

1 Samuel 2
March 6, 2022

Open with Prayer

HOOK:

Q: Do godly parents always produce godly children? If not, what are some explanations? [Let class engage]

- (1) Busy parents don't give enough time to their children.
- (2) Godliness in parents is not attractive to children.
- (3) Godly parents expect too much of their children and turn them away.
- (4) Godly parents are a good influence, but influence cannot determine what a person will become.
- (5) Children, like parents, have to make their own spiritual commitments.

Transition: As a word of encouragement, let me say that we need to question the assumption that parents can determine a child's life. Each human being is in fact responsible for his or her own choices. Moms and dads should not blame themselves for their grown children's decisions. Second, we need to recognize that parents do influence, but they can never *control* their decisions. Let's begin.

BOOK:

2 Then Hannah prayed and said:

“My heart rejoices in the LORD;
in the LORD my horn is lifted high.
My mouth boasts over my enemies,
for I delight in your deliverance.

2 “There is no one holy like the LORD;
there is no one besides you;
there is no Rock like our God.

3 “Do not keep talking so proudly
or let your mouth speak such arrogance,
for the LORD is a God who knows,
and by him deeds are weighed.

4 “The bows of the warriors are broken,
but those who stumbled are armed with strength.

5 Those who were full hire themselves out for food,
but those who were hungry hunger no more.
She who was barren has borne seven children,
but she who has had many sons pines away.

6 “The LORD brings death and makes alive;
he brings down to the grave and raises up.

7 The LORD sends poverty and wealth;
he humbles and he exalts.
8 He raises the poor from the dust
and lifts the needy from the ash heap;
he seats them with princes
and has them inherit a throne of honor.

“For the foundations of the earth are the LORD’s;
upon them he has set the world.

9 He will guard the feet of his saints,
but the wicked will be silenced in darkness.

“It is not by strength that one prevails;
10 those who oppose the LORD will be shattered.
He will thunder against them from heaven;
the LORD will judge the ends of the earth.

“He will give strength to his king
and exalt the horn of his anointed.”

¹¹ Then Elkanah went home to Ramah, but the boy ministered before the LORD under Eli the priest.

Eli’s Wicked Sons

¹² Eli’s sons were wicked men; they had no regard for the LORD. ¹³ Now it was the practice of the priests with the people that whenever anyone offered a sacrifice and while the meat was being boiled, the servant of the priest would come with a three-pronged fork in his hand. ¹⁴ He would plunge it into the pan or kettle or caldron or pot, and the priest would take for himself whatever the fork brought up. This is how they treated all the Israelites who came to Shiloh. ¹⁵ But even before the fat was burned, the servant of the priest would come and say to the man who was sacrificing, “Give the priest some meat to roast; he won’t accept boiled meat from you, but only raw.”

¹⁶ If the man said to him, “Let the fat be burned up first, and then take whatever you want,” the servant would then answer, “No, hand it over now; if you don’t, I’ll take it by force.”

¹⁷ This sin of the young men was very great in the LORD’s sight, for they (or men) were treating the LORD’s offering with contempt.

¹⁸ But Samuel was ministering before the LORD—a boy wearing a linen ephod. ¹⁹ Each year his mother made him a little robe and took it to him when she went up with her husband to offer the annual sacrifice. ²⁰ Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, saying, “May the LORD give you children by this woman to take the place of the one she prayed for and gave to the LORD.” Then they would go home. ²¹ And the LORD was gracious to Hannah; she conceived and gave birth to three sons and two daughters. Meanwhile, the boy Samuel grew up in the presence of the LORD.

²² Now Eli, who was very old, heard about everything his sons were doing to all Israel and how they slept with the women who served at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. ²³ So he said to them, “Why do you do such things? I hear from all the people about these wicked deeds of yours. ²⁴ No, my sons; it is not a good report that I hear spreading among the LORD’s people. ²⁵ If a man sins against another man, God (or the judges) may mediate for him; but if a man sins

against the LORD, who will intercede for him?” His sons, however, did not listen to their father’s rebuke, for it was the LORD’s will to put them to death.

²⁶ And the boy Samuel continued to grow in stature and in favor with the LORD and with men.

