

1 Samuel 2 • Hannah's Prayer and Eli's Sons

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Samuel is a wonderful book. We talked a little bit about it last week. We talked about how this story really brings us to the end of that period in Israel's history of the Judges that became increasingly dark and difficult as the years went by. And finally, God raises up this man, Samuel.

But last chapter, all we really got to was, more or less, we saw the birth of Samuel, and we saw how incredibly miraculous that was. We saw a heart, may I tell you, a heart of faith in Samuel's mom. Hannah, what a lady we got going for us there who was barren and cried out to God, said, Lord, give me a child. I'll give him back to you and the Lord heard her prayer.

And really the second chapter, at least the first several verses of the second chapter here that we're starting in tonight, begins with just Hannah's expression of thanksgiving. I think it's important that we read this.

This is really almost like a detour to the Psalms, this section right here. It's like reading a Psalm. It sounds very much. It reads very much like something David would have written or Asaph or one of the other psalmists that was responsible for the majority of the Psalms. And it's just really an expression of praise.

But more than that, there's a prophetic element. Not prophetic necessarily in the sense of foretelling. But do you guys understand that prophecy doesn't have to include foretelling? A lot of people believe that prophecy and telling about something in the future are one in the same. They can be, but not necessarily.

A prophetic word is simply a forth telling or a speaking forth, if you will, from God to man. It is something that the Lord lays upon an individual's heart. It could be something as simple as the Lord laying it upon someone to walk over to you and say, I have a message from God for you. And here it is. I love you. Boom. End of prophecy. But that's prophecy no less than something we read frankly in the Old Testament related to the foretelling of some great and grand event in the scheme of God's redemptive program. Please understand that prophecy is just speaking forth a message from God.

In that sense, what we hear Hannah doing here in these verses is very much an expression of the heart of the Lord. And we know that because it is so close to the Psalms and beautifully so. And the Psalms had not been written yet, by the way, at this time.

Samuel is still about, himself, is only about 3 to 4 years old when Hannah says this, or gives this beautiful word of praise. And Samuel will grow up to be an old man who will anoint David king over Israel. And David will become the psalmist of Israel at that time and so forth. And so David isn't even around yet and yet to read this beautiful few verses sounds very much like something David would have written. And it's just a heart of praise.

And it begins, it says, “*And Hannah prayed* (and so she's, remember praise is always directed to the Lord, but she's laying this up) *and...* (she says), “*My heart exults in the LORD;...*” (ESV)

Don't confuse exult and exalt. To exult with a **u** essentially means to show or feel jubilation. It really just means, my heart is just bubbling over with joy and gratitude to the Lord. To exalt with an **a** is to lift up. Lord, we exalt your name, but I exult in the Lord in jubilation and praise, right? That's what Hannah is saying.

And she says too, “*...my horn...*” And by the way, the word, horn in the Old Testament refers to strength, okay? “*...my (strength) is exalted in the LORD. My mouth derides (or scoffs) my enemies, because I rejoice in your salvation.*” She begins this prayer, this beautiful prayer, with just this heart that lifts her herself, her words to the Lord.

Have you ever gotten caught up in praise? Have you ever just became enraptured with praise to the point where you just couldn't contain yourself and you just began to just, you couldn't help it. You just bubbled over. And that's what Hannah is describing in her heart. My heart is just bubbling over. There's so much joy.

And you might think, well, I could understand why she had so much joy. She just, she'd been given this baby, and now she was able to make good on her vow to give this child to the Lord. She does it in faith. She does it with rejoicing and so on and so forth. But you know what's interesting about that bubbling over with joy? It really doesn't have to do anything at all with your circumstances.

I have read of Christians who were being persecuted for their faith, who were behind bars even in some of the most hideous circumstances. Who in the dank,

dark environment of their cell, just had to dance, because they were overflowing with joy. They were exalting in the Lord their God in such a way that they could not contain it. And yet no one saw them. No one probably heard them except the Lord. And, they were in the worst of circumstances at the time that they did it.

