

1 Samuel 02 - Hannah's Praise; Contrast Between Samuel and Eli's Sons; Parental Influence on Children; Judgment on House of Eli

I. Transition from the house of Eli to Samuel (1:1—4:1a)

(1) Samuel's birth (1:1—2:10)

(E) Hannah praises God (2:1-10)

(2) Samuel's spirituality contrasted with Eli's son's carnality (2:11-36)

(A) Contrast in ministerial faithfulness (2:11-17)

(a) Samuel's faithfulness (2:11)

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1 Samuel 2

(E) Hannah praises God (2:1-10)

1 Then Hannah prayed and said, "My heart rejoices in the LORD; My **horn** is exalted in the LORD, My mouth speaks boldly against my enemies, Because I rejoice in Your salvation.

1 Then Hannah prayed and said, "My heart exults in the LORD; My horn is exalted in the LORD, My mouth speaks boldly against my enemies, Because I rejoice in Your salvation.

1 Then Hannah prayed: "My heart exults in the LORD; my strength is increased by the LORD. I will open my mouth to speak against my enemies, because I rejoice in your deliverance.

1 And Hannah prayed, and said, My heart rejoiceth in the LORD, mine horn is exalted in the LORD: my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; because I rejoice in thy salvation.

- "...horn" - symbolizes strength

- After years of prayerfully waiting on the Lord, Hannah experienced God's power to peacefully persevere

— In choosing to redeem her vow (dedicate Samuel fully to the Lord), she now knew God in a way she had not before

This magnificent prayer provides the key to interpreting the rest of 1 and 2 Samuel. In this prayer, which contains no petition, Hannah articulated her belief that God rewards trust with blessing. He turns barrenness into fertility, not just in her case but universally. Mary, the mother of Jesus, incorporated some of Hannah's song in her own "Magnificat" (Luke 1:46-55).

2 "There is no one holy like the LORD, Indeed, there is no one besides You, Nor is there any **rock** like our God.

2 "There is no one holy like the LORD, Indeed, there is no one besides You, Nor is there any rock like our God.

2 Indeed, there is no one holy like the LORD, indeed, there is no one besides you, there is no rock like our God.

2 There is none holy as the LORD: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God.

- Hannah had little to say about herself...her song praises her glorious God

— She praised God because He had provided salvation for His people (v1-2)

- "...rock" - strength

3 "Do not go on boasting so very proudly, Do not let arrogance come out of your mouth; For the LORD is a God of knowledge, And with Him actions are weighed.

3 "Boast no more so very proudly, Do not let arrogance come out of your mouth; For the LORD is a God of knowledge, And with Him actions are weighed.

3 Don't continue to talk proudly, and don't speak arrogantly, for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed.

3 Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogancy come out of your mouth: for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed.

- When we pray, we need to be very careful that we do not allow our pride to cause us to stumble. We need to recognize our weakness, our insufficiency, and our inability to deserve anything from God.

— We have no claim on God that He should listen to us or grant our petitions

— Only after we accept Christ do we have a claim in God because we can come to Him in the name of Jesus Christ

4 "The bows of the mighty are broken to pieces, But those who have stumbled strap on strength.

4 "The bows of the mighty are shattered, But the feeble gird on strength.

4 The bows of warriors are shattered, but those who stumble are equipped with strength.

4 The bows of the mighty men are broken, and they that stumbled are girded with strength.

- Hannah learned that God will humble people who view themselves as self-sufficient (v3-4), but will help those who cast themselves on Him, asking Him to provide what they need (v5-8)

5 "Those who were full hire themselves out for bread, But those who were hungry cease to *be hungry*. Even the infertile woman gives birth to **seven**, But she who has many children languishes.

5 "Those who were full hire themselves out for bread, But those who were hungry cease to *hunger*. Even the barren gives birth to seven, But she who has many children languishes.

5 Those who had an abundance of bread now hire themselves out, and those who were hungry hunger no more. While the barren woman gives birth to seven children, she who had many children languishes.

5 They that were full have hired out themselves for bread; and they that were hungry ceased: so that the barren hath born seven; and she that hath many children is waxed feeble.

- "...seven" - Hannah eventually had five other children (v21), but the expression "seven children" here symbolizes the full granting of her desire for a son

6 "The LORD puts to death and makes alive; He brings down to Sheol and brings up.

