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Old Testament Literature 102 OA

7 February 2023

### Lessons from Eli

Within the book of Samuel we can see the actions and character of Eli. We can see Eli in the first three chapters in the role of priest over the people of Israel as well as father to his two sons, Hophni and Phinehas. Eli was successful in his role over Samuel as priest but failed in his role as priest and father over his own two sons. Overall, I feel that although Eli made mistakes and misjudgments he was a good character in how he was used in the life of Samuel.

In the first 3 chapters of 1 Samuel we can see Eli exercise his authority as priest in Hannah and her son's lives. When Hannah cried out to the lord in chapter 1 for a son, Eli comes into agreement with her and says for God to grant her petition (NKJV 1:17). Sure enough, Hannah becomes pregnant with Samuel. Later when Hannah brings Samuel to the tabernacle Eli blesses them and asks the Lord to grant them descendants. Hannah goes on to have three sons and two daughters. Eli exercised his role as priests well here and his actions are good. In the end of chapter 3, when Samuel hears the voice of God and does not realize, Eli gives Samuel good guidance as he tells him to answer the voice of God, here we can see the good judgment and wisdom of Eli.

When I first read the passage I could not understand what Eli did wrong, he tried to correct his sons but when I continued reading into chapter 3 and saw who Samuel was growing into and how God would use him it made me think about how faithful God was to Hannah. She was intentional about what God had given her. In chapter 1 she made a vow to God that she would, "...give him to the Lord all the days of his life..." if he would give her a child. (NKJV

1:11). That was when I realized, Eli was nonchalant. He was not intentional about the children and the promise that God had made to him and his house. In chapter 2 God says to Eli, "...I said indeed that your house and the house of your father would walk before Me forever.' But now the Lord says: Far be it from Me; For those who honor me I will honor and those who despise Me shall be lightly esteemed." (NKJV 1 Samuel 2:30). God reminded Eli of the promise he made to his father about his house and his generations, that they would walk with Him. Even though He had made Eli's house this promise, chapter 2 verse 12 says that Eli's sons did not know the Lord and the word goes on to say that they disrespected and violated God's tabernacle and offerings despite their father, Eli, being the very priest that was appointed to protect and honor God's tabernacle. Eli rebukes his sons so they may turn away from their sin against the Lord but it does not seem that he actually managed to stop them as the Lord steps in later in the story and accuses Eli of honoring his sons above Himself. God tells Samuel about Eli, "For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity that he knows, because his sons made themselves vile, and he did not restrain them." (NKJV 3:13). God tells Samuel that Eli did not restrain his sons' sins and was not intentional about restraining them.

The lesson I have learned in reading about the life of Eli in the first three chapters of 1 Samuel is to always be intentional about what God has spoken over you and your generations. Eli seemed to be a good priest had he not had children. He blesses Hannah and then goes on to help and bless Samuel but when it came to his house he left it in disorder so much so that he allowed his very own children to disrespect the dwelling place of God. In Eli allowing his sons to disrespect God, he himself dishonored God. Eli reminds me to always honor God in everything I do and to be intentional about the gifts God has given me, giving them back to God in surrender. I relate Eli's sons to potential sin or anything that I have not surrendered to God in my life.