Why did they do it? What would cause somebody in those circumstances to do what Hannah is doing here? The presence of God? The very presence of God. To be in His presence, to know His love, to know His providential care and concern is just to, oh God, You're just too much. And just to overflow with that sort of a thing.

Now, I want you to remember, yeah, God did give Hannah a baby. God did give her the ability to make good on her vow. But remember what making good on that vow means. It means leaving this little 3 to 4 year old boy in Shiloh, 15 miles roughly away from where mom and dad live. And this is the child she wanted so desperately and cried out to the Lord for. And every mother in this room knows and understands that pull between mother and child, and to leave this child.

We talked last week, even the circumstances of where she was leaving the child. Eli was an old man. He had two sons that who were known to be corrupt. And yet she's leaving this precious little child, who's easily influenced obviously, in the hands of these individuals to raise. So just to be able to hear this praise to God, with no hint of feeling sorry for self.

And she goes on and she says, verse 2, *"There is none holy like the LORD: for there is none besides you; there is no rock like our God."* Why does she refer to God as a rock? Well, what do you think of about a rock? What do you think of? I think of something big and stable. We're not talking about pebbles here.

We're talking about rocks. Big rocks. The kind you can't even dream about picking up. They're big, they're huge, and you can stand on them, and they're not going anywhere. And a wind can blow and it won't get moved. And she's thinking of the Lord that way. And she says to Him, there is no rock like You, *"no rock like our God."*

And so she says in verse 3, *"Talk no more so very proudly, let not arrogance come from your mouth; for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed."*

Now she's referring to the human condition. Now she's talking about the propensity of people to fly off at the mouth, and make boastful claims about all kinds of things, about their life, what they've done, what they haven't done, and so forth. And she says don't just don't even do it. Don't. And here's why. Because God sees the heart and He weighs the motives of the heart. God knows exactly why you and I do what we do. In fact, God sees the motive that you and I don't see.

Sometimes, we can actually deceive ourselves as to our motive. We can think we're doing something good, and in fact we are doing something good from an external perspective. But why we're doing something good can be hidden from our own hearts, and God can come along and expose. I'll tell you why you did that. You did that so you'd feel better about yourself.

Oh, then we get all offended. I did that because I cared about that person. Not really, maybe, but that was secondary. The first thing you cared about, the thing you cared about the most was you. But that's kind of the stuff God exposes in us. He exposes what's going on in the heart. And that's what Hannah is saying so she says, talk no more proudly because God sees the heart.

She says in verse 4, *“The bows of the mighty are broken, but the feeble bind (or gird) on strength.”*⁵ *Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread, but those who were hungry have ceased to hunger. The barren has borne seven, but she who has many children is forlorn.*⁶ *The LORD kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up.”*

Do you see what Hannah is doing in these verses? I've read them all together for you so that you could get to see the poetic pattern of what she's doing in these verses. She is basically expressing two contrasting ideas on both sides of the equation to show that God holds this, and this, and everything in between in His hands. It's a way of saying from A to Z, God knows it, does it, has it all. Okay.

She begins to go through all of these various things. *“The bows of the mighty (again in verse 4) are broken, but the feeble... (are strong) Those who were full (past tense) have (now) hired themselves out for bread, (while) ...those who were hungry have ceased hunger.”* Again two contrasting ideas, but to say God controls and has the whole process in His hands. All right.

And then she makes even reference to a barren woman. *“The barren has borne seven,...”* And again, she's not using the number seven as a literal number to say that the barren woman had seven children. Remember that the number seven is a poetic number that speaks of God's perfect will, God's purposes. *“The*

(woman) *barren has ...seven,*” has given birth to seven while the woman who has had many children is still forlorn. Contrasting ideas.

And then look at this contrast in verse 6. *“The LORD kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol (which is the grave) and raises up.”* From the grave. Contrasting ideas to say that the Lord has total authority over life and death. Okay.

Look at verse 7. *“The LORD makes poor and makes rich; he brings low and he exalts.”* Okay, again, contrasting ideas. The Lord does it all. ⁸ *“He raises up the poor from the dust; he lifts the needy from the ash heap to make them sit with princes and inherit a seat of honor. For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and on them he has set the world.”* ⁹ *“He will guard the feet of his faithful ones, but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness, for not by might shall a man prevail.”*

If there's one thing that Hannah is intimately in touch with, it's the reality of this truth that it is God who accomplishes these things. She knew that she was a barren woman, and yet now she's given birth to a child. And so what is her conclusion? It is by God's power, not man's might, that we prevail. Okay?

