

Eli is a significant character in the biblical narrative of 1 Samuel, and his life is chronicled in chapters 1 to 3. Eli served as a high priest in Israel during a tumultuous time when the nation was experiencing moral and spiritual decay. In this assignment, I will explore Eli's actions both good and bad. Then, I will analyze whether he was a good or bad character. Additionally, I will close in on lessons from Eli's life that Christians like me can apply to their spiritual lives.

Firstly, Eli is portrayed as a compassionate and empathetic individual. In chapter 1, he encounters Hannah, a woman who was childless and oppressed by her rival, Peninnah. Eli comforts her and blesses her, praying that God will grant her request for a child. Eli also exhibited humility when Hannah recognized him as the high priest and he responded by stating that he was a man like any other. According to the Law of Moses, Israelites could not worship God through sacrifices at any time and in any way they pleased. They were to bring sacrifices to the tabernacle and the priests, which at this time were at Shiloh. Furthermore, Eli's sons Hophni and Phinehas who were, were corrupt and disrespectful to God's sanctuary. Even though the priests were wicked, he still offered sacrifices to the Lord knowing that the wickedness of the priest did not make his own service to the Lord invalid. However, he reapproached them and warned them of their wrongdoing. This demonstrated that Eli was not afraid to confront wrongdoing, even if it involved his family.

On the other hand, Eli's parenting skills were questionable, and his leniency towards his sons' wrongdoing led to their downfall. Eli knew of his sons' wickedness but failed to discipline them. He rebuked them verbally, but his actions did not match his words. Eli's failure to discipline his children resulted in God's judgment upon his household. Eli, as a father, spoke but he did not carry it out. He warned but he did not see to it. It was too painful for Eli to displease his sons and

he honored his sons more than God. His sons knew that their Dad would not do anything about putting a stop to the foolishness. Everything that was required in the Old Testament law was completely ignored by Eli when instructing his children. Eli never brought them to the elder's gates, didn't dispose them of their priestly office, didn't stop them from performing sacrifices, nor did he call for them to be stoned for their fornication. Eventually, Hophni and Phinehas were killed in battle and Eli died soon after hearing the news. His family's priesthood was removed.

In conclusion, Eli was a complex character, exhibiting both good and bad traits. He was compassionate, empathetic, humble, and not afraid to confront wrongdoing. However, his leniency towards his sons' wrongdoing demonstrated his weakness as a parent, and his failure to discipline his children led to their downfall. Overall, it is difficult to determine whether Eli was a good or bad character, as his character exhibited both positive and negative traits.

As Christians, we can learn valuable lessons from Eli's life. Firstly, we must be compassionate and empathetic towards those who are suffering, just as Eli was towards Hannah. We must also not hesitate to confront wrongdoing, even if it involves our family members. Additionally, we must prioritize discipline and accountability in our families to avoid spiritual decay. Finally, we must recognize our weaknesses as parents and seek God's wisdom and guidance in raising our children. Doing these things will help in the future tremendously.