

INTRODUCTION

There was a day when Israel's enemies, the Philistines, fought against Israel and defeated them. In the battle, 30,000 men of Israel died.

Among the dead were the two priests, sons of the high priest.

What's more, the holy Ark of the Covenant was taken by the enemy.

When the high priest heard that news, he fell backward, breaking his neck, and died.

When the wife of one of the priests heard that her husband and her father-in-law had died, and that the Ark of the Covenant was taken, she died in childbirth.

It was one of Israel's darkest days.

But that is literally ancient history. Why should we care to read about that and have a sermon based on it?

Because throughout the Bible are things that the Holy Spirit had written there to tell us about how God, who is holy, holy, holy, brings sinners like us to Himself through Jesus Christ, His Son and our Savior.

And because the things that happened to Israel, as God's church in the Old Testament, are an example, written down for our instruction, who are God's church in the New Testament. They warn us against sinning as Israel sinned, and show us the way of escape, so we may flee the temptations by which they fell into sin.

And because I went looking for what we could learn from the rest of the Bible, to make us understand what 1 Timothy 3 says about a man ruling his own house well, having his children in subjection. And I found a treasure of instruction for us here in these chapters of 1 Samuel.

So, then, why all this judgment from God, which came upon Israel that day?

I. The High Priest Eli's Sons Had Corrupted the Worship and Morals of the Church

A. 1 Samuel 2:12-17 Now the sons of Eli were corrupt; they did not know the LORD. 13 And the priests' custom with the people was that when any man offered a sacrifice, the priest's servant would come with a three-pronged fleshhook in his hand while the meat was boiling. 14 Then he would thrust it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; and the priest would take for himself all that the fleshhook brought up. So they did in Shiloh to all the Israelites who came there. 15 Also, before they burned the fat, the priest's servant would come and say to the man who sacrificed, "Give meat for roasting to the priest, for he will not take boiled meat from you, but raw." 16 And if the man said to him, "They should really burn the fat first; then you may take as much as your heart desires," he would then answer him, "No, but you must give it now; and if not, I will take it by force." 17 Therefore the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD, for men abhorred the offering of the LORD.

1. They took from the church's offerings what did not belong to them
 - a) from men's share of the offered meat (13-14)
 - b) even from God's share of the offered meat (15-16)

B. 1 Samuel 2:22 Now Eli was very old; and he heard everything his sons did to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle of meeting.

1. there were women who came to the tabernacle to worship; there were women who served there in some capacity;
2. they took advantage of the women

C. Israel was made to despise the worship of God

1. 1 Samuel 2:17 Therefore the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD, for men abhorred the offering of the LORD. [ESV treated the offering of the Lord with contempt]
2. being, in effect, driven away from the worship of God at His tabernacle, the people went to worshiping false gods
 - a) 1 Samuel 7:3-4 Then Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel, saying, "If you return to the LORD with all your hearts, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths from among you, and prepare your hearts for the LORD, and serve Him only; and He will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines." 4 So the children of Israel put away the Baals and the Ashtoreths, and served the LORD only.

- D. APPLICATION: Some of you have experienced what it is like when those who lead the church in worship do things that trouble the worshippers
1. people think church is no different from the world
 2. young people who grow up in the church leave it as soon as they are adults
 3. very devout Christians scarcely can stand to go to church, and end up looking for some other way
- E. APPLICATION: Church, beware!
1. do not let the church where you are a member go that way!
 2. heed the instructions the Bible gives, so as to appoint to office only men who are blameless!

God sent judgment upon Israel. But why?

Because the high priest Eli's sons had corrupted the worship and morals of the church.

But how did it come to that? Those priests' conduct in office was terrible.

How could it get that bad?

II. Eli Knew the Evil Deeds of His Sons, But Did Not Restrain Them - 1

Samuel 3:13

- A. Eli was those men's father, was the high priest over them, and was Israel's judge; yet with all that authority, he did not restrain his sons
- B. When his sons' evil conduct became notorious, Eli did reprove them
 - 1. 1 Samuel 2:23-25 And he said to them, "Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all the people. 24 No, my sons; it is no good report that I hear the people of the LORD spreading abroad. 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.
 - 2. last week we studied what the Bible says about parents "chastening" their children
 - a) it does include instruction or correction by words; eventually in this case Eli did that
 - b) but it also includes correction by punishment, by blows and stripes if necessary
- C. But he had waited too late for that to have any effect
- D. And he did not make use of his authority
 - 1. to punish them for correction
 - 2. to remove them from office in the church

So, Eli knew the evil deeds of his sons, but did not restrain them

Why did Eli not do what was necessary to stop his sons from their evil deeds in the church?

