

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE #2

MONDAY Hannah wrote first about her own situation. (she seemingly wrote the early verses in chapter two with Peninnah in mind) But from verse 8 on, she wrote in a broader sense. She expanded her thoughts and concluded that in the same way God had been sovereign in her life, God will be sovereign in all things. Perhaps unwittingly, she spoke a word concerning the Messiah, as well.

I Samuel 2:8-10

Notice how forcefully Hannah wrote of the judgment of God. She described it as God setting the world in order. That's what God does, and will do. One day, He will come again to set everything in order. Ever since the Fall of Adam and Eve, the world has been a mess. It's been under the curse of sin. It's been the center of unspeakable evil and depravity. But it will not be left that way. Jesus is going to set it right! Let us look for that Day, and live for the day of His return. Let us do some 'setting right' in our own lives as we wait!

TUESDAY Hannah left Samuel at the Tabernacle. The old High Priest, Eli, was in charge of things there, so for all intents and purposes, Samuel was under his roof and in his family. Elsewhere in Eli's family, all was not well. The sons of Eli were priests – it was a family thing, remember – but at the same time, they were unconverted and their behavior was despicable. They abused the sacrifice system of the Tabernacle and ordered their servants to act badly, as well. And everybody in Israel was aware of this problem.

I Samuel 2:11-17

The behavior of Eli's sons was inexcusable. Only a few people were in a position to do anything about it. Eli was one of those, but he did not act. His sons despised and openly disobeyed the laws which God gave regarding the sacrifices. They treated what others took very seriously with scorn and con-tempt. Let us be certain we do not look down on the faith or ministries of others. The one who cleans the bathrooms for Sunday each week is not regarded in God's sight, in any sense, of lesser value than the one who leads in Communion. God does not despise the small things!

WEDNESDAY The story line shifts to Samuel's life in the Tabernacle. His mother's visits are described: each year, she brought him a new coat, and each year, Eli gave a special blessing to her. This blessing was evidently focused on Hannah getting other children to replace the son she had given to the Lord. The Lord gave her five other children. Also, the yearly blessing from Eli indicates that he was happy with Samuel. Perhaps the contrast to his own sons was part of this.

I Samuel 2:18-21

Samuel grew up in the presence of the Lord. Remember, the Lord demonstrated His presence to Israel by dwelling between the spread wings of the Cherubim over the golden Mercy Seat covering the Ark of the Covenant. The Ark was kept in the Tabernacle – in the Holy of Holies. Eli, and Eli alone, as high priest, was permitted to enter that compartment, and to do so only once a year – on the Day of Atonement. Still, the Tabernacle was right there! The Holy of Holies was right there! God's presence was right there! Let us live with a growing awareness of God's presence with us. He is with us always. He is right here! It's not a force. It's not a feeling. It's not a mystic wonder. It's the indwelling of God's Spirit.

THURSDAY Eli's son continued to disgrace their father and heaped scorn upon the things of the Lord. They even tried to seduce the young women who came to the

Tabernacle to worship. Because they were sons of the high priest, they used their status to do such wicked things. Eli warned his sons that God will not tolerate that kind of behavior, but they did not listen to him. God's judgment was much closer than they could have ever guessed!

I Samuel 2:22-26

Eli's sons stand out in stark contrast. Notice how God presents them to us: something about the sons; something about Samuel; something about Eli's sons; something about Samuel, and so on. The contrast was clear to God and to all the people. It was clear to Eli, and he apparently tried to reform the behavior of his sons and get them on track. But they wouldn't. It's the darkness and light principle. Darkness does not like light. For light makes the darkness even dark-er. Samuel did this in the way he lived. And it is God's plan for all who truly believe to do the same. Let us determine to do some serious shining-in-the-dark!

FRIDAY The contrast between the sons Eli and Samuel continues. The main point of the whole comparison is that Godly parents do not automatically produce Godly children – that ultimately, each must stand alone before God. Each must choose himself whether to reject or receive the things of God. Eli, as did Samuel, received them but Eli's sons refused them. In these few verses, a prophet comes to Eli and rebukes him and his sons.

I Samuel 2:27-29

God's gracious work is revealed in the verbs God himself uses to describe what He has done: *reveal* myself...*choose* him...*give* to him. That same work in our lives summarizes God's working within. In 28b, the Lord asks, "Did I not give ...all the offerings of the children of Israel?" Under the Law of Moses, the priests (Eli was one) and their families were provided for by taking some of that which was offered by the people to the Lord. The point is this: God was providing for Eli and his sons. But Eli's sons were not content with God's provision and wanted better. As if anyone could ever provide for himself better than God could! Let us resolve to be content with all that God provides for us, whether rain or famine.

SATURDAY The Lord tells Eli that it was his desire that Eli's family would always walk before Him, and always serve as priests. But that is not going to happen. Because there is a broader principle which comes into play here: "He who honors me, I will honor; those who despise me, I will lightly esteem." The Lord applies this to Eli's case and announces in a general way that Eli will be cut off.

I Samuel 2:30-33

Isn't it amazing how much a man of His word God is! What he says He will do. Every time! To everyone! (God is not a respecter of persons) Eli was a priest in the Tabernacle. There was much about him that was admirable and noble. But Eli did not honor God when it came to the way he dealt with his sons. He seems to have 'loved' them so much that he could not correct or discipline them. Eli paid no heed to what God said about raising and teaching children; he thought that just 'loving' them was the most important thing. The 'love' Eli felt was not a genuine and Biblical love. Genuine, Biblical love disciplines. Genuine love corrects. Such love cares more for the child's eternal well-being than his temporary comfort. That's genuine love! Let us love one another (and our kids) in this way.