

A Study of I Samuel

The Desiring for a King

Chapter Two

Eli - A Careless Father (2:12 – 36)

Hannah's Prayer (2:1-11): Hannah's prayer is recorded through verse 10. The prayer of Hannah rounds out her life, a woman of great faith and personal character. Hannah was a godly mother who prayed for and cherished her son (and undoubtedly her other children, vs. 11). Her character is in sharp contrast to Eli and his sons.

Hannah starts out her prayer by acknowledging her joy for the Lord answering her. Her horn (strength and power) is exulted and her mouth (able to speak praise) is enlarged over her enemies by preserving her lineage (1 cf. Psalm 18:1-3).

Hannah acknowledges God as the One and only Holy God who abases the proud and lofty and raises up men of low estate (2-3 cf. Luke 1:48-52). What follows are comparisons that backup this very truth (4-5):

- The mighty men vs those that stumble (4).
- The full vs the hungry (5)
- The barren vs those that have many children (5)

Hannah acknowledges the sovereignty of the Lord over the earth (6-8).

Hannah acknowledges the power of the Lord (9-10).

Notice verse 10 is an acknowledgment of a coming king, one anointed of the LORD, a prophecy of Christ as King (Psalm 2:1-9). This is before Israel's time of the monarchs.

Eli's Wicked Sons (12-17): Again, the account of Hannah here is in stark contrast to that of Eli. Though Eli was dedicated to the house of the Lord, his sons were sons of Belial,¹ they knew not the LORD (12). The sins of Hophni and Phinehas are "very great" for the men "abhorred the offering of the LORD" (17). And Eli was not innocent in this matter

¹ See foot note #4

for when a prophet comes to him regarding his sons he says, (you) “honourest thy sons above me...” (29). Though Eli did rebuke his sons (23-25) that is all he did.

As to the sins of Hophni and Phinehas they were both **ritual** and **moral**: **Ritually** they violated regulations in the Law concerning sacrifices. The Law of Moses defined exactly what was to be the priest's portion of every peace offering (Lev. 7:31-35); it also gave express directions about the burning of the fat (Lev. 7:23-25, Lev. 7:31). It was therefore a gross act of disobedience and lawlessness on the part of Hophni and Phinehas to take more than the Law gave them (13-16). **Morally**, they were fornicators, laying with the woman that assembled at the door of the of the tabernacle of the congregation (22).

Contrasted with Samuel (18-21): Samuel stands in stark contrast to Hophni and Phinehas as does Hannah with Eli. Elkanah and Hannah were faithful, goldy parents who provided for Samuel year after year (18-19). Eli himself blessed Hannah and the Lord visited her; she bore three sons and two daughters (21).

Samuel himself grew “and was in favour both with the LORD, and also with men” (26 cf. Luke 2:52).

A Father’s Rebuke (22-26): Eli was old and overweight from his overindulgence in unlawful eating of meat from the offering of the people (see 13-16, 29 cf. I Sam. 4:18). By the time Eli hears of all that his sons did unto all Israel it was too late. After his verbal rebuke to his sons, they “hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because the LORD would slay them” (25). The children were hardened against spiritual things. Eli himself partook of these things by allowing them to happen, and as such Eli honored his sons above God. That is idolatry so God will have to remove them all.

A Prophet’s Judgement (27-36): A prophet is sent from the LORD and lays out for Eli the judgment concerning him and his house. *First*, Eli will lose the esteem of the office of the priesthood (31-34). This would be fulfilled some 80 years later under the reign of Solomon (I Sam. 14:3; 1 Kings 2:26-27, 35). Abiathar was the last of the priests of Ithamar, the family of Eli the high priest. Zadok, who succeeded, was of the family of Eleazar; and by this change the priesthood reverted to its ancient channel. *Secondly*, the sons of Eli would die in one day (34 cf. 4:11).

A Study of I Samuel

The Desiring for a King

Chapter Three

The Lord Revealed Himself to Samuel

The Calling of Samuel (1-10): According to tradition Samuel is 12 at this time. Samuel ministered before the Lord at Shiloh but up to this point the Lord had never revealed Himself to Samuel (see vs. 7 cf. 21). Note the following in this chapter:

Closed Vision

Closed Eyes

Closed Light

In the midst of this darkness the Lord appeared out of darkness to bring light once again.