Prophecy Against the House of Eli

²⁷ Now a man of God came to Eli and said to him, “This is what the LORD says: ‘Did I not clearly reveal myself to your father’s house when they were in Egypt under Pharaoh? ²⁸ I chose your father out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to go up to my altar, to burn incense, and to wear an ephod in my presence. I also gave your father’s house all the offerings made with fire by the Israelites. ²⁹ Why do you (plural) scorn my sacrifice and offering that I prescribed for my dwelling? Why do you honor your sons more than me by fattening yourselves on the choice parts of every offering made by my people Israel?’

³⁰ “Therefore the LORD, the God of Israel, declares: ‘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 honor me I will honor, but those who despise me will be disdained. ³¹ The time is coming when I will cut short your strength and the strength of your father’s house, so that there will not be an old man in your family line ³² and you will see distress in my dwelling. Although good will be done to Israel, in your family line there will never be an old man. ³³ Every one of you that I do not cut off from my altar will be spared only to blind your eyes with tears and to grieve your heart, and all your descendants will die in the prime of life.

³⁴ “ ‘And what happens to your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, will be a sign to you—they will both die on the same day. ³⁵ I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who will do according to what is in my heart and mind. I will firmly establish his house, and he will minister before my anointed one always. ³⁶ Then everyone left in your family line will come and bow down before him for a piece of silver and a crust of bread and plead, ‘Appoint me to some priestly office so I can have food to eat.’ ”

Process Observations/Questions:

Q: What did you most like about this passage? What resonated with you? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you least like about this passage? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you find in this passage that you didn’t understand? [Let people engage]

Q: What do we learn about Jesus in this passage? [Let people engage]

LOOK:

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. We must remember that when there is a “disregard for the Lord,” especially from people who are church leaders, there are consequences!

Close in Prayer

Commentaries for Today's Lesson:

Wiersbe, W. W. (1993). Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament (1 Sa 2:1–36). Victor Books.

D. Her son (2:1–11).

While Elkanah was worshiping (1:28), his wife was praying and praising God. 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 2:10—"His King" and "His Anointed" (Messiah, Christ)—for Hannah's burden was for the glory of the Lord among His people. Hannah certainly exemplifies a godly mother, for she put God first, she believed in prayer, she kept her vows, and she gave God all the glory.

II. Eli-A Careless Father (2:12–36)

A. His sinful sons (vv. 12–21).

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). Philippians 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 v. 18: "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. His selfish disobedience (vv. 22–26).

Eli refused to face facts honestly and obey the Word of God; see Deut. 21:18–21 and 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.

C. His severe judgment (vv. 27–36).

God in His grace sent a severe message to Eli by the mouth of an unknown man of God, 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 (v. 29); 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 (1 Sam. 22:17–20); and later Solomon replaced Eli's family with the family of Zadok (1 Kings 2:26–27, 35). Of course, the "faithful priest" of v. 35 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.

Merrill, E. H. (1985). 1 Samuel. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures (Vol. 1, pp. 434-435) Wheaton, IL: Victor Books

B. Hannah's song (2:1–10)

This is one of the earliest and most stirring poems in the Old Testament. So messianic in character is it that Mary, the mother of Jesus, incorporated it into her own song of triumph, the Magnificat, in which she praised God for having selected her to be the human mother of Jesus, the Messiah (Luke 1:46–55).

1. HANNAH'S EXULTING IN THE LORD (2:1)

2:1. **Hannah**, with clear reference to her rival Peninnah, spoke of her joy **in the LORD** who had helped her achieve satisfaction at last. Horns, used by animals for defense and attack, symbolized strength. Thus Hannah spoke of her **horn** in describing the strength that had come to her because God had answered her prayer.

2. HANNAH'S EXTOLLING OF THE LORD (2:2–8)

2:2–8. Through His attributes such as holiness, strength (a **Rock**), knowledge, and discernment (vv. 2–3), and in view of His actions toward both the ungodly and the godly (vv. 4–8), the Lord demonstrates His awesome sovereignty in human affairs. Especially pointed is Hannah's reference (v. 5) to herself and Peninnah respectively: **She who was barren has borne seven children, but she who has had many sons pines away**. Hannah eventually had five other children (v. 21), but the expression "seven children" here symbolizes the full granting of her desire for a son. The breaking of **the bows** (v. 4), satisfying of the **hungry** (v. 5), raising of the dead (v. 6), and elevating of **the poor** (vv. 7–8) refer to the principle that the final disposition of all things is in the hand of **the LORD**. He who created the world (v. 8) was able to cause Hannah to triumph.

