

## 1 Samuel 2:12-36

March 22, 2012

An outline of this section:

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- II. Eli's Successor (v. 18-21, 26)
- III. Eli's Speech (v. 22-26)
- IV. Eli's Sin (v. 27-29)
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### I. Eli's Sons (v. 12-17)

#### V. 12

Keep in mind, Eli is not simply a priest, one of thousands in Israel - no, He is the High Priest, the one, High Priest of Israel.

His eldest son was to be the next High Priest of Israel, and yet we read that his sons were corrupt, they did not know the LORD. Literally in the Hebrew, they were "sons of Belial." Paul "uses" Belial as a synonym for Satan in 2 Corinthians 6:15.

How can this be? How is it that Eli's sons did not know the LORD? How could they possibly be sons of Belial? Well, we know that our children have a free will, and sometimes the best Christian parents, can have the worst, non-Christian kids. But oftentimes Christian parents are simply not good parents; and such is the case of Eli with his sons.

Notice the things Eli's sons did:

#### V. 13-16

Imagine that. You travel to the Tabernacle, which in those days was located at Shiloh. You bring your sacrifice to God, but then the priest's servant comes and says "give me your meat for the priests to barbecue for themselves."

However, you know better than that, you know that the fat always belongs to God; Leviticus 3:16, "All the fat is the LORD's." But the religious representative of God says, "No, give it to me now, or I'll take it from you by force." How wicked is that?

And then, at other times you offer your sacrifice, and there's a portion that you give

to the Lord, and a portion you enjoy with your family, unless it's a burnt offering; so there you are boiling the meat for a time of festivity with your family, and this time the priest comes in with a 3-pronged flesh hook in his hand and he just goes in to the pan or kettle and says, "whatever I bring up with this 3-pronged flesh hook is mine and I'm gonna take it for myself.

Again, you know better than that. Leviticus 7:34, says that the priest is allowed to have the breast and the right thigh - and that's it.

But so often we see leaders, and often times religious leaders, abusing their authority, considering themselves to be above the law. I hope you know as a congregation, I hope you know as Christians, that the final authority in the church is not the pope or the pastor, it's not the overseer or the elder; it's not the man of God, or the woman of God - no, the final authority is the Word of God, for the only ultimate authority is God himself.

If you ever see a leader abusing his or her position, violating the teachings of the Scriptures - please understand, you do not have to submit to that; as a matter of fact, approach him or her with the motivation of loving God, loving God's people and loving that person.

Apparently there was a misunderstanding in this time of history, and the priests just carried on in their sin, unchecked and unaccountable.

And so we read in:

## **V. 17**

Some say it was the priests who abhorred God's offering; but what happened was the conduct of these priests made the people abhor God's offering. The people were disgusted and therefore hated going to the Tabernacle.

We'll see later (in v. 24), that the priests "made the LORD's people transgress."

And so we read, "Therefore the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD..."

They were stealing from God, and causing the people to stumble; they were not serving the Lord, they were serving themselves, getting fat off the flock, meat from the masses; the sin was very great, for the greatest evil is always the perversion of the greatest good.

*"A wicked priest is the worst creature upon the earth. Who are devils, but they which were once angels of light?" - Trapp*

Leaders are so accountable - Leviticus 10:3 "And Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the LORD spoke, saying: 'By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; and before all the people I must be glorified.'"

Eli's Son's - notice now, the contrast:

## **II. Eli's Successor (v. 18-21, 26)**

### **V. 18**

The child Samuel was very different than the children of Eli. He had a different heart, and undoubtedly his godly mother made a huge impact upon him, from the very beginning.

The children of Eli served themselves, while Samuel, on the other hand, served the LORD.

We even read about him wearing a linen ephod. "*The linen ephod was a sleeveless garment that was worn by priests, especially when officiating at the altar. Occasionally it was worn by others engaged in religious ceremonies such as David (2 Samuel 6:14) and here by Samuel.*" – NKJV Study Bible

Not only did Samuel have his linen ephod, notice what we read next:

### **V. 19-21, 26**

Such a beautiful family this would be; such a powerful ministry this would be.

Samuel was dressed and blessed by his mom; Samuel ministered before the LORD (v. 18), and grew before the LORD (v. 22).