Eli's eyesight is all but gone at this time, Eli being about 98 years old (see 4:15). The lamp of God, the candlestick was about to go out for it was well into the night (see vs. 15). Samuel upon hearing the voice of the Lord rushes into Eli assuming it is he (4-5) this he does for 3 times before Eli perceives it is the LORD (6-9).

Following the 3 calls the LORD now stood before Samuel and calls out to him (10). Notice the calling of the Lord, "Samuel, Samuel" as in "Saul, Saul" etc.

The Confirming of Judgment (11-14): The LORD confirms His judgment against Eli's sons that the "man of God" brought to Eli back in chapter 2 (2:27-34). The affirmation by the LORD is seen in the verbiage, "when I begin, I will also make an end" (12). The judgment against Eli concerning his sons is because Eli knew what they did but did not restrain them from their vile deeds (13). And this judgment is set, their will be no repent from the LORD no matter the extent of Eli's supplications to the LORD (14).

The Concern of Eli (15-18): Samuel was willing to keep the prophecy concerning Eli to himself for Samuel "feared to show Eli the vision" (15). Eli however pressed Samuel and Samuel tells Eli all that the LORD had showed him (18). In Eli's statement there seems to be almost a relief, "It is the LORD: let Him do what seemeth Him good" (18). Often times when one is unable or unwilling to quit certain sins, they, deep down inside desire judgment against them, at least then it would be over. One would ponder if this is the case with Eli, for he unwilling to do anything about the sins of his sons would be tired of the continual grieving it brought day in and day out.

The Consecration of Samuel (19-21): Israel now has a continual vision and voice from the LORD in Samuel for all Israel knew that Samuel was established a prophet of the LORD (cf. 4:1)

A Study of I Samuel

The Desiring for a King

Chapter Four

The Capture of the Ark and Prophecy fulfilled

The Plight in Battle (1-2): The battle between Israel and the Philistines took place at Aphek and Ebenezer; with Israel encamped at Ebenezer and the Philistines at Aphek. Israel loses in battle some 4,000 men.

The Plan in Battle (3-9): The Israelites in desperation bring the Ark of the Covenant to the battle in hopes that “it” might save them in battle (3). The faulty thinking in what is happening here is two-fold. *First*, it is not recorded that Israel sought direction from God. Israel simply in rash haste sought a quick physical solution. *Secondly*, from Israel’s own words it shows that they sought supernatural deliverance from the Ark and not the God of the Ark (3). They looked at the Ark of the Covenant as more of a talisman, as if God’s presence was tied to the Ark somehow. They turned the Ark into a religious relic (see 2 Kings 19:4). This is a blatant attempt to manipulate God. Notice it is when the Ark of the Covenant arrives in the camp that all Israel shouted with a great shout that all the earth rang out so that even the Philistines hear the shouting (5-6).

While Israel is trusting in their talisman, the Philistines saw the arrival of the Ark as God arriving in battle as He did against Egypt during the plagues in the wilderness (8-9).

The presence of Hophni and Phinehas were a curse not a blessing (4).

The Problem (10-11): Israel is setup to lose this battle, they did not seek the LORD, they sought deliverance from their power box, the Ark of the Covenant which was delivered by Eli’s two corrupt sons.

Israel loses mightily in battle, for there was a “very great slaughter” that day in which 30,000 footmen died (10). And on top of this the Ark of God was captured and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas both died (11).

The Prophecy (12-22): The LORD had begun to fulfill His judgment against Eli with the death of Hophni and Phinehas. What the LORD has begun, “He will see to the end” (3:12). The priesthood would continue for 3 more generations before God will completely extinguish the line of Eli from the office of the priesthood (1 Kings 2:27, 35). Ahijah served as priest to King Saul. He is identified as the great-grandson of Eli through Phinehas and Ahitub. The prophecy came to pass fully when Abiathar, son of

Ahijah (the same as Ahimelech) was replaced by King David with Zadok after Abiathar sided with Adonijah against Solomon.