That's a lesson that we have a hard time learning until we really get to a place of real weakness in our lives. Until we get to a place in our lives where we're facing a situation for which we have no answer. And in fact no hope of finding an answer other than finally, ultimately, turning to the Lord.

And like Hannah crying out to him from the depth of her being and saying you know what God? If You don't do this, it won't happen. If You don't accomplish this, it won't get accomplished, so, I lay this before You. And it's at that point when God begins to answer that a prayer, that an individual understands that it is by God's power that these things are accomplished, and not by the striving and the might of man. And man, does that set you free. Oh, does that set you free.

I think you guys have probably heard so many times that Ian Fisher, our former elder here at Calvary Chapel, who's now with his wife and family in Las Vegas, living there now. But he, they went through a very dark period after their eldest daughter passed away in an accident. And they, of course, they took her little girl, their granddaughter, and raised her as their own. But it wasn't that easy because the child's father, who was not a good guy, was fighting them for custody. And Ian's a fighter. I don't know how many of you ever got to know Ian very well, but he's a fighter like, like many of us. Right. And especially

when something's very precious to you. And he fought. I mean, he elicited the help of attorneys, and legal wrangling, and he spent a ton of money. Just a ton of money and all kinds of effort to fight this battle to get this little girl into their home, and so forth.

And he came to me one night over at the house where, it was a long time ago. He came to me over at my house over at the other when we were living over here by the church, and he was just wrung out. I could tell he'd been weeping and he just said, I need somebody to pray with. So we, the family was in the house, so we just hopped in the car and drove over to TVCC, to the parking lot. And I just shut off the car, and we sat there, and I said, let's pray.

He said, yeah, because I got nothing left. I got nothing left. He said, I don't have any more money to fight this battle. I don't have any more energy. I just, it's a hopeless mess. And the last thing that had been given to them was some demand from the father that was just outrageous. They felt like they couldn't abide by it, but they were feeling more and more pinched into a place where there was nothing they could do.

It was amazing the prayer time that we had together sitting in my car in the front seat. It just praying and he's just weeping before the Lord. Just God, I just can't do this. I give up, I give this thing to You. And it was one of the most amazing surrenders I've ever witnessed or had the privilege of witnessing.

And we got done praying and we went back to, we left. Crazy, crazy situation. Right after that, and I mean right after that, suddenly, out of nowhere, this little girl's daddy, her biological father, dropped everything, and just went away. And we're talking a guy that was into drugs and just into bad stuff. And he just, he signed everything over without any request, without any pressure being put on him.

Suddenly the attorney, Ian's attorney just said, we just got papers from him and he has signed over everything completely to you and Vi. It was over. It was done. It was finished. But it was amazing. Ian's told that story himself. I'm telling nothing that he wouldn't tell.

He's told it to you guys over the years, but what made the difference, I believe, was that Ian was fighting, and he learned that the battle belongs to the Lord and it's not the striving of man that's going to accomplish those things. It's when we give up and we lay it at his feet and say, Lord, I trust You, I give it to You.

But many times for you and I, that takes a complete expenditure of self, doesn't it? Have you gotten there before? Where you got nothing left, you got nothing left to give. You got nothing left to fight with. The fight is gone. The money is gone. It's just, it's gone.

And you come to that place of just saying, Lord, you are all I have left. And you can almost hear the Lord going, what time? Now sit back and let me show you what I can do. The battle belongs to the Lord. And that's what Hannah is saying here at the end of verse 9 *"for not by might shall a man prevail."*

"The adversaries (verse 10) of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; against them he will thunder in heaven. The LORD will judge the ends of the earth; he will give strength to his king and exalt the horn (or the strength) of his anointed."
It's a beautiful prayer. It's a beautiful prayer.