6 "The LORD kills and makes alive; He brings down to Sheol and raises up.

6 The LORD kills and gives life, he brings people down to where the dead are and he raises them up.

6 The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up.

- Perhaps even more significant, it is a prayer that shows a deep awareness of who God is. Hannah acknowledged God as holy (v2), as One who knows and weighs human deeds (v3).

- Hannah saw Him as the One who satisfies the needy (v5), who is Master of life and death, of poverty and wealth (v6). Her sense of the power and glory of God is summed up beautifully in these verses:

7 "The LORD makes poor and rich; He humbles, He also exalts.

7 "The LORD makes poor and rich; He brings low, He also exalts.

7 The LORD makes people poor and he makes people rich, he brings them low, and he also exalts them.

7 The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up.

8 "He raises the poor from the dust, He lifts the needy from the garbage heap To seat *them* with nobles, And He gives them a **seat of honor** as an inheritance; For the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S, And He set the world on them.

8 "He raises the poor from the dust, He lifts the needy from the ash heap To make them sit with nobles, And inherit a seat of honor; For the pillars of the earth are the LORD's, And He set the world on them.

8 He raises the poor up from the dust, he lifts up the needy from the trash heap to make them sit with princes and inherit a seat of honor. Indeed the pillars of the earth belong to the LORD, and he has set the world on them.

8 He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S, and he hath set the world upon them.

- "...seat of honor" - those who love God enjoy His presence, provision and His reward, although their "seat of honor" may come in the future completion of His kingdom

- Hannah's prayer indicates that she had a deep awareness of who God is:

- She acknowledged God as holy (v2)
- He weighs human needs (v3)
- He satisfies the needy (v5)
- He is the Master of life and death, poverty and wealth (v6)

...the whole sense of power and the glory of God is evident here

9 "He watches over the feet of His godly ones, But the wicked ones are silenced in darkness; For not by might shall a person prevail.

9 "He keeps the feet of His godly ones, But the wicked ones are silenced in darkness; For not by might shall a man prevail.

9 He guards the steps of his faithful ones, while the wicked are made silent in darkness. He grants the request of the one who prays. He blesses the year of the righteous. Indeed it's not by strength that a person prevails.

9 He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; or by strength shall no man prevail.

10 "Those who contend with the LORD will be terrified; Against them He will thunder in the heavens, The LORD will judge the ends of the earth; And He will give strength to His **king**, And will exalt the **horn** of His **anointed**."

10 "Those who contend with the LORD will be shattered; Against them He will thunder in the heavens, The LORD will judge the ends of the earth; And He will give strength to His king, And will exalt the horn of His anointed."

10 The LORD will shatter his enemies —those who contend against him. Who is holy? The one who will thunder against them in the heavens. The LORD will judge the ends of the earth, he will give strength to his king, and he will increase the strength of His anointed one."

10 The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: the LORD shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed.

- "...king" - this is a pre-monarchal prophecy from the mouth of Hannah, speaking about King David (Cf. Judges 8:22-23)

— God had previously revealed through Moses that in the future, He would provide a king for His people (Deut 17)

— He actually revealed His purpose to set up a king of His people as early as Genesis (Gen 17:6,16; 35:11; 49:10; Cf. Gen 1:26-28)

— Hannah's reference to this "king" shows that the people of Israel looked forward to the fulfillment of that promise

— Shortly after this, Israel demanded a king from God (8:4-7), but that wasn't the king God had in mind

- "...horn" - strength

- "...anointed" - *Meshiach*, or Messiah. What a tremendous reorientation! The same Hannah who was so bitter and downcast that she could not even sense God's grace now saw the Lord clearly.

— In fact, she was able to praise God in a situation which some might expect would throw her back into despair—the loss of the very child she had prayed for!

The whole point of this prayer is that people should trust in the Lord. Hannah did this, and God blessed her miraculously.

In 1:1—2:10 we also find, for the first time, the "reversal-of-fortune" motif that is a major theme in 1 and 2 Samuel. People apparently unimportant become important, and those who appear to be important become unimportant (Cf. Matt 19:30). The crucial factor for them as Israelites was *their response to the will of God* as contained in the Mosaic Covenant.

