

## Samuel 2 - Kingdoms Fail in the Home

When we looked at 1 Samuel 1, we explored how kingdoms begin at home. This week, we're going to look at how kingdoms *fail* in the home. In 1 Samuel 1, Hannah set the home stage for Samuel's spirituality, preparing him for God's use in establishing the Kingdom of Israel.

In 1 Samuel 2, Eli and his family faced a similar situation, but Eli failed his sons. Unlike Samuel, Eli's sons responded poorly, allowing their hearts to harden. Eli's failure to hold his sons accountable discipline his sons contributed to the hardening of their hearts. By God's grace Israel would continue to go on in its kingdom calling, but it will be without Eli and his sons. Eli's sons, Hophni and Phinehas, will take the Ark of the Covenant, which represents the presence of God in the Tabernacle, into battle. They will be killed in battle, the Ark will be captured, and Eli will fall and die of a broken neck when he hears the news. The final word on Eli and his sons will be *Ichabod*, "The glory has departed." The Theocracy is in failure at this point. It is in a state of death before the monarchy can even be born. It will have to be born again, which is the great theme of the Bible. As a preview, we will see Saul's reign born out of this situation in a carnal kingdom without the glory. We will see David's reign with a spiritual rebirth and the restoration of the Ark to the Tabernacle and the return of glory.

There will be more to come, but today we are going to focus on the failure of Eli and his home. In the course of doing this, we are going to especially see how Hophni and Phinehas hardened their hearts which will lead to the tragic end of the house of Eli.

### 1. What could have been -

1 Samuel 2 starts off with Hannah's song, a reminder of how things *could* be.

1Sam 2:1-11 And Hannah prayed, and said, My heart rejoiceth in the LORD, mine horn is exalted in the LORD: my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; because I rejoice in thy salvation.

2*There is* none holy as the LORD: for *there is* none beside thee: neither *is there* any rock like our God.

3Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let *not* arrogancy come out of your mouth: for the LORD *is* a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed. **[This is a prophetic warning that will judge the arrogance of Hophni and Phinehas.]**

4The bows of the mighty men *are* broken, and they that stumbled are girded with strength. **[Another prophetic word since Eli's sons will die in battle]**

5*They that were* full have hired out themselves for bread; and *they that were* hungry ceased: so that the barren hath born seven; and she that hath many children is waxed feeble.

Hannah's words continue on prophetically because out of the grave of Eli's house is going to rise the ministry of Samuel as he will ultimately anoint the glorious reign of David.

6The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up.

7The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up.

8He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, *and* lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set *them* among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth *are* the LORD'S, and he hath set the world upon them.

9He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail.

10The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: the LORD shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed.

11And Elkanah went to Ramah to his house. And the child did minister unto the LORD before Eli the priest.

It is particularly interesting that Samuel was sent to live with the very ones who will reject the admonitions of Eli. Eli will fail with his sons, but the presence and spiritual success of Samuel will demonstrate that Hophni and Phinehas did not *have* to turn out the way they did. Eli will be lenient with his sons which will be a warning on how the failure of the home will compound the hardening of their hearts.

## 2. Dishonest ministry -

In vs. 12-21 we see the further contrast between Eli's sons and Samuel.

There was a certain way sacrifices were to be handled. The priests were, indeed, to take a portion of the sacrifices for their households, but Hophni and Phinehas abused the sacrificial system.

1Sam 2:12-17 Now the sons of Eli *were* sons of Belial; they knew not the LORD. **[They were not true believers. In fact, they were total impostors.]**

13And the priests' custom with the people *was, that*, when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant came, while the flesh was in seething, with a fleshhook of three teeth in his hand;

14And he struck *it* into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; all that the fleshhook brought up the priest took for himself. So they did in Shiloh unto all the Israelites that came thither. **[Certain sacrifices were to be boiled, but using a three tooth fleshhook they were taking a larger share than they were due.]**

15Also before they burnt the fat, the priest's servant came, and said to the man that sacrificed, Give flesh to roast for the priest; for he will not have sodden flesh of thee, but raw. **[The priests were entitled to the flesh after it had been boiled *and* the fat had been burned. They were violating the whole process. Instead of waiting for it to be seethed, or boiled, the way they were supposed to do, they wanted it raw because they wanted to roast it at home.]**

16And *if* any man said unto him, Let them not fail to burn the fat presently, and *then* take *as much* as thy soul desireth; then he would answer him, *Nay*; but thou shalt give *it me* now: and if not, I will take *it* by force. **[They compounded the problem by threatening the people with force.]**

17Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD: for men abhorred the offering of the LORD. **[They even *further* compounded the problem by causing the**

## **people to despise the whole sacrificial system]**

### 3. The hardening of the heart -

Romans 1-3 covers how God offers His testimony to man so that man is inexcusable. First, God can be known through the testimony of the creation. He can then be known through the conscience of man. Lastly, He can be known through His revealed Word. Ultimately, man's response in faith to the testimony of God will receive the salvation that only God can perform.

Rom 10:17 So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

The hardening of the heart is not done by some decree of God. God does not unilaterally impose a heart with hardness. There is a process by which a man stiffens his neck and hardens his heart in response to the testimony presented to him. Just as faith comes by hearing, so does hardening the hardening of the heart is described in Proverbs 1:

Prov 1:20-31 Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets:  
21She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, *saying*,  
22How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?  
23Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.  
24Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded;  
25But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof:  
26I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh;  
27When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you.  
28Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me:  
29For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD:  
30They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof.  
31Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.

The option is available for all who hear the call of wisdom. Proverbs 1 sums up how the hardening of the heart is avoidable. One can choose to respond.