But if there's one thing that Hannah's prayer shows us, and this is important guys, I really want you to get this. It's that everything that you and I have is on loan from God, and that includes our children. And if it includes our children, it certainly includes everything else that we have.

As we talked about last week and even mentioned here just briefly at the beginning, Hannah could have made all kinds of excuses as to why she shouldn't have given Samuel up after this point, when he's 3 to 4 years old with the way it looked. With Eli being as old as he was, his sons being as corrupt as they were, and so forth.

But when God graciously answered Hannah's prayer, she determined to follow through on her vow, her promise to the Lord, and go ahead and dedicate her son to the Lord's full time service. But here's, guys, here's what's going on. Please get this.

Essentially, Hannah was willing to do what all mothers have to do eventually, and that is let go of their children. And that's something that I didn't understand until I had to start doing it. It's not an easy thing to do. I've married off both of my girls now, and that was not fun. That was not an easy process. It was not a fun process. And I did not make life very enjoyable for the young men who came after their hands because it's very difficult to let go.

It was obviously harder for the first one. At least then, you got a little experience after that and you know a little bit of how it's going to go. But with the first one it was really hard. I mean, it's your firstborn too. That's difficult. Firstborn, it's a girl. And here's this guy. This guy. It's a kid. Get away from my

daughter. And, oh, it's hard. It's really hard. And then you've got, and then boys come along too. And that's interesting. So we've been done that twice with both genders.

Now boys, it's a little bit different. With boys and you do have to let them go. I mean, you better let them go is the bottom line there. Those of you that have little boys in your home, be careful. Be careful that you don't learn the lesson of Hannah. Hannah figured it out right away. She actually figured it out before Samuel was born. Most parents don't figure it out until they've even done some damage.

Because trying to hold back your child when you need to let them go can actually do them damage. And Sue and I have noticed over the years that particularly boys, they get to the to an age of about 17. And if you don't give them some level of responsibility, they start doing really stupid things. And I mean really dumb things, and they need, boys just need responsibility.

And if they don't have it, they start to while away their time doing things they shouldn't do. And I'm a proponent of giving them what they need. But it doesn't mean it isn't hard. It's very difficult very, very difficult.

But most of us parents who've had to let go of our kids, we learned it just through our own ridiculous, stubborn nature. But Hannah, in this prayer, and in her actions, shows that she knew that these kids are just, they're just on loan. They're just on loan, you guys. They don't belong to you. They belong to Him.

At least that's— we do this dedication process, when parents have little babies and we bring them up here, and we dedicate children to the Lord. And, really there's nothing real super spiritual about that whole process except it involves the parents expressing the understanding that this is a child that You have given that really isn't mine. This is Yours. This is Your child. This is Your little boy or Your little girl.

And You've blessed me with this privilege of raising this child, this precious responsibility that You have given this awesome responsibility of raising Your child in the fear and admonition of the Lord. To teach this child the things of God, to learn the Scriptures, to know from their earliest days that there's a God in heaven who created them and who they will one day serve with all of their hearts.

Can you think of a more incredible privilege than that? What an amazing thing that God allows us to do. But so many times we take these children and we hold

on to them with clenched fists, as if they're ours. And yes, they're yours to protect, they're yours to rear, and to raise, and to train, and to teach, and to love, and to admonish, and to correct, and so on, and so on. But ultimately, they are the Lord's and you must give them.

There's going to come a time, there's going to come a day, when your kids are going to walk out of your home. You always hope that it's on the best of terms. But whether it is on the best of terms or the worst of terms, there will come a day when they will walk out of your home.

And at that point, your parenting shifts into a completely different mode. And it's funny how when my kids have left home, it's like God turned up the responsibility to pray for them almost. Because you get this the sense that while they're in your home, well, you see them every day and you're yeah, you're here, we're all here. Okay, let's see. And you're talking and just dealing with the regional interactions of life.

But when they leave home, now they're gone and you don't see them every day. You don't talk to them every day necessarily. And so suddenly now you find yourself praying for them in new and different ways.