3. HANNAH'S EXPECTATION FROM THE LORD (2:9–10)

2:9–10. In addition to stating that **the LORD** blesses **His saints** but brings **the wicked** to destruction (v. 9), Hannah closed her poem with the prophetic announcement that the Lord **will give strength to His king and exalt the horn of His anointed**. The reference to a king here in this premonarchical passage has led many critics to maintain that the poem is a redaction from a later period which was placed in Hannah's mouth. This is unnecessary, of course, if one accepts the possibility of predictive prophecy. In addition, the notion of a coming human king was in no way foreign to Israel's expectation since **the LORD** had clearly intimated this as early as the time of Abraham (see *Introduction*). The word parallel to "king" (v. 10) is "anointed," a translation of *māšīah* ("Messiah"). This is the first Old Testament reference to an individual's being "the Anointed One." Though it may be unwarranted to make a direct connection between Hannah's prophecy and Jesus the Messiah, it is evident that the juxtaposition of "king" and "anointed one" points to the royal nature of the anointed one(s) whom God would raise up (see Ps. 89:20–24).

C. *The situation at Shiloh (2:11–36)*

1. SAMUEL'S PROGRESS (2:11, 26)

2:11, 26. Immediately after the return of his parents to their **home** young **Samuel** began his training **under Eli** (v. 11), a training which was characterized by his development physically, but especially morally and spiritually (v. 26). He grew **in stature and in favor with the LORD and with men**, an appropriate description of a son who, like Mary's, had come as a blessing of God to the world (Luke 2:52).

2. THE SINS OF THE PRIESTHOOD (2:12–17, 22–25)

2:12–17, 22–25. The human reason for the birth of Samuel had been recounted. He came in response to a godly mother's prayer. Now it was important to see the divine reason. The Book of Judges asserts, "In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit" (Jud. 21:25). This was also true of the priests. **Eli**, though apparently a moral man himself, had lost control of his priestly **sons** who went so far as to appropriate for themselves the choice **meat** of the sacrificial animals which rightfully belonged to **the LORD** as His **offering** (1 Sam. 2:12–17). Moreover, they engaged in ritual fornication in the very precincts of the tabernacle at Shiloh in accord with Canaanite cultic practice (vv. 22–25).

3. THE BLESSING OF SAMUEL'S FAMILY (2:18–21)

2:18–21. As though to show the contrast between the ungodly and the godly about which Hannah had sung, the narration now contrasts the family of **Samuel** with that of Eli. Though Samuel's **mother** had given **Samuel** to **the LORD**, she retained her maternal love and responsibility. She came yearly to Shiloh to attend to the needs of her son. Nor did **the LORD** forget **Hannah**. As is so often the case, He gave her not only what **she** had **prayed** for but much more—in her case **three sons and two daughters** (cf. the example of Rachel, Gen. 30:22–24; 35:16–18).

4. THE REJECTION OF THE PRIESTHOOD (2:27–36)

2:27–36. It is no wonder that God rejected the priesthood of Eli and his **sons**. After reviewing the circumstances of the selection of Eli's ancestors to be priests of **the LORD** over **Israel** (vv. 27–28), an unnamed **man of God** announced **to Eli** that his priesthood would end because it had violated the conditions for its ongoing existence (vv. 29–33). Yet **the LORD** would not terminate the office of priest altogether for He would **raise up ... a faithful priest** (v. 35) whose line of succession (**house**) would be **firmly** established and who would **minister before His anointed one** (i.e., the king) forever. In human terms this was fulfilled when 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). But in the ultimate sense the "faithful Priest" and "Anointed One" are One and the same, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is both Priest and King (Ps. 110; Heb. 5:6; Rev. 19:16).

D. *Samuel's call (chap. 3)*

For centuries God had rarely visited His people with revelation (v. 1). Now He had one to whom He could entrust His message. He called the young lad Samuel.

Mathews, K. A. (1998). The Historical Books. In D. S. Dockery (Ed.), Holman Concise Bible Commentary (pp. 110–111). Broadman & Holman Publishers.

Hannah's prayer in song celebrated the righteousness and sovereignty of God. He defeats the proud and exalts the humble. He will protect His saints and strengthen His anointed king.