God will bless people who want to further His program in the world by making it possible for them to do that. He may even do supernatural things to enable them to do so. Natural limitations do not limit God. Knowledge of what God has revealed about Himself and His program is what God uses to inspire trust in Himself and interest in His program. God may even reverse the fortunes of people because of their response to His will. "Reversal of fortune" is a major theme throughout 1&2 Samuel...the unimportant become important, based on their response to the will of God.

What was so different between the angry and frustrated Hannah, and the one who prayed this prayer? Hannah now was able to look beyond herself and her own needs. She could sense God's love now and trust Him. And she could sense the future that God had for this first child she loved so deeply. Because Hannah truly had given her son to the Lord, she trusted God to care for him and to give him a fulfilling life.

OT Model Prayers

We have many models of prayer in the OT. Among the greatest are:

- Gen 18:16-33
- Ex 32:11-14
- Num 14:11-19
- 2 Sam 7:18-29; 12:13-23
- 1 Kings 8:22-53
- 2 Kings 19:14-19
- 2 Chr 20:6-12
- Ezra 9:5-15

Compare this passage with Mary's song in Luke 1:46-55. In both cases, the women praise God for His victory and for honoring the prayers of the humble. Note the two names of Christ in v10—"His King" and "His Anointed" (Messiah, Christ)—for Hannah's burden was for the glory of the Lord among His people.

(2) Samuel's spirituality contrasted with Eli's son's carnality (2:11-36)

(A) Contrast in ministerial faithfulness (2:11-17)

(a) Samuel's faithfulness (2:11)

11 Then Elkanah went to his home at Ramah. But the boy continued to attend to the service of the LORD before Eli the priest.

11 Then Elkanah went to his home at Ramah. But the boy ministered to the LORD before Eli the priest.

11 Then Elkanah went to his house at Ramah, while the boy was ministering to the LORD in the presence of Eli the priest.

11 And Elkanah went to Ramah to his house. And the child did minister unto the LORD before Eli the priest.

- The story of Hannah and Elkanah concludes with a single paragraph

— Each year the two returned to the tabernacle to worship, bringing Samuel new clothes, but they did not come alone. God had opened Hannah's womb, and she bore three additional sons and two daughters. What a wonderful reminder that it is impossible to out-give God.

- As for Samuel, the boy ministered before the Lord and was cared for by Eli the priest

— Eli was probably over 70 years old at this time, as he became the virtual father of Samuel
— We should wonder at Elkanah and Hannah's wisdom in leaving their young son with a man who had been a failure at raising his own sons (Cf. v12), but Eli eventually turned out to be a good "father" to Samuel.

Eli—a Careless Father

While Eli himself was a dedicated and righteous man, his sons "had no regard for the Lord" (v12). This passage catalogs their sins as both ritual and moral: ritually they violated regulations in the Law concerning the sacrifices that signified God's acceptance of sinners. In this they treated the Lord's offering with contempt, a very great sin in God's sight. Morally they were just as corrupt, quick to commit adultery, and ready to use violence as were the people that, as priests, they were called to serve.

While Eli rebuked his sons, they paid no attention. And Eli did no more than rebuke them. He did not even strip them of their priesthood, the least he might have done. As a result God sent a prophet to announce His judgment. The prophet outlined a series of tragic events that would take place "because you scorn My sacrifice and offering" and "honor your sons more than Me" (v29). No one in Eli's family line would grow old: his descendants would die in the prime of life. In the place of Eli and his line God would raise up "a faithful priest, who will do according to what is in My heart and mind" (v35). [Ultimately that faithful Priest is Jesus, who fulfills in Himself all that the OT priesthood merely signified.] In the immediate context, however, Samuel, whose primary role was as a judge and prophet, did serve as a priest. And in the course of history the high priestly role was shifted from Eli's family line to another branch of Aaron's family (Cf. 1 Kings 2:27,35).

How tragic when a servant of the Lord (and a high priest at that) fails to win his own sons to the Lord! These sons of Eli were selfish, for they put their own desires ahead of the Word of God and the needs of the people; they were overbearing; and they were lustful (2:22). Phil 3:17-19 is a perfect description of these ungodly priests. Note the repetition of the word "flesh." Note too the contrast between Eli's sons and young Samuel in v18: "But Samuel..." No doubt Eli's sons laughed at young Samuel and ridiculed him for his faithful ministry; but God was going to step in and settle accounts before long.