Holding onto our kids can, as I said before, be a damaging thing, so be careful about that. Love them, train them, bless them, fill them, make sure they know they're loved. I mean, cuddle them and smother them with kisses. But when they're old enough to leave, let them go. They have to learn to fly. But ultimately, know that they belong to the Lord.

Verse 11. It says, *"Then Elkanah went home to Ramah. And the boy (speaking of Samuel) was ministering to the LORD in the presence of Eli the priest."*

Now we're going to switch gears a little bit, learn a little bit about the sons of Eli. It says, *"¹² Now the sons of Eli were worthless men."* The NIV says, *"wicked."* The ESV says, *"worthless."* That's a terrible thing to say about someone. But when God's word says it, there's an authoritativeness to it. And so we just take it at face value. They were worthless.

I want you to notice what it says in the second part of verse 12. *"They did not know the LORD."* So here are priests. Now they're not the high priest. Eli is the high priest, but they're priests under their father. They're serving under their father. And get this, here's what the Bible says about them. Number one, they're wicked and they don't know the Lord. That's not a good combination, by the way, for men in this particular, position of service.

But it goes on to explain some of what they did. *“¹³ The custom of the priests with the people was that when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant would come, while the meat was boiling, with a three-pronged fork in his hand, ¹⁴ and he would thrust it into (whatever it was boiling in) the pan or kettle or cauldron or pot. All that the fork brought up the priest would take for himself. This is what they did at Shiloh to all the Israelites who came there.”*

Now, let me just stop here for just a moment and say that the Law of Moses contained a stipulation, a command, if you will, that the needs of the priests, they were the descendants of Levi, were to be taken care of by the tithes, and offerings, and sacrifices of the people of Israel, all right? So the people were to bring their tithes, and their offerings, and their sacrifices, even their animal sacrifices. And unless it was a whole burnt offering, some of the meat from the animal would go to the high priest and his family. So this was a common thing.

Now, God didn't necessarily in great detail exactly how the meat was to be doled out. Okay. So the custom we're told was that they would take the meat after the animal been slaughtered and the portion that was going to be burned up on the altar was already done. They take the other rest of the meat and they'd put it in some a pot and they'd boil it. And then the priest would send one of his servants over with a fork, and he'd stick it in there, and whatever he could get out with the fork was his, and the rest of it belonged to the family.

Remember we talked about that. That was the fellowship offering. And so the priest took what was ever on the fork, and they went away. And that was the custom. It wasn't necessarily the way God specifically said to do it, but that was the custom. All right.

Well, here's what they did, though, because the sons of Eli didn't keep to the custom. It says that, *“¹⁵ Moreover, before the fat was burned, the priest's servant would come and say to the man who was sacrificing, “Give meat for the priest to roast, for he will not accept boiled meat from you but only raw.””*

All right, remember something, you guys, the fat of the sacrifice was always to be burned on the altar to the Lord. Okay? They were not to eat the fat. Not bad advice from God, by the way. But the fat always got burned up on the altar. And you know what fat smells like when it burns, don't you? It actually smells really good. That's why barbecues...

You ever been walking down the street and one of your neighbors is barbecuing? And you're like, where's that coming from? And we want to just follow that right over to their home and invite ourselves for dinner. It really is a

very nice aroma. And so the altar of sacrifice of the Jews probably smelled really good because the fat was essentially what was burned on the altar. And it was and God even said, it's an aroma pleasing to the Lord, isn't that interesting?

But in this case, the sons of Eli would demand their portion before the Lord even had His, right? So they were supposed to slaughter the animal, take the fat off the inner organs, and burn it on the altar. And then they were to take the rest of the meat and boil it. And then the priest would get some, the family would get some, and they'd have a barbecue.

Well, again, the priests jumped in before anything had even been burned on the altar and said, give us our portion. We want what we want. We don't want, boiled meat. We don't want it with the fat already taken off. In other words, we want it now. We want it raw. Give it to us now or we'll take it by force.

Do you see what's happening? It's not just this, I don't know, this lust for the meat the way they wanted it. But it is a complete trampling of the meaning and the purpose of the sacrifice. Here comes a worshiper to fellowship with the Lord or to sacrifice an animal for the forgiveness of sins. And before that sacrifice is even made to the Lord, the priest is demanding their portion. It's, it really is ridiculous.

