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OT Bible 102

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The story of Eli is one that speaks of human frailties in the position of leadership. His awesome responsibility as the voice who spoke on behalf of God for the people and to the people, put him in a very precarious position. According to Jewish tradition Priests are held in high esteem because of their roles. As we go through this text we will see the ramification of his action and the fact that as human beings we fail even in our best effort when we do things our way.

Eli the Priest of the Lord had an daunting responsibility of continuing the tradition of worship to God. he was entrusted with the function and maintenance of the temple, through the rituals of sacrifices for both priest and the people. The magnitude of this task put the lives of the nation at risk if it was done in presumptuousness; having been taught this from a younger age while studying the Torah.

Priests are held in a whole different position from the people, because of their distinct roles. They would take the request of the people to God and they would intern administer the blessings of God upon the people, as the voice or hand of God. Therefore if he blesses you, you are blessed and if he curses you you are cursed.

However, Eli's sons were of a major sore point to the people and he knew this. He had appointed his sons to carry out the Priestly functions the way he was taught. Which is indicative

of the Torah on training up one's children in the way of the Lord, when they are “anointed to succeed their father as high priest” Lev 16:32.

However, they had violated the law and practices of God; “they desecrated the sacred offerings the Israelites presented” Lev 22:15 and Eli took a nonchalant approach by just speaking to them as a form of correction but not administering the punishment to them for their action.

This nonchalant attitude, became a major cause for concern to the people and to the all seeing God, who sent him a warning through a prophet. 1 Sam 2:27-36. He warned Eli of his son's wrongdoings and told him what will be God's judgment on his lineage.

Eli, conceded that the message was from God and that it was true and God is just, but he never intervened to try and save his family line from destruction or corrected his son's action.

This is quite puzzling, because we serve a forgiving God who hears our cry and forgives when we repent. Eli, I'm sure was aware of this, yet he did nothing to stop the impending carnage that will be coming on his lineage.

He conceded that God is just and what he does is right, but shouldn't that have prompted him to put a stop to his son's action and pleading to God for mercy, since he has been the go-between for the people through the sacrifice and administering the actions of the law? After all, that's his job.

Nevertheless, he was just a man with many flaws. He stood in the presence of God for the people and he worshiped before God for years. This man who had carried the burden of Israel for years was probably at times alone and tired. Maybe years of serving has caused him to become burnt out and accept anything and God sending a prophet to speak to him might have been a relief that

God is now taking over. Or maybe he was upset at God for setting up another priests in his house under his care to replace him.

With such an awesome task it must be daunting at times to be the head. As a father it must be both a joy and a pain. Knowing that his sons will become priests and carrying on his descendants. But on the flip side, they will both die and his lineage will die also, after spending his life in God's presence and working for him.

As hard as it may seem God is just, but as human beings we might think it's unfair but the creator knows all things and sees all things. So he makes plans at all times to manifest His perfect will on the earth.

We Christians are to pay close attention to this man's walk with God and how his very action of nonchalance became the destruction of his entire family line. It speaks to the fact that we are not gods but mere mortals, with a mandate to carry out on the behalf of God , and as such we must be mind full of our attitude to our responsibility from God. It must never be what we think or how we want it to go, but our function must be carried out how God has designated it.

Eli failed to correct his sons and it brought a major downfall on Israel and his family. As hardworking as he was he lost a whole generation.