III. Eli Honored His Sons More Than God - 1 Samuel 2:27-34

- A. It was a great honor for Eli to be a priest, and especially to be the high priest (27-28)
- B. And it was a generous provision for the priests that God had made, in given them a share of the offerings for themselves to eat
- C. In his sons' not being content with the share of the food God had appointed them, but instead seizing more than they were due; and in Eli allowing it and getting fat on it, Eli was scorning what God had given him; the bible says literally that Eli was "kicking at" what God had given him
- D. Here is a line that I hope makes everyone here shudder: God rightly accused Eli of honoring his own sons more than he honored God.

E. APPLICATION

1. Eli was in a position as the senior pastor of God's church
2. by his being in that position, his sons became pastors in the church, also
3. Eli's sons were benefiting financially from their positions, because they had the power to take more from the church's offerings than was just
4. Eli knew it was wrong, and he told his sons they should stop, but he was not willing actually to stop them, because his devotion was more to his own sons than to God and God's church

F. APPLICATION

1. how do young adults come to believe that they can get away with doing evil, even in the church?
 - a) They get away with doing evil in their family as they grow up.
 - b) Apparently Hophni and Phineahas thought they could get away with what they were doing, that their father would not stop them. And they were right!
2. is it right for the church to put a man in a position of trust in the church, making him a pastor or deacon, if it can be seen that he merely tells his children to do right, but does not actually make them do right? what should the church expect to happen?
 - a) church members who should be exluded will not be
 - b) his children, once grown, could become a big problem for the church if he and they are in positions of trust
3. Oh, dear church, do not put Eli into office in the church. Consider well how he rules his household. Does he rule it well? Are his children in subjection?

G. APPLICATION

1. Oh, you who are blessed with children, either now or in the future, do not fail to restrain them from doing evil. Chasten them while they are still children, so they will not become sons of Eli, bringing God's judgment on themselves and disaster on God's church. Restrain them while yet it is not too late for them!

Eli was not faithful as a priest, because he honored his own sons more than God

IV. God Promised and Provided a Faithful Priest - 1 Samuel 2:35

A. Samuel, for whom Hannah had been praying, and whom God was just then providing

1. he would minister before God's anointed, King Saul and King David
 - a) in fact, he would do the anointing
2. yet he could not be the priest whose house would never end
 - a) he was not of a priestly line
 - b) his own sons were corrupt

B. Zadok

1. 1 Kings 2:27 So Solomon removed Abiathar from being priest to the LORD, that he might fulfill the word of the LORD which He spoke concerning the house of Eli at Shiloh.
2. 1 Kings 2:35 The king put Benaiah the son of Jehoiada in his place over the army, and the king put Zadok the priest in the place of Abiathar.
3. he would minister before King Solomon; his line would minister before the kings of Judah for many generations
4. yet he could not, because the covenant under which his family were priests would come to an end

C. Jesus Christ

1. so far is he from taking parts of the offering that belong to God, or that belong to the worshiper, He offered Himself
2. when you come to worship God through Him, He will not deprive you of any benefit that God has promised you

D. Men who are blameless to be pastors in the church

CONCLUSION

God sent judgment upon Israel. But why?

Because the high priest Eli's sons had corrupted the worship and morals of the church.

But how did it come to that? How was conduct that bad tolerated in the priests?

Eli knew the evil deeds of his sons, but did not restrain them

Why did Eli not do what was necessary to stop his sons from their evil deeds in the church?

Eli honored his own sons more than God.

But God has promised He would raise up a faithful priest.

1 Samuel 2:29

NKJV Why do you kick at My sacrifice and My offering which I have commanded in My dwelling place, and honor your sons more than Me, to make yourselves fat with the best of all the offerings of Israel My people?'

GEN: ...honourest thy children aboute mee...

KJV: ...honourest thy sons above me...

ESV: ...honor your sons above me...

1 Samuel 2:35

NKJV Then I will raise up for Myself a faithful priest who shall do according to what is in My heart and in My mind. I will build him a sure house, and he shall walk before My anointed forever.