In verse 16, it says, *“And if the man said to him, ‘Let them burn the fat first, (in other words, make the offering to the Lord) and then take as much as you wish,’ he would say, ‘No, you must give it now, and if not, I will take it by force.’”*¹⁷ Thus (look at this) *the sin of the young men was very great in the sight of the LORD, (why?) for the men treated the offering of the LORD with contempt.”*

It's funny. Here's these guys who as priests are to help people who recognize their own sin, come before the Lord, and ask for forgiveness. And in the process of doing that, they are sinning themselves. So it's a very, very serious thing.

Now, verse 18 tells us that, *“Samuel was ministering before the LORD, a boy clothed with a linen ephod. (which, of course, was the clothing of the priest)*¹⁹ *And his mother used to make for him a little robe and take it to him each year when she went up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice.*²⁰ *Then Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, and say, ‘May the LORD give you children by this woman for the petition she asked of the LORD.’ So then they would return to their home.*

²¹ Indeed the LORD visited Hannah, (look at this) and she conceived and bore three sons and two daughters. And the boy Samuel grew in the presence of the LORD.

So Hannah, who was barren, ended up having six children including Samuel. Six kids, isn't that cool? So God multiplied her blessing. She gave to the Lord this first child, and God gave her these five more kids.

Verse 22. *"Now Eli was very old, and he kept hearing all that his sons were doing to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who were serving at the entrance to the tent of meeting."* That's a that's a nice way of saying they were having sex with the women who were serving at the doorway of the tent of meeting. That's how corrupt these men were.

"²³ And he said to them, "Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all these people. ²⁴ No, my sons; it is no good report that I hear the people of the LORD spreading abroad. (and then he says something very wise.) ²⁵ If someone sins against a man, God will mediate for him, but if someone sins against the LORD, who can intercede for him?" But they would not listen to the voice of their father, for it was the will of the LORD to put them to death." Stop there please for just a moment.

That's a difficult statement to hear, isn't it? *"It was the will of the LORD to put them to death."* Does God really want people to die? Is that what we're reading here in 1 Samuel? Does a loving God really will and want to put people to death? Well, obviously not. The Bible says in other areas, the Lord says, I take no pleasure in the death of any man. In fact, it tells us in the Word that God delights to show mercy, and He is never made happy in any way, takes no joy in, in someone dying.

But we need to think about just exactly what's going on in this situation there in the tabernacle. A person comes to make an offering to the Lord and their hearts are sincere. They want to meet with God, right? And they want to know that their sins have been covered through this sacrificial offering.

And the sons of Eli were so corrupt that they would steal the offering. They would completely discredit the person's attitude in coming to the Lord, and approaching God for forgiveness, and so forth. And all the while representing God.

Do you understand that God takes very seriously those who represent Him? Which is a very important thing to remember whenever, when you're ever

tempted to say, here's what God thinks. We ought to shudder, we have to tremble before we say that unless we know that we are absolutely quoting something that is dead on, this is what the Lord thinks because God takes it very seriously, the people who represent Him and we're going to see how it plays out here with the sons of Eli in a moment.

But do you guys remember Moses? You guys remember that? At the beginning of their, well, the rough beginning of their 40 year trek? Well, actually it was a total of 38 or a total of 40, but it was 38 years after they went to the promised land. And then got sent back out in the wilderness. Total of 40 years.

But early on in that time that people were complaining because they had no water. You remember the story. God said to Moses, go out and strike the rock with your staff, right? And water will come gushing out of the rock and will take care of my people. Perfect. All right.

Moses goes out, does exactly what God tells him to do. Water comes miraculously gushing out of a rock. Water doesn't come out of rocks, by the way. And not naturally. And the people were all taken care of.

They came back after about another 38 years, they came back to that same area. Moses has been dealing with these crybabies for a total of 40 years. And he's basically at the end of himself with these folks. And here they are again complaining, we don't have any water.

And God, speaks to Moses and he says go to the rock, and just, this time He says, speak to the rock and the rock will bring forth life giving water. But Moses got frustrated, remember? And he went out and he hit the rock again, just like he was told to do many years before.