Hannah was so giving – she gave her son, she gave her son clothes; she prayed by pouring out her heart and soul to the LORD, she obeyed in giving her best to the LORD.

God then "visited" Hannah, and she eventually had 3 sons and 2 daughters – what a blessing for the one who was barren!

When you read that Samuel "grew before the LORD" (v. 21), you can't help but notice the Lord raising him up, while He's bringing, Eli, Hophni and Phinehas down.

Psalm 75:6-7 comes to heart, "For exaltation *comes* neither from the east nor from the west nor from the south. But God *is* the Judge: He puts down one, and exalts another."

We'll see the same thing with Saul and David as we continue our journey through 1 Samuel.

### III. Eli's Speech (v. 22-26)

Eli was now an old man. And this is probably mentioned due to the simple fact that his eldest son could succeed him any day now, if Eli were to die, this is whom he would pass the baton to.

But Eli knew everything his sons were doing.

They were ***stealing*** from the men of God.

They were ***sleeping*** with the women of God

They were therefore ***stumbling*** all the people of God.

3 things that still tragically happen today, and not sparingly, but frequently.

And so, Eli simply and foolishly gives them a "good" speech.

He asks them ***why*** they do it (v. 23).

And asks them ***not*** to do it (v. 24)

He tries to reason with them: when the sin is simply man against man, then you've always got someone to appeal to, but when the sin is against God, there's no intercessor left.

And I don't mean to be mean, but how foolish it is at this point in the game, to be giving these wicked rebels a reasonable speech. Didn't he hear? They don't fear God! No, a speech will not reach these guys.

The tragedy here as a leader and as a parent is that Eli was not willing to discipline his sons and do something about it, God, therefore, wanted to kill them.

Proverbs 29:19 is definitely applicable, "A servant will not be corrected by ***mere words***; for though he understands, he will not respond."

*"Parents would be better off to yell less, lecture less, and to take sensible action more often, letting the children see the consequences of their disobedience."* - Guzik

Eli's sons, Eli's successor, Eli's speech:

### IV. Eli's Sin (v. 27-29)

A man of God comes to Eli. We don't know his name, but we do know his nature. He's a man of God, a godly man. He's clear, confrontational and courageous – and right

after we read of Eli asking his sons ***why***, the man of God turns it around and asks ***Eli*** why, he kicks the way he does. Perhaps there was a bit of confusion as to whom all this really belonged to.

The man of God came with a word from God (v. 27), "Thus says the LORD:"

And there's a lot here but the main message is that the man in the prominent position, is to live in constant recognition, that this is ***God's*** work, it's all ***from*** Him, ***for*** Him, and ***to*** Him, and never, ever, ever is it to be from, for or to any man.

Notice again what God said:

Did I not clearly reveal Myself (v. 27)

My priest (v. 28)

My altar (v. 28)

My sacrifice (v. 29)

My offering (v. 29)

My dwelling place (29)

But we see Eli's sin in v. 29 (read again)

Eli was honoring his sons, he was honoring himself, and he was not honoring the Lord.

In this case it was sins of grace and gluttony, two more common pitfalls among God's people.

***Romans 6:1-2*** "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?"

***Malachi 1:6*** "A son honors *his* father, and a servant *his* master. If then I am the Father, where *is* My honor? And if I *am* a Master, where *is* My reverence? Says the LORD of hosts to you priests who despise My name..."

Eli's sons, Eli's successor, Eli's speech, Eli's sin;

#### **IV. Eli's Sentence (v. 30-36)**

The promise of the past would die; the future family would die; Eli was to be replaced and disgraced;

Some say Eli was replaced by Samuel, and to a certain degree he was, but technically he would ultimately be replaced by the sons of Zadok. We read in 1Kings 2:27 "So Solomon removed Abiathar from being priest to the LORD, that he might fulfill the word of the LORD which He spoke concerning the house of Eli at Shiloh."

Eli was replaced and disgraced. The past promises and future family would die due to his sin. May God help us as parents, as leaders, as Christians called to influence this world for good – to learn from the lessons as we've studied Eli's sons, Eli's successor, Eli's speech, Eli's sin and Eli's sentence.

May our Lord bless you as you turn from your sin and trust Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior – today - and forever and ever.