Geneva:

Meaning Zadok, who succeeded Abiathar, and was the figure of Christ.

Poole:

The person designed is Zadok 1 Kings 2:27, 35; 1 Chronicles 29:22

Henry:

This was fulfilled in Zadoc

It has its full accomplishment in the priesthood of Christ, that merciful and faithful high priest whom God raised up when the Levitical priesthood was thrown off, who in all things did his father's mind, and for whom God will build a sure house, build it on a rock, so that the gates of hell cannot prevail against it.

The wickedness of ministers, though it destroy themselves, yet it shall not destroy the ministry. How bad soever the officers are, the office shall continue always to the end of the world. If some betray their trust, yet others shall be raised up that will be true to it.

Gill:

Not Samuel...but Zadok, as it is commonly interpreted, who was put into the office of the high priest by Solomon when he came to the throne, in the room of Abiathar, of the line of Eli

Clarke:

This seems to have been spoken of Zadok, who was anointed high priest in the room of Abiathar, the last descendant of the house of Eli in their proper and more extended sense, these things are supposed to belong to our great High Priest and the Christian system

Barnes:

Zadok is meant rather than Samuel. The High Priesthood continued in the direct descendants of Zadok as long as the monarchy lasted (see 1Ch_6:8-15)

in its first sense obviously means the kings of Israel and Judah. But doubtless the use of the term Messiah here and in 1 Sam 2:10 is significant, and points to the Lord's Christ, in whom the royal and priestly offices are united. In this connection the substitution of the priesthood after the order of Melchisedec for the Levitical may be foreshadowed

K&D:

the promise of the raising up of the tried priest, for whom God would build a lasting house, also refers to all the priests whom the Lord would raise up as faithful servants of His altar, and only receives its complete and final fulfilment in Christ, the true and eternal High Priest.

This fulfilment is effected in connection with Christ and His kingdom.

Hawker:

I cannot think as some have thought, that this scripture had its accomplishment in the person of Zadok, and that the anointed, before whom this faithful Priest is said to walk, meant David king of Israel. Surely, Reader, none but the ever blessed Jesus could merit the title of faithful Priest. Neither could any be considered as the truly anointed of God, but He to whom the Spirit was given without measure, and who was indeed anointed to be, at one and the same time, the Prophet, the Priest, and the King, of his people.

Spurgeon:

No doubt first referring to Zadok, who succeeded afterwards to the priests office; but looking further forward still to our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the ever-faithful High Priest who always does according to that which is in the mind and heart of the Father.

JRY:

application of this can be made to church pastors

1 Samuel 3:13

NKJV For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knows, because his sons made themselves vile, and he did not restrain them.

GEN ...his sonnes ranne into a slander, and he stayed them not.

KJV ...his sons made themselves vile, and he did not restrain them.

ESV ...his sons were blaspheming God, and he did not restrain them.

H3543 *kahah*

KJV margin: Heb. frowned not upon them

K&D:

...and did not prevent them.

Gill:

he did not make use of his authority, neither as a father, and especially not as high priest, and the judge of Israel, who ought not only to have sharply reproved them, which he did not, but to have censured or punished them, and turned them out of their office: "or did not frown upon them" (t), as in the margin of our Bibles; he did not knit his brows, or wrinkle up his face, and by his countenance show his displeasure at their proceedings, but in an easy, smooth, gentle manner, expostulated with them about them.

Trapp:

No, not so much as by frowning upon them - so the word signifieth - by casting a wry look toward them.

Poole:

he contented himself with a cold and gentle reproof, and did not severely rebuke, and punish, and effectually restrain them from their abominable courses, nor use that authority which God had given him, as a father, as a high priest, and as a judge, or chief magistrate, against them, as by the law of God he was obliged to do.

Henry:

Or, as it is in the Hebrew, he frowned not upon them. If he did show his dislike of their wicked courses, yet not to that degree that he ought to have done: he did reprove them, but he did not punish them, for the mischief they did, nor deprive them of their power to do mischief, which as a father, high priest, and judge, he might have done.

Those that do not restrain the sins of others, when it is in the power of their hand to do it, make themselves partakers of the guilt, and will be charged as accessaries: Those in authority will have a great deal to answer for if they make not the sword they bear a terror to evil workers.

Clarke:

He did not use his parental and juridical authority to curb them, and prevent the disorders which they committed.