Now, God graciously provided water for the people of Israel, but Moses then got taken to the woodshed over that thing. And God said, Moses, I wasn't angry. You were angry. You were frustrated. I wasn't frustrated. I just wanted to bless My people.

And you know that's the reason why Moses didn't get to go into the promised land. You can only see it from the top of a hill. It was because of that mistake. But what was that mistake? It was a misrepresentation of the heart of the Lord. And that tells you a little bit about how serious God considers that misrepresentation.

Not only that, but Moses completely bungled up the whole picture that God was trying to convey. Because remember the New Testament tells us that rock was a picture of Jesus. And that rock only needs to be struck once for life giving water to gush forth. The rivers of living water, as the Bible says, that will issue forth. It doesn't need to be struck twice, or three times, or four times, just once. Jesus died once for all. And so Moses messed up that picture too. Again, misrepresentation.

So it's a serious issue. God could not continue to allow this blasphemous behavior and representation of his heart go on with the sons of Eli. And yes, He wanted to put them to death because this could not continue. People's eternal lives are on the line here.

And then we're given this contrasting statement in verse 26. *"Now the boy Samuel continued to grow both in stature and in favor with the LORD and also with man."*

And then the chapter ends with a prophecy coming to Eli. *"²⁷ And there came a man of God (who goes unnamed) to Eli and said to him, 'Thus says the LORD, 'Did I indeed reveal myself to the house of your father when they were in Egypt subject to the house of Pharaoh? ²⁸ Did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to go up to my altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? I gave to the house of your father (and He's speaking of Levi) all my offerings by fire from the people of Israel. ²⁹ Why then do you scorn my sacrifices and my offerings that I commanded for my dwelling, (look at this) and honor your sons above me by fattening yourselves on the choicest parts of every offering of my people Israel? '"* Now stop there for just a moment.

We already heard that Eli rebuked his sons and we know that he did that. He said to them, guys, this is not good. This information that I'm getting from the people of God, this isn't good about what I'm hearing that you're doing. You shouldn't be doing this and so forth.

But what does the Lord say back to Eli? He says, why didn't you do something about it then? You chose your sons above honoring the sacrifices, above honoring My Word, and you fattened yourself on the choicest morsels of meat from my people's sacrifices.

And what that says is that Eli was complicit in this to some degree because he too was taking the meat that his sons were demanding from the people. And rather than doing anything about it, he was eating it. And he not only was eating it, he got very fat by eating it.

We're going to find out that his body weight is going to contribute primarily to his death as we go on with the story.

Ultimately, I've said before, when we started, when we introduced Eli last week. I said that I like Eli, I always have. I read through these scriptures and I just, I think Eli is a really likable guy. But as I said before, he was a very poor parent. His sons were irreverent, they were evil, and he did little or nothing about it.

Here's the deal you guys and parents, you need to particularly listen up here because this is a lesson for every parent. I think Eli lacked two very important qualities needed in any effective parent who is raising their children. And one is strong determination to be determined to do what's right. And then next, the ability to carry out corrective action. Okay. Strong determination and corrective action.

Eli was not resolved to end what his sons were doing. He rebuked them, yes, but he took no action to remove them. He was the high priest. Don't forget that. Eli was the high priest, and not only as the high priest, but as the father, he was culpable. And he rebuked them, but he took no action to remove them.

He knew that they were sleeping with the women. He knew that they were defiling the Lord's sacrifices. He knew that they didn't know the Lord or care a snit about the things of the Lord. And he took zero action to remove them. He should have done it. He should have defrocked them both publicly. And this judgment that is now being leveled upon his house would not have happened.

So this prophecy goes on in verse 30, this prophet speaks to Eli and he says, *"Therefore the LORD, the God of Israel, declares: 'I promised that your house and the house of your father should go in and out before me forever,' but now the LORD declares: 'Far be it from me, (look at this) for those who honor me (this is very important) I will honor, and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed.'"* Right?

Those who honor the Lord, God will honor. What Eli didn't do is he didn't honor the Word of the Lord as it related to several things.

