefore, Eli was unworthy of the LORD’s blessing.

God had chosen Aaron and his descendants to be the High Priest and the priests of the tabernacle.

This was the highest honor God could pay a man, to make him High Priest.

He was to be above sin.

This honor carried with it the responsibility to put God and His law above everything, and everyone.

The High Priest was God's communication with man upon the earth.

He spoke through the Urim and the Thummim worn by the High Priest.

The High Priest was in direct communication with the LORD.

All of this should have made the High Priest a man of tremendous integrity, one who knew and revered God above all else.

Eli had allowed his sons to take the food that belonged to God and to the person offering, for themselves.

Eli had put his sons above God.

1 Samuel 2:30 "Wherefore the LORD God of Israel saith, I said indeed [that] thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now the LORD saith, Be it far from me; for them that honor me I will honor, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed."

"I said indeed":

The LORD had promised that Aaron's descendants would always be priests (exodus 29:9), and He had confirmed that promise by oath (Num. 25:13).

Because of flagrant disobedience, the house of Eli would forfeit their priesthood.

Although the Aaronic priest-hood was perpetual, priests could forfeit their position by their sin.

The punishment of the leader of the congregation (in this case the High Priest), is greater, because he sinned in full knowledge.

Judgment begins at the house of God.

God removes the perpetual priesthood from Eli here, because he knew of the sins of his sons and did nothing about it.

Verses 31-36: This prophetic denunciation declares that the family of Eli, from the high priestly house of Ithamar, would have its privilege removed and that the high priesthood would be given to another line.

This apparently took place in the time of Solomon when the high priesthood was transferred back to Zadok of the line of Eleazar, where it had been before Eli's time (Num. 20:22-28; 25:11-13 with 4:3; 1 Kings 2:26-27).

To Zadok's house is promised a perpetual priesthood (Ezek. 44:15; 48:11).

1 Samuel 2:31 "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."

"There shall not be an old man in thine house":

The judgment of untimely death followed the descendants of Eli.

Eli's sons died in the flower of their manhood (4:11).

Later, Saul massacred the priests at Nob (22:16-19).

Ultimately, Solomon removed Abiathar from the priesthood (1 Kings 2:26-27), and the priestly line of Eleazar prevailed, as God promised (Num. 25:12-13).

1 Samuel 2:32 "And thou shalt see an enemy [in my] habitation, in all [the wealth] which [God] shall give Israel: and there shall not be an old man in thine house for ever."

"Enemy in my habitation":

This probably referred to the desecration of the tabernacle, where the LORD dwelt, at Shiloh by the Philistines (see Jer. 7:12-14).

This is just saying that, God will kill Eli's sons and Eli for their sins.

The "arm", in this case, is speaking of descendants.

All of the men of Eli's descendants will die young. They will not live to be old men.

There would be prosperity for the Hebrews under Samuel, Saul, David, and Solomon's reign, but the house of Eli would not have sons to live to old age to enjoy it.

1 Samuel 2:33 "And the man of thine, [whom] I shall not cut off from mine altar, [shall be] to consume thine eyes, and to grieve thine heart: and all the increase of thine house shall die in the flower of their age."

Of his family, which should spring from him: whom I shall not cut off from mine altar: from serving there.

Who though he shall not be a High Priest, but a common priest, as all of the descendants of Aaron were.

"Shall be to consume thine eyes, and to grieve thine heart":

That is, the eyes and heart of his posterity; who though they should see of their family ministering in the priest's office, yet should make so poor a figure on account of their outward meanness and poverty.

Or because of their want of wisdom and intellectual endowments.

Or because of their scandalous lives, that it would fill their hearts with grief and sorrow, and their eyes with tears, so that their eyes would fail, and be consumed, and their hearts be broken.

"And all the increase of thine house shall die in the flower of their age":

Or "die men"; grown men, not children, when it would not be so great an affliction to part with them.

But when at man's estate, in the prime of their days, perhaps about thirty years of age, the time when the priests entered upon their office to do all the work of it.

The Targum is, "shall be killed young men:"

It is more than once said in the Talmud, that there was a family in Jerusalem, the men of which died at eighteen years of age; they came and informed Juchanan ben Zaccai of it; he said to them, perhaps of the family of Eli are ye, as it is said (1 Sam. 2:33).

This is the most hurtful of the judgments of God.

God will allow him to see the death of his sons.

Just about the worst hurt parents can have in this life, is to live to see the death of their children.

Even though his descendants are cut off living in their youth, they will still be required to serve the LORD in the tabernacle.

1 Samuel 2:34 "And this [shall be] a sign unto thee, that shall come upon thy two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas; in one day they shall die both of them."

"A sign unto thee":

The death of Eli's two sons on the same day validated the prophecy (4:11, 17).

We remember that, the same fate came to the two sons of Aaron, who sinned against God.

God will not allow them to live, to continue in corrupting the congregation.

Hophni and Phinehas are acting priests in the tabernacle.

They will both die for their sins in one day.

Judgment of God falls on them the same day.

1 Samuel 2:35 "And I will 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."

"I will raise me up a faithful priest":

This is speaking of Samuel (in the near future).

It is most assuredly speaking prophetically of Christ.

He is the true High Priest, after the order of Melchizedec.

Notice "forever" in the Scripture above.

Samuel was dedicated to God for his entire life.

This goes much further, and speaks of the eternal High Priest of us all; Jesus Christ the Righteous.

He will know the perfect will of God.

Even Jesus said, "Father, not my will, but thine be done".

However, the ultimate fulfillment of the faithful priest is found in the Lord Jesus Christ (Psalm 110; Heb. 5:6; 7:24-25; Rev. 19:11).

"I will build him a sure house":

The sons of Zadok will also serve in the millennial temple (see Ezek. 44:15; 48:11).

"Mine anointed":

This refers to the Messiah who will defeat God's enemies and establish His rule in the Millennium (see verse 10).

1 Samuel 2:36 "And it shall come to pass, [that] every one that is left in thine house shall come [and] crouch to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, and shall say, Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a piece of bread."

"A morsel of bread":

The judgment corresponded to the sin.

Those who had gorged themselves on the sacrifices (verses 12-17), were reduced to begging for a morsel of food.

This is speaking of them coming to Samuel.

The Levitical tribe, and particularly the descendants of Eli, lived of the offerings in the tabernacle.

They needed this food offered to live.

1 Samuel Chapter 2 Continued Questions

1. It seemed some of the _____ knew the law of God better than the priests did.

2. Who were the sons of Eli causing to sin?
3. What did Samuel wear in the tabernacle?
4. What did Samuel's mother do for him, once a year?
5. Who speaks a blessing on Hannah and Elkanah?
6. Why does Hannah have more children?
7. What terrible sin, of the sons of Eli, do we read in verse 22?
8. Why did they not listen to the voice of their father?
9. Who was Samuel in favor with?
10. Who came and warned Eli of what was to happen?
11. What would happen to Eli's descendants?
12. What is the most hurtful of the judgments of God on Eli?
13. What happens to Phinehas and Hophni?
14. Who is verse 35 speaking of?
15. Why would Eli's descendants beg for food?