(b) Eli's sons unfaithfulness (2:12-17)

12 Now the sons of Eli were useless men; they did not know the LORD.

12 Now the sons of Eli were worthless men; they did not know the LORD

12 Now the sons of Eli were worthless men who did not know the LORD.

12 Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the LORD.

- The priests (Eli's sons) were corrupt...no regard for the law or sacrifices

— Their conduct reflected the low spiritual condition of the nation at the time, and also discouraged (rather than encouraged) the Israelites from worshipping the Lord at the tabernacle

- Their sins could be characterized both ritually and morally:

- Ritually: they violated the regulations of the law concerning the sacrifices that signified God's acceptance of sinners; they treated the Lord's offering with contempt (which is a big sin in God's eyes)
- Morally: quick to commit adultery and use violence for their own gain; they were supposed to serve the people instead of themselves

Eli's sons were not only evil in their personal lives, but they flagrantly disregarded the will of God even as they served as leaders of Israel's worship. They neither knew the Lord (in the sense of paying attention to Him, v12) nor treated His offerings as special (v17; Cf. Mal 1:6-14). The writer documented these evaluations with two instances of their specific practices (v13-14 and v15-16). The Law ordered the priests to handle the offerings in particular ways to respect God's holiness (Cf. Lev 3:3,5; 7:34; Deut 18:3). Eli's sons disregarded those instructions.

13 And *this was* the custom of the priests with the people: *when* anyone was offering a sacrifice, the priest's servant would come while the meat was cooking, with a three-pronged fork in his hand.

13 and the custom of the priests with the people. When any man was offering a sacrifice, the priest's servant would come while the meat was boiling, with a three-pronged fork in his hand.

13 The custom of the priests with the people was that whenever a person offered a sacrifice, a servant of the priest would come with a three pronged fork in his hand while the meat was boiling, and

13 And the priests' custom with the people was, that, when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant came, while the flesh was in seething, with a fleshhook of three teeth in his hand;

14 And he would thrust it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; everything that the fork brought up, the priest would take for himself. They did so in Shiloh to all the Israelites who came there.

14 Then he would thrust it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; all that the fork brought up the priest would take for himself. Thus they did in Shiloh to all the Israelites who came there.

14 he would stick it into the boiler or pot, and take everything the fork brought up—that is, the priest would take it for himself. This is what they were supposed to do with all the Israelites who came there to Shiloh.

14 And he struck it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; all that the fleshhook brought up the priest took for himself. So they did in Shiloh unto all the Israelites that came thither.

- The priests (Eli's sons) lived off the food offerings presented as sacrifices

— The Law allowed the priests to take for themselves the breast and upper part of the right rear leg of animals brought as peace offerings (Lev 7:28-36; Deut 18:1). However, Eli's sons abused their position and took the best portion of meat, all that the three-pronged fork brought up when plunged into the remaining meat being boiled for the sacrificial meal.

— They demanded the best part of the meat before it had even been burned as an offering to the Lord

15 Also, before they burned the fat, the priest's servant would come and say to the man who was sacrificing, "Give the priest meat for roasting, as he will not take cooked meat from you, only raw."

15 Also, before they burned the fat, the priest's servant would come and say to the man who was sacrificing, "Give the priest meat for roasting, as he will not take boiled meat from you, only raw."

15 But even before they burned the fat, the servant of the priest would come and say to the person offering the sacrifice, "Give me meat to roast for the priest. He won't accept boiled meat from you, but only raw."

15 Also before they burnt the fat, the priest's servant came, and said to the man that sacrificed, Give flesh to roast for the priest; for he will not have sodden flesh of thee, but raw.

16 And *if* the man said to him, "They must burn the fat first, then take as much as you desire," then he would say, "No, but you must give *it to me* now; and if not, I am taking it by force!"

16 If the man said to him, "They must surely burn the fat first, and then take as much as you desire," then he would say, "No, but you shall give *it to me* now; and if not, I will take it by force."