You and I can look at ourselves as parents and we can say, are we honoring the Lord by the way, we're raising our children. The Bible says that we're to correct our children when they're wrong. The world basically wants to convince us that any correction is going to hurt them psychologically, which is ridiculous. It's absolutely ridiculous. We have to correct our children when they're going wrong. When they're doing the wrong thing, we have to step in and say, that's

wrong. We're not going to do it that way. And we have to be willing to take decisive action related to that correction.

And this is a big deal in our culture today. I mean everybody is, everybody has got a hair trigger on this issue of correcting children and taking decisive action in that correction. And I don't know if you heard about the great running back from the Minnesota Vikings, Adrian Peterson. He is in total hot water because, and very admittedly, he over corrected his child. I mean, and he was doing, we found out what used to happen to him. He made a switch out of a branch and gave his son an old good old fashioned southern whooping and it wasn't good. It wasn't good. And now he's in major hot water over it.

And what it does, you see, is it raises the temperature of the environment of our culture and society. And everybody's talking about it. Just go through the channels during news hour. They're all talking about child abuse as it relates to correcting your children and giving disciplinary sort of measures their way.

Well, as Christian parents, we have to understand the environment and the culture that so easily gets on a bandwagon, and we have to balance it with the wisdom of God's Word. Right? And we can't abandon the Word of the Lord for the sake of cultural biases and pressures. We can't do that.

And, obviously, beating a child within an inch of their life is wrong, and you can expect to go to jail if you do it. And it's flat out wrong, but correcting your child is not wrong. And being willing to stand behind that correction is not wrong, and it will not hurt the child. And to do it, honors the Lord. And God says, if you honor Me, I'll honor you. It goes back and forth.

There are all kinds of things we could say about that whole issue, but I want to be careful not to go on too long about it. I think we all know and understand, that parents have to be very careful when they discipline their children. If you discipline your children in anger, you're a fool. Flat out. Okay? Get over it. Get over the anger. Get cool.

A cool head before you bring any discipline to your child. Period. Exclamation point. Just don't do it. Tell yourself, no, not going to do it when I'm angry. It's hard, but you have to just, you have to do that. You're bigger than they are. You could hurt them. The goal is not to do that. The goal is to bring correction, loving correction, but, and to do it again, honors the Lord because He told us to correct our children.

Verse 31 goes on. It says, *“Behold, the days are coming when I will cut off your strength and the strength of your father's house, so that there will not be an old man in your house.”* In other words, your descendants will die at a very young age.

“³² Then in distress you will look with envious eye on all the prosperity that shall be bestowed on Israel, and there shall not be an old man in your house forever. ³³ The only one of you whom I shall not cut off from my altar shall be spared to weep his eyes out to grieve his heart, and all the descendants of your house shall die by the sword of men. ³⁴ And this that shall come upon your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, shall be the sign to you: both of them shall die on the same day.”

That’s going to be a sign to Eli that God has spoken through this man, this prophet, when his sons die on the same day. By the way, what God is telling Eli here, is that your line, your family line, is not going to serve Me anymore.

Now, God was gracious and allowed that family line to serve for the next couple of generations. But this was all brought to fulfillment during the early reign of Solomon, when the priest under David, Abiathar rebelled against the king, went instead with a competing king, if you will. And he was taken out of his position as high priest and a different priest was put in from a different family line or a branch, if you will, off the line of Levi. But God eventually made good on His word to Eli and their descendants were no longer priests after that time.

Furthermore, God says in verse 35, *“And I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who shall do according to what is in my heart and in my mind.”* And in human terms, that prophecy was fulfilled when Abiathar was taken off the priesthood and Zadok was put in under king Solomon.

In the ultimate sense, it is fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ, who is our High Priest, and so forth. But I think even in immediate context, it even points to Samuel being raised up into the role of priest and judge.

But he says in the middle of verse 35, *“And I will build him a sure house, and he shall go in and out before my anointed forever. ³⁶ And everyone who is left in your house shall come to implore him for a piece of silver or a loaf of bread and shall say, “Please put me in one of the priests' places, that I may eat a morsel of bread.””*