Eli's Corruption (2:11–36). The corruption of the tabernacle at Shiloh by Eli's sons is contrasted with the faithful ministry of young Samuel. Whereas Hannah's son "ministered before the LORD," the sons of Eli "had no regard for the LORD." Eli's servants had contempt for the Lord's offerings, and his sons engaged in temple prostitution. Yet young Samuel, as it would be said of Jesus (Luke 2:52), grew in "favor with the LORD and with men."

A man of God prophesied the death of Hophni and Phinehas and the appointment of a "faithful priest." The immediate context suggests that Samuel is meant (1 Sam. 3), though Samuel did not exhaust this powerful image. This priest has also been identified as the high priest Zadok (1 Kgs. 2:35), or Jesus Christ the priestly Messiah (Heb. 5:1–10; 7:1–28).

Philbeck, B. F. (1972). 1 Samuel. In H. F. Paschall & H. H. Hobbs (Eds.), The Teacher's Bible Commentary (pp. 164–165). Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers.

Samuel's Dedication (1 Sam. 1:1–2:11)

The passage.—The story about the emergence of Israel's monarchy properly begins with Samuel. He profoundly influenced the entire period, serving as Israel's last judge, as one of her earliest prophets, and as a power behind the throne of her first two kings.

Samuel is clearly portrayed as a man chosen to perform his allotted tasks. He is born into a devout home, the son of a barren woman who fervently prayed for a son (v. 11) and who pledged to set him apart as a Nazirite (see Num. 6:1–8).

Special points.—Elkanah regularly took his family on an annual pilgrimage to the temple of the Lord at Shiloh (vv. 2, 9). Such a practice was expensive and far beyond the means of ordinary working men. The "temple of the Lord" mentioned here and in 3:3 should not be confused with the place of worship constructed by Solomon.

When Samuel was about three-years old, Hannah brought him back to Shiloh where he began his religious training under Eli's leadership. Hannah's song on this occasion (2:1–10) praises Israel's God as the Lord of history. The Lord would surely judge the wicked and deliver the righteous (v. 9). This principle provides the theme for the ensuing chapters. Samuel's emergence as God's man of the hour will be paralleled by the precipitous decline of Eli's corrupt sons (2:12).

House of Eli Rejected (1 Sam. 2:12–36)

The passage.—As Israel's tribal structure was being strained to the breaking point, her central religious institutions were violently disrupted as well. Apparently the sanctuary at Shiloh and the core of Israel's priesthood were destroyed by the Philistines following their victory at

Aphek (4:1–22). The biblical author foreshadows subsequent events as he explains why Eli’s corrupt sons were to be rejected.

Eli’s sons were guilty of both ritual and moral offenses. In the rites of sacrifice, they violated ancient customs regarding the priests’ portion of the offering (vv. 13–17). Even more importantly, they were charged with immoral relations with the women who served at the entrance of the tent of meeting (v. 22). Because of their guilt, Eli’s sons would be rejected as priests and God would find a man of his own choosing to follow them (vv. 34–36).

The context seems to imply that Samuel will be God’s “faithful priest,” but from what we can tell, he functioned only as a prophet and as a judge. Moreover, the corruption of his own sons prohibited them from becoming enduring leaders in Israel (7:15–17). The author apparently looked forward to an unnamed priestly line which would later emerge in the days of the monarchy.

Special points.—Although Eli’s sons must bear the consequences for their actions, the author of these verses attributes ultimate responsibility for their downfall to God (v. 25). He stresses God’s sovereignty so strongly that he sees everything that happens as the result of divine causation. Other biblical passages accord man a greater freedom in God’s economy (Gen. 3:1–25; Rom. 1:18–25). Later prophetic demands for ethical conduct on the part of God’s people also rest squarely on man’s moral responsibility for his own conduct. Thus, within God’s economy, men are free to determine their own destinies. They remain God’s creatures, but they are free to accept or reject divine leadership (v. 30).

Richards, L. O. (1987). The Teacher’s Commentary (pp. 200-202). Victor Books.

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. It is impossible for us to out give God.

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

Eli’s family failures (1 Samuel 2:12–36). While Eli himself was a dedicated and righteous man, his sons “had no regard for the Lord” (v. 12). 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” (v. 29). 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” (v. 35).

Ultimately that faithful Priest is Jesus, who fulfills in Himself all that the Old Testament priesthood merely signified. In the immediate context 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).

**The Holy Bible: New International Version. (1984). (1 Samuel 2:1-36). Grand Rapids, MI:
Zondervan.**

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