

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

AUGUST 12TH-13TH, 2023 // 1 SAMUEL

PRAISE (1 SAMUEL 2:1-10) HANNAH'S SECOND PRAYER

Before Hannah and Elkanah leave Samuel, she prays. Her 2nd prayer is from personal experience and love for God and is drastically different than her 1st. It focuses on thankfulness, praise to and acknowledgement of God's power.

- **Though requests are fine, prayer should begin with praise and thankfulness to God.**

THE GOD OF STRENGTH (V1-3)

The term "horn" symbolizes Hannah's strength increasing. She also says there is "no one holy like the Lord." This means in a world of idols none have the power to help/change people.

- **To stand in the presence of a holy, powerful God and be changed, we must be humble and admit our faults (v3).**

HE IS ALSO THE GOD OF JUSTICE (V4-8)

Hannah gives us different examples of God mediating mankind and executing justice. The point is that **God "humbles" those who walk in arrogance and selfishness and "exalts" those who walk in peace and humility.**

- Hannah focuses on military power, daily needs, economics, life and death.

THIS IS A TOUGH ONE

Though we are at times placed in positions to administer justice based on God's standards of right and wrong (police, judges, parents, pastors, etc.), ultimately justice is not ours.

- **God will eventually hold everyone accountable. Until then, we're called to live and make decisions righteously.**

THE GOD OF THE FUTURE (V9-10)

The last part of Hannah's prayer focuses on the hope of God taking care of His people both in this life and in the life to come. Hannah knew that **we need a Savior because we cannot make it by our strength, ways, or ideas.**

- We also see an allusion to Jesus Christ, the "anointed King."

CORRUPTION (1 SAMUEL 2:11-21) A GREAT CONTRAST IS BUILDING

Samuel "serv[ing] the Lord in the presence of Eli" sets up a stark contrast with Eli's "wicked" sons. The crux of Eli's son's evil and corruption was that **"they did not respect the Lord."**

- A lack of respecting God is always the root of evil. **Do we respect the Creator by honoring His principles and commands?**

THE ABUSE OF POWER

One example of Hophni and Phinehas' evil was their misuse of power in the temple. In Leviticus 7 it tells the priest that they can have the breast and right thigh of a sacrifice, but they were taking virtually all of the sacrifice for themselves.

- This was both a **disregard for God's commands and the well-being of others.**

THE SERIOUSNESS OF MINISTRY MISCONDUCT

Leviticus 10 called for death to priests who misused their power for selfish gain. Though this sounds extreme, it shows the seriousness God places on those with spiritual authority.

- **Though leaders are held to a higher standard (James 3:1), all people with spiritual influence must have integrity.**

BACK TO THE STARK CONTRAST

The end of v17 starkly contrasts v18-21. As Eli's sons grow in evil and abuse people around them, Samuel grows in the Lord. Also, notice "the Lord paid attention to Hannah's need[s]" as she grew in her relationship with Him.

- We will also see that the attention of the parents to their children plays a part in this.
- **The point of this section is simple but profound: if we choose to be in God's presence (pray, read, community) we grow and prosper. If we don't, we gravitate towards evil and do damage to ourselves and others.**

JUSTICE & HONOR (1 SAMUEL 2:22-36) GREED AND SEX SCANDALS

Eli was getting up in age and heard that his sons were stealing from the people and having sex with women who served in the temple.

- v25a means if we do something unjust to someone, people (judges, pastors, etc.) can mediate, but **if we do evil against God, only repentance can save us from punishment.**

"SINCE THE LORD INTENDED TO KILL THEM"?

v25b is interesting. Because of the continued neglect of Eli's warnings to address their sin, Hophni and Phinehas were destined to be punished similar to Pharaoh in Exodus 4, 5, and 7.

- This is a physical example of a spiritual truth: **if we choose to not address sin and repent, we will also face eternal death.**

AN UNNAMED "MAN OF GOD"

God sent an unnamed person to reveal His judgment against Eli's family. The prophet reminded Eli of God's provision and blessings over the years, but **overtime they started to take their freedom and prosperity for granted and became selfish and entitled.**

- **Have we gotten to a similar state?**

THE SINS OF ELI'S FAMILY

Though Eli was not overtly evil, **he tolerated evil within his household.** They **"despise[d]" the sacrifices of others, didn't honor God's commands, honored themselves over God, and got "fat" off the backs of others.**

- What are we tolerating within our families? Who do we honor? How do we serve?

REMEMBER, THE GOD OF JUSTICE

V30-36 begin with a haunting "Therefore..." God couldn't let these egregious acts continue, so the unnamed prophet proclaims that God would cut off Eli's lineage's authority.

- Eli's sons would die, and their descendants would lose their livelihood and suffer untimely deaths as well.

SO, WE PAY FOR OTHERS' SINS?

There are always ramifications for sin. If we grew up in a sinful place (home or even nation), we're more likely to commit sin or at least feel its effects. Though the OT mentions generational curses, these are quickly broken by repentance.

- **We're responsible for our choices and have equal access to freedom through God.**

"THEN I WILL RAISE UP A FAITHFUL PRIEST"

In the place of Eli and his family, God would raise up someone with integrity who would "do whatever is in [God's] heart and mind."

- V36 ends with an assurance from God that Eli's family who **knowingly lived in sin, abuse, and selfishness would be humbled and reduced to nothing.**

PRAISE AND THANKS

- Like Hannah, we must wrap our prayers with **praise** (acknowledging God's power and goodness) and **thanks**.
- In this, our hearts remain humble and our thoughts are focused more on God and His will, not just our desires or problems.
- **Praise, repent, other people, ourselves**

STRENGTH AND JUSTICE

- If we will put God first in our lives and in our prayer time, God will give us supernatural strength to endure life and make wise decisions.
- We must also know that **God is just and all evil will be dealt with eventually. Justice is not ours but belongs to a righteous God.**

TOLERATING EVIL

- **If we allow or try to manage sin, we will eventually drown in it.** Sin prohibits a relationship with God and that leads to chaos.
- Even if we are not directly committing the sin, we must not condone or turn a blind eye to it. **If we withhold or neglect truth, we are accomplices to evil.**

THERE IS ALWAYS A PRICE FOR SIN

- There are natural consequences of sin that affect others. This may mean that we have a proclivity to certain sins because we've been exposed to them.
- Though **there still may be ramifications, this chain can be broken if we truly repent** (identify, ask to forgive, move away from).

LIVING IN CONTRAST (1 PETER 2:9)

- We must also be **living in stark contrast to the "world."** This is not about how we look as much as how we **think, speak, treat others, and value and live out the teachings and principles of scripture.**
- If one seeks truth, it isn't hard to see the results of living for self vs. living for God.
- Choose to think more about God and others than ourselves.
- Guard our hearts and minds from evil.
- Pray, read the Word, set aside time to meditate/listen to God.
- Obey the scripture and learn to listen to the Spirit's direction.