Barnes:

In the sense of punishing. He did not remove them from their office, which he ought to have done.

JFB:

though his misfortunes claim our sympathy, it is impossible to approve or defend the weak and unfaithful course which, in the retributive justice of God, brought these adversities upon him

Ellicott:

the weak and indulgent father refrained from removing his sons from their high office.

Spurgeon:

Take warning, fathers and mothers, by this experience of old Eli. A man said to me, one day, "I never laid my hand upon my children;" and I answered, "Then I think it is very likely that God will lay his hand upon you." "Oh!" he said, "I have not even spoken sharply to them." "Then," I replied, "it is highly probable that God will speak very sharply to you; for it is not God's will that parents should leave their children unrestrained in their sin."

MacLaren:

Eli was a kindly, and, in his way, good man, but wanting in firmness, and acquiescent in evil, partly, perhaps, from lack of moral courage and partly from lack of fervent religion. He is not charged with faults in his own administration of his office, but with not curbing his disreputable sons.

The sin was mainly the sons'; but the guilt was largely the father's. We may learn how cruel paternal laxity is, and how fatal mischief may be done, by neglect of the plain duty of restraining children. He who tolerates evil which it is his province to suppress, is an accomplice, and the blood of the doers is red on his hands.

EB:

After the previous warning, Eli seems to have gone on lamenting but not chastising.

The fault of Eli was, that he might have restrained them and he did not restrain them. In those times fathers had more authority over their families than is given them now. The head of the house was counted responsible for the house, because it was only by his neglecting the

power he had that his family could become openly wicked. It was only by Eli neglecting the power he had that his sons could have become so vile. Where his sons were heirs to such sacred functions there was a double call to restrain them, and that call he neglected. He neglected it at the time when he might have done it, and that time could never be recalled.

So, there is an age when children may be restrained, and if that age is allowed to pass the power of restraining them goes along with it. There are faults in this matter on the part of many parents, on the right hand and on the left. Many err by not restraining at all. Mothers begin while their children are yet infants to humor their every whim, and cannot bear to hold back from them anything they may wish. It is this habit that is liable to have such a terrible reaction. There are other parents that while they restrain do not restrain wisely. They punish, but they do not punish in love. They are angry because their children have broken their rules; they punish in anger, and the punishment falls merely as the blow of a stronger person on a weaker. It does not humble, it does not soften. What awful consequences it often brings!

[on 1 Sam 2:11-36]

And how did the high priest deal with this state of things? In the worst possible way. He spoke against it but he did not act against it. He showed that he knew of it, he owned it to be very wicked; but he contented himself with words of remonstrance

his fault was that he did not restrain his sons at the time when he ought and might have restrained them...Had he acted as he should have acted at the beginning, matters would never have come to such a flagrant pass.

It is often very difficult to explain how it comes to pass that godly men have had ungodly children. There is little difficulty in accounting for this on the present occasion. There was a fatal defect in the method of Eli. His remonstrance with his sons is not made at the proper time. It is not made in the fitting tone. When disregarded, it is not followed up by the proper consequences. We can easily think of Eli letting the boys have their own will and their own way when they were young; threatening them for disobedience, but not executing the threat; angry at them when they did wrong, but not punishing the offence; vacillating perhaps between occasional severity and habitual indulgence, till by-and-bye all fear of sinning had left them, and they coolly calculated that the grossest wickedness would meet with nothing worse than a reproof.

Spurgeon:

That is all that the godly old man said to his wicked sons. He was far too gentle in his way of reproofing them. He was evidently afraid of his own sons, not the only man who has been in the same predicament.

Anna - Prelude (please choose)

Anna - Trinity 3 "From All That Dwell Below the Skies"

Rita - Trinity 37 "God Is Our Refuge"

Allison - Trinity 705 "Grace Greater Than Our Sin"

Thad - Call to Worship and Opening Prayer: Hebrews 4:14-16

Dillon - Scripture Reading: Ephesians 2:1-22

If whole chapter seems over long, you could plan to stop at the end of some thought.

~~Jeremiah~~ Jeff - Congregational Prayer

Jeff - Benediction: Jude 1:20-21

Requested by Anna: 3, 148, 198, 506

3 (Psalm 117) From All That Dwell Below the Skies

148 Comfort, Comfort Ye My People

198 Jesus Christ Is Risen Today

506 Why Should Cross and Trial Grieve Me?