16 If the man told him, "They must surely burn up the fat first, and then take for yourself whatever you desire," the servant would say, "No, give it now, and if you don't, I'll take it by force!"

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.

- The priests were to burn the best part of the sacrifices on the altar as offerings to God, but Eli's sons demanded for themselves raw meat that was not cooked at all
— Meat was luxurious food in Israel's economy, so Eli's sons were living off the fat of the land

17 And so the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD, for the men treated the offering of the LORD disrespectfully.

17 Thus the sin of the young men was very great before the Lord, for the men despised the offering of the LORD.

17 By doing this, the sin of the young men was very serious in the LORD's sight because the men despised the LORD's offering.

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

- In their oppressive power, greed and gluttony, Hophni and Phinehas blasphemed God. They treated God's people and their offerings to Him with contempt.

— Their dishonesty caused many people to turn from God; the Israelites saw what Eli's sons were doing in the Tabernacle and instead of being drawn closer to the Lord, they were driven away.

— The idea of shutting our eyes to sin in the church, or covering it up, drives people away from God. The consequences for irreverence or misrepresenting God are serious.

(B) Contrast in fertility (2:18-25)

(a) Samuel brings fertility to his home (2:18-21)

18 Now Samuel was ministering before the LORD, as a boy wearing a linen ephod.

18 Now Samuel was ministering before the LORD, as a boy wearing a linen ephod.

18 Now Samuel was ministering in the LORD's presence, as a boy wearing a linen ephod.

18 But Samuel ministered before the LORD, being a child, girded with a linen ephod.

- While Eli's adult sons lived to selfishly get what they could, young Samuel was "ministering before the Lord"

19 And his mother would make for him a **little robe** and bring it up to him from year to year when she would come up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice.

19 And his mother would make him a little robe and bring it to him from year to year when she would come up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice.

19 His mother would make a small robe for him, and she would bring it each year when she went up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice.

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 robe" - a small, priestly robe (Cf. Ex 28:31; 2 Sam 6:14)

— Hannah dressed Samuel as a little priest, showing that she respected the office and wanted her son to grow up valuing it. Even though he was surrounded by corruption, God was with Samuel and had a purpose for him.

20 Then Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, and say, "May the LORD give you children from this woman in place of the one she requested of the LORD." And they went to their own home.

20 Then Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife and say, "May the LORD give you children from this woman in place of the one she dedicated to the LORD." And they went to their own home.

20 Then Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife and say, "May the LORD give you descendants from this woman in place of the one she dedicate to the LORD." Then they would return to their home.

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.

21 The LORD indeed visited Hannah, and she conceived and gave birth to three sons and two daughters. And the boy Samuel grew up before the LORD.

21 The LORD visited Hannah; and she conceived and gave birth to three sons and two daughters. And the boy Samuel grew before the LORD.

21 The LORD took note of Hannah, and she became pregnant and gave birth to three sons and two daughters. Meanwhile, the boy Samuel continued to grow, and the LORD was constantly with him.

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.

- Hannah's obedience resulted in God's blessing her and Elkanah even more: she had five more children, and Samuel continued to develop in his service to the Lord

— This is similar to Abraham's offering of Isaac...Abraham gave Isaac to the Lord in obedience and received many additional offspring without losing Isaac

Hannah and Elkanah gave one child to God and received five more without losing the first, just as Abraham gave Isaac and received many offspring without losing Isaac! God gave Hannah far more than she had given him, and He still works in the same way for those who love Him and seek to live according to His plan and purpose.

Eli's Lack of Influence on His Sons

Eli refused to face facts honestly and obey the Word of God (Deut 21:18-21; 17:12). In 3:13 God states clearly that Eli refused to restrain his sons; instead, he pampered them. His weak warning in 2:23-25 was certainly no substitute for definite discipline. Compare 2:26 with Luke 2:52.

Eli held the highest position in Israel (High Priest). He was responsible for leading the people, starting with his own sons, in worship and loyalty to God. Instead, he allowed Hophni and Phinehas to dishonor Him. Therefore, God outlined His specific judgment on Eli and his household, to remove Eli's lineage from the priesthood and to replace them with another line of Levi's descendants.

(b) Sons of Eli bring infertility to their home (2:22-25)

22 Now Eli was very old; and he heard about everything that his sons were doing to all Israel, and that they slept with the women who served at the doorway of the tent of meeting.

