

ABOUT GOD'S PROMISES

“Eli’s sons were wicked men; they had no regard for the LORD.”

—1 SAMUEL 2:12

Eli’s family was of the tribe of Levi, descendants of Aaron, to whom God had given the priesthood of Israel. About 250 years after entering the land of Canaan, Eli and his two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, ran the tabernacle shrine at Shiloh. 1 Samuel 3:1 says, “In those days the word of the LORD was rare; there were not many visions.” There may have been plenty of activity within the shrine, but there was little encounter with God.

Hophni and Phinehas, with no regard for the Lord, had turned their privileged status into self gain, taking the choicest pieces of meat for themselves rather than sacrificing it to God. They were also sexually exploiting the women serving in the shrine, and Eli had failed to restrain them. Then God, through an unnamed agent, speaks to Eli, “I promised that your house and your father’s house would minister before me forever. But now the LORD declares: ‘Far be it from me! Those who honour me, I will honour, but those who despise me will be disdained’.” (1 Samuel 2:30). God decreed that none of Eli’s descendants would serve in the tabernacle again or even reach old age.

God first makes a promise and then withdraws it, but God does not break promises. He will, however, rescind them and the reason is because all God’s promises are conditional. There are no unconditional promises He makes. In 2 Timothy 2:13, Paul says, “If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot disown Himself.” That means God will never initiate a break in a promise and will never fail to fulfill what

He has promised. But if the conditions are not met by us, in this case, by Eli's family, then the promise becomes annulled.

God's promise to the family of Eli was made in the context of their serving the purposes of God amongst His people. In as much as the priesthood operated on God's terms, they were totally secure. The same applies today. Changing the terms and doing our own thing instead of fulfilling God's objectives is abusing and exploiting the position God has entrusted us with. He then withdraws and ceases to be involved.

God is committed to His agenda only. It isn't a question of God conforming to us and blessing our plans, but of us conforming to Him and His plans. God is always the fixed point. 2 Chronicles 15:2 says, "The Lord is with you when you are with him." Instead of our prayers saying, as they often do, "Lord, be with me today," our prayers should be saying, "Lord, enable me to be with You."

PRAYER: Dear Lord, scripture holds many promises You have made for us, and I know they are all fulfilled as we abide in You. Help me to do that, Lord..... always.

TO REFLECT UPON: Am I living my life on God's terms and discovering the benefits of His promises?