

Jonas Max Trofort

Old Testament Literature

Professor David Emanuel

Monday, January 23, 2023

1 Samuel 1-3

In the first three chapters of 1 Samuel, we are introduced to Eli who was the oldest priest sitting at the doors of the tabernacle known as Shiloh. As a priest in the Lord's permanent home, Eli had the privilege of welcoming individuals who came to petition before the Lord. In the first three chapters, we learn about Eli, his sons, and the good and bad things that were done. Eli, like many other priests of Israel, did both good and bad in the Lord's sight. One of them was that he neglected his parental duties toward his sons by refusing to restrain or discipline them. He failed to correct Hophni and Phinehas' inappropriate and sinful behavior in the tabernacle.

Due to the fact that Eli was a neglectful parent his children operated without self-control or respect for authority. As a result of Eli's neglect, 1 Samuel 2v12 says, "they had no regard for the Lord." The scripture continues to explain how the sons of Eli would sleep with the women who served at the entrance of the tent of meeting and were "treating the Lord's offering with contempt." In response, the Lord said that Eli and his house would be cut off from His favor and that, as a sign of the truth of the Lord's words, both sons would die on the same day (1 Samuel 2:30-34). Parenting is a very serious responsibility and every time it is taken lightly that in itself is a sin. We are taught that we are held accountable and judged by society and God by how we raise our children. Everyone is not given the chance to be a parent, this is a blessing from God

and so in response to this gift parents must do everything in their power to raise children the right way.

Although Eli did bad things, he did manage to do things that were pleasing to God. Among the good things, Eli raised Samuel in the Temple while serving as a priest and judge for over 40 years over Israel. During this time, Eli raised Samuel well and completely different than his own sons; Samuel was raised to fear and serve the Lord. Due to Eli's obedience in raising Samuel, Samuel was raised in God's presence which fulfilled the promise Samuel's mother, Hannah, made to God. In the midst of it all, although Eli did good, his good didn't outweigh his bad because he chose his son over God but we can not deny that Eli did a good thing by raising Samuel.

When Hannah made her promise to God, if she listened to Eli she would have been too discouraged to make her promise. In the scripture, 1 Samuel 1v9-20, while Eli was sitting on his chair by the doorpost of the Temple, Hannah started fervently praying and weeping bitterly. 1 Samuel 1v13, explains how Hannah reached another level within her prayer and started, "praying in her heart, and her lips were moving but her voice was not heard." This type of prayer was unfamiliar to Eli and in response, he accused her of being drunk and discouraged her. In the text, I thought that Eli being a Priest in the Lord's house would be in tune to recognize the difference between someone in deep prayer and someone that is drunk. After Eli's response, instead of being filled with embarrassment and leaving Temple frustrated Hannah responded to Eli with respect and wisdom. Hannah explained that she was drunk and instead, "deeply troubled...Do not take your servant for a wicked woman; I have been praying here out of my great anguish and grief." Eli blessed her and her prayer.

In conclusion, I personally believe that Eli had a weak character; he didn't parent well and was out of touch as a priest. Instead of standing for God, Eli chose to defend his guilty and blasphemous children who he deliberately failed to correct. Eli had the chance and opportunity to correct and help them but instead, we see this because by the grace of God Eli was able to raise Samuel in the way of the Lord. Instead of Eli being the strong person to take his children to the Lord they pulled him down and all ended up paying the costly consequences. I have learned a lesson in the importance of Godly parenting and how discipline is a display of love. When living for Christ, there can be no space for leniency and pleasing God must be the priority.