22 Now Eli was very old; and he heard all that his sons were doing to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who served at the doorway of the tent of meeting.

22 Now Eli was very old, and he had heard everything that his sons were doing to the Israelis, and how they lay with the women who were serving regularly at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting.

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.

- Eli's sons were following the example of Canaanite worship rather than the Mosaic Law:

- Disrespecting the sacrifices and taking the best meat for themselves and offering the leftovers to the Lord
- Ritual prostitution was a key part of Canaanite worship
 - Instead of temple prostitutes, Eli's sons "laid" with women who performed menial duties in the tabernacle (Cf. Ex 38:8)
 - Josephus wrote that the sons regularly raped women who came to worship, and enticed others by bribery [5:10:1]

23 So he said to them, "Why are you doing such things as these, the evil things that I hear from all these people?"

23 He said to them, "Why do you do such things, the evil things that I hear from all these people?"

23 "Why are you doing these things that I'm hearing about?" he asked his sons, "These reports about your evil deeds are coming from all these people!"

23 And he said unto them, Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil dealings by all this people.

- What a weak warning for such serious sins...

— Eli should have removed his sons from the priesthood, but he failed to do so. His failure led to unintended, unimagined consequences (maximum divine discipline).

24 No, my sons; for the report is not good which I hear the LORD'S people circulating.

24 No, my sons; for the report is not good which I hear the LORD's people circulating.

24 No, my sons, I'm not hearing good news being circulated by the LORD's people.

24 Nay, my sons; for it is no good report that I hear: ye make the LORD's people to transgress.

- The behavior of Eli's sons was an open scandal in Israel; their immoral behavior caused other Israelites to fall into sin

— The people were doing what the priests were doing, thus Eli's sons led the people into sin

25 If one person sins against another, God will mediate for him; but if a person sins against the LORD, who can intercede for him?" But **they would not listen** to the voice of their father, for the LORD desired to put them to death.

25 If one man sins against another, God will mediate for him; but if a man sins against the LORD, who can intercede for him?" But they would not listen to the voice of their father, for the LORD desired to put them to death.

25 If a person sins against another, God will mediate for him, but if a person sins against the LORD, who can intercede for him?" But they would not follow the advice of their father; for the LORD wanted to put them to death.

25 If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against the LORD, who shall intreat for him? Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because the LORD would slay them.

- Eli's weak warning to his sons was no substitute for definite discipline; God held him accountable. Even when confronted by their father, the two sons refused to repent.

— Old men are typically wise, but Eli was not wise enough to restrain the sinful behavior of his sons

- "...they would not listen" - God's first judgment on them was to harden their hearts as a result of their sin. He later would bring final destruction on them (Cf. Ex 7:3; Rom 1:24).

- Unintentional sin was pardonable under Mosaic Law, but deliberate, rebellious sin was not, particularly for ritual prostitution (Cf. Num 25:1-5; Deut 23:17; Amos 2:7-8). The punishment for arrogant, deliberate sin was death (Num 15:30).

(C) Contrast in divine blessing (2:26-36)

(a) Samuel blessed (2:26)

26 Now the boy Samuel was continuing to grow and to be in favor both with the LORD and with people.

26 Now the boy Samuel was growing in stature and in favor both with the LORD and with men.

26 But the boy Samuel continued to grow both physically and in favor with the LORD and the people.

26 And the child Samuel grew on, and was in favour both with the LORD, and also with men.

- While Eli's sons were growing in disfavor with God and the Israelites (v22-25), Samuel was growing in favor with both because he was obeying God

Eli's Severe Judgment

God in His grace sent a severe message to Eli by the mouth of an unknown man of God (v27, warning him that his family would suffer because of the sins of his sons and because of his own carelessness. He honored his sons above the Lord (v29); this was idolatry. Eli had not been jealous for the glory of the Lord, so God had to remove him.

In later years, Saul killed many of Eli's descendants (22:17-20); and later Solomon replaced Eli's family with the family of Zadok: the priesthood was taken from Abiathar, descendant of Aaron's son Ithamar, and given to Zadok, descendant of Aaron's son Eleazar (1 Kings 2:27,35). Of course, the "faithful priest" of v35 refers immediately to Samuel, but ultimately to Christ. Verse 34 predicts the death of Eli's two sons; see 4:17-18 for the fulfillment.

(b) Eli's sons cursed (2:27-36)

27 Then a **man of God** came to Eli and said to him, "This is what the LORD says: 'Did I not indeed reveal Myself to the house of your father when they were in Egypt in bondage to Pharaoh's house?'"

27 Then a man of God came to Eli and said to him, "Thus says the LORD, 'Did I *not* indeed reveal Myself to the house of your father when they were in Egypt *in bondage* to Pharaoh's house?'"

27 A man of God came to Eli, saying to him, "This is what the LORD says: 'When they were in Egypt and slaves to the house of Pharaoh, did I not reveal to the family of your ancestor Aaron'"

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?"

- "...a man of God" - an unnamed prophet (Cf. 9:9-10)

— God sent a prophet to speak with Eli...this was odd since Eli was the high priest in Israel. God was done talking to him.

- The specific sins that this prophet directed against Eli and his sons was two-fold:

- They had not appreciated God's grace extended to them in the Exodus deliverance (v27)
- They did not appreciate the opportunity to serve Him as priests (v28)

28 Did I not choose them from all the tribes of Israel to be My priests, to go up to My altar, to burn incense, to carry an ephod before Me? And did I not give to the house of your father all the fire offerings of the sons of Israel?

28 Did I *not* choose them from all the tribes of Israel to be My priests, to go up to My altar, to burn incense, to carry an ephod before Me; and did I *not* give to the house of your father all the fire *offerings* of the sons of Israel?

28 that I had chosen him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to offer up burnt offerings on my altar, burn incense, and carry the ephod in my presence? And did I not give to your ancestors' family all the Israeli fire-offerings?

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?

29 Why are you **showing contempt** for My sacrifice and My offering which I have commanded for My dwelling, and why are you honoring your sons above Me, by making yourselves fat with the choicest of every offering of My people Israel?'

29 Why do you kick at My sacrifice and at My offering which I have commanded *in My* dwelling, and honor your sons above Me, by making yourselves fat with the choicest of every offering of My people Israel?'

29 Why, then, do all of you show contempt for my sacrifice and offering that I've commanded for my dwelling? And you honor your sons more than me in order to fatten yourselves from the best of all the offerings of my people Israel.'

29 Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice and at mine offering, which I have commanded in my habitation; and honourest thy sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people?

- "...showing contempt" - *ba át*, to scorn or show contempt

— It is a serious matter to undervalue the grace of God. God initiated blessing, but they did not respond appropriately with gratitude, trust and obedience.

- Eli honored his sons above the Lord (idolatry); he had not been jealous for the glory of the Lord, so God removed him

— His guilt was in his failure to rebuke his sons severely for their sin (3:13), although he did warn them of God's judgment (v25)

— He also enjoyed the fruits of their disobedient worship (v13-16). Did Eli grow fat from eating the best portions that his sons extorted from the people (Cf. 4:18)?

30 Therefore the LORD God of Israel declares, 'I did indeed say that your house and the house of your father was to walk before Me forever'; but now the LORD declares, 'Far be it from Me—for those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me will be insignificant.

30 Therefore the LORD God of Israel declares, 'I did indeed say that your house and the house of your father should walk before Me forever'; but now the LORD declares, 'Far be it from Me—for those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me will be lightly esteemed.

30 "Therefore, the LORD God of Israel has declared, 'I did, in fact, say that your family and your ancestor's family would walk before me forever,' but now the LORD declares, 'Far be it from me! The one who honors me I'll honor, and the one who despises me is to be treated with contempt.

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 honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.

- This prophecy shows the dangers of knowing God's Word but neglecting it...

- This is a key verse in 1 & 2 Samuel; it articulates the principle that both books of Samuel illustrate. Every section of both 1 & 2 Samuel demonstrates the truth of this statement.

31 Behold, the days are coming when I will eliminate your strength and the strength of your father's house, so that there will not be an old man in your house.

31 Behold, the days are coming when I will break your strength and the strength of your father's house so that there will not be an old man in your house.

31 The time is coming when I'll cut away at your family and your ancestor's family until there are no old men left in your family.

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.

- The prophet outlines a severe prophecy from God: that judgment would fall on Eli's family. No one in Eli's family would grow to be an old man.

— In later years, Saul killed many of Eli's descendants (Cf. 22:17-20)

— Later, Solomon replaced Eli's family with the family of Zadok (Cf. 1 Kings 1:7-8; 2:26-27,35). Zadok, a descendant of Levi's son Eleazar, replaced Abiathar as high priest in Solomon's day (1 Kings 2:26-27,35).

- They had dishonored God so God would dishonor them. In Eli's place, God would raise up a "faithful priest" (v35) (Samuel).

God's judgment on Eli and his sons was that He would dishonor them. God had promised that Levi's descendants would serve Him forever as priests, namely, as long as Israel existed as a sovereign nation (Ex 29:9; Num 25:13). Now God revealed that He would cut off Eli's branch of the Levitical family tree. Eli was a descendant of Levi through Levi's son Ithamar. His descendants ceased to function as priests when Solomon dismissed Abiathar as high priest. Abiathar escaped the slaughter of the priests at Nob (22:17-20), but Solomon defrocked him because he supported Adonijah (1 Kings 2:27,35).

32 And you will look at the distress of My dwelling, **in spite of all the good that I do for Israel**; and there will never be an old man in your house.

32 You will see the distress of *My* dwelling, in *spite of* all the good that I do for Israel; and an old man will not be in your house forever.

32 Distress will settle down to live in your household, and despite all the good that I do for Israel, there will never be an old man in your family forever, and you will never again have an old man in my house.

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.

- "...in spite of all the good that I do for Israel" - the lone bright spot in this dire prophecy: God will not allow weak or wicked leaders to thwart His purposes or destroy His people

33 Yet I will not cut off every man of yours from My altar, so that your eyes will fail from weeping and your soul grieve, and all the increase of your house will die in the prime of life.

33 Yet I will not cut off every man of yours from My altar so that your eyes will fail *from weeping* and your soul grieve, and all the increase of your house will die in the prime of life.

33 Any of you whom I don't eliminate from serving at my altar will grow tired from weeping, and their souls will grieve. All the increase of your family will die by violence.

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.

34 And this will be the sign to you which will come in regard to your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas: on the same day both of them will die.

34 This will be the sign to you which will come concerning your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas: on the same day both of them will die.

34 Here's a sign for you—your two sons Hophni and Phineas will both die on the same day!

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.

- Here, we get a terrifying prophecy that they would die on the same day (fulfilled in 4:17-18)

Earlier in Israel's history another Phinehas, the godly son of another priest, Eleazar, had executed an Israelite named Zimri and a Moabite woman named Cozbi for practicing sexual immorality in the tabernacle (Num 25). Now this Phinehas, a priest and the son of another priest, Eli, was practicing sexual immorality in the tabernacle. How far the priests had departed from the Lord during the approximately 300 years that separated these incidents!

35 But I will raise up for Myself a **faithful priest** who will do according to what is in My heart and My soul; and I will build him an enduring house, and he will walk before **My anointed** always.

35 But I will raise up for Myself a faithful priest who will do according to what is in My heart and in My soul; and I will build him an enduring house, and he will walk before My anointed always.

35 And I'll raise up for myself a faithful priest who will do according to what is in my heart and according to my desire. I'll build for him an enduring house and he will walk before my anointed one forever.

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.

- "...faithful priest" - refers in the near term to Samuel, but in the ultimate sense refers to Christ

- "...My anointed" - the king of Israel; one of his descendants would be the Messiah
— The ministry of Zadok's descendants will continue into the messianic kingdom (Ezek 44:15; 48:11)

36 And everyone who is left in your house will come to bow down to him for a silver coin or a loaf of bread and say, "Please assign me to one of the priest's offices so that I may eat a piece of bread.""

36 Everyone who is left in your house will come and bow down to him for a piece of silver or a loaf of bread and say, "Please assign me to one of the priest's offices so that I may eat a piece of bread.""

36 Anyone who remains in your family will come and prostrate themselves before him for a small wage or a loaf of bread and will say, "Please put me in one of the priest's offices so I can eat a piece of bread.""

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.

- This verse continues the description of the fate of Eli's descendants after God deposed Abiathar