Prov 1:33 But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.

Eli testified in protest against Hophni and Phinehas, but they hardened themselves to Eli.

1Sam 2:22-25 Now Eli was very old, and heard all that his sons did unto all Israel; and how

they lay with the women that assembled *at* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.  
23And he said unto them, Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil dealings by all this people.

24Nay, my sons; for *it is* no good report that I hear: ye make the LORD'S people to transgress.

25If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against the LORD, who shall intreat for him? Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because the LORD would slay them. **[God kept giving them opportunities to repent which would lead to God being justified in slaying them.]**

God suffered (or allowed) Hophni and Phineas to live in that hardened state as they were part of a greater picture, but their hardened state would also be their death sentence. The Scriptures are filled with great sinners who repented, but also great sinners who did *not* repent. Hophni and Phineas had every opportunity to reverse course. By comparison, Samuel is proof that there was a choice to serve God that could have been made.

1Sam 2:26 And the child Samuel grew on, and was in favour both with the LORD, and also with men.

Even though this chapter involved more than Hophni and Phineas, their response should be a testimony to each of us personally. Indeed, Eli could have done better, as we shall see in a moment, but Hophni and Phineas were responsible for themselves. We should be reminded that *we* must take personal responsibility we have for our choices.

#### 4. Kingdoms fail in the home -

The home is the testing ground as the next generation prepares to enter the world. Hophni and Phineas were certainly of age, but the influence of the home still has an effect. The input that Eli had was weak. The report of his protests during their abusing women and the sacrifices amounted to telling them that it was not a good idea. He told them that God was going to judge them, but as the high priest he had authority to do more. He could have held them accountable and removed them from their responsibilities. When a man of God (a prophet) came to Eli, he pointed this out to him.

1Sam 2:29-36 **Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice and at mine offering, which I have commanded *in my habitation*; and honourest thy sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people? [Eli could have chosen to honor God above his sons, but he gave preference to his sons instead.]**

30Wherefore the LORD God of Israel saith, I said indeed *that* thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now the LORD saith, Be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.

31Behold, the days come, that I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father's house, that there shall not be an old man in thine house.

32And thou shalt see an enemy *in my habitation*, in all *the wealth* which God shall give Israel: and there shall not be an old man in thine house for ever.

33And the man of thine, *whom* I shall not cut off from mine altar, *shall be* to consume thine eyes, and to grieve thine heart: and all the increase of thine house shall die in the flower of their age.

34And this *shall be* a sign unto thee, that shall come upon thy two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas; in one day they shall die both of them. **[Hophni and Phinehas were suffered to live until the fullness of time and the conjunction of events when the tides of Israel will turn. This will occur in chapter 7].**

35And I will raise me up a faithful priest, *that* shall do according to *that* which *is* in mine heart and in my mind: and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever.

36And it shall come to pass, *that* every one that is left in thine house shall come *and* crouch to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, and shall say, Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a piece of bread.

The failure of Israel at this point will lead to the next stage in the Theocracy. Someone might wonder how the failure of Eli is *so* bad if it facilitated the monarchy and Kingdom of Israel. Although God planned for a king in Israel, the circumstances for why a king would be established were regrettable. The failure of Eli speaks so strongly to our homes today. It is most directed at the home, first, because the home is the most basic unit of civilization. In fact, the institution of the home was established even at the beginning of Genesis. It is the place that is most personal to us. What happens in the neighborhood, the state, or the world is mostly out of sight and therefore out of mind. We cannot live others' lives for them. Society depends on each home, as simultaneously as possible, to live responsively before God. What are ways to have avoided this failure?

- Be strong in conviction

Eli's failure to hold his sons accountable contributed to the spiritual degradation of Israel rejecting God as their King. When they do get their first king, his reign will be a reflection of that spiritual deterioration. As the heads of our homes, even if one is single, we must put God first.

1Cor 16:13 Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.

- Be consistent

We are not only to *stand fast* in the faith, we also need to *walk consistently* in the faith.

Col 2:4-7 And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.

5For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ.

**6As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:**

7Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

- Be responsible to your elders

For those who are young, take advantage of the fact that your family has brought you here. Learn as much as you can spiritually because you are going to need it in a world that is operating to take you down and use you to elevate their own power.

Prov 1:7-9 The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of knowledge: *but* fools despise wisdom and instruction.

8My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother:

9For they *shall be* an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck.

- Maintain the spirituality of your home

One of the greatest needs is to have a spiritual time daily with family. Spirituality should not be far from our interactions with each other, but there needs to be a time to very deliberately read and pray together. It might seem difficult because you have some sense that you are expected to have something significant to teach each time. Or you might feel like you have to pray really hard and remember everything as if the fate of the world is in your hands. But just reading together with easy commentary and simple prayers that depend on *God* to change the world done faithfully will help keep a family on track.

Deut 6:6-9 And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:

7And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

8And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.

9And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.

- Stay pure

Ps 119:9 Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed *thereto* according to thy word.

1Thess 5:22 Abstain from all appearance of evil.

Clean up your language. Get rid of the alcohol. These days I have to add on, get rid of the weed.

## 5. Repent early -

Repentance must begin in the home. But there are a number of other ways that the message of repentance beginning at home can then be applied. Peter speaks of repentance being a household concern in the church.

1Pet 4:17-18 For the time *is come* that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if *it* first *begin* at us, what shall the end *be* of them that obey not the gospel of God?  
18And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?

Solomon applied this concept to the household of Israel which we apply to our nation today.

2Chr 7:13-16 If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people;

14If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

15Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent unto the prayer *that is made* in this place.

16For now have I chosen and sanctified this house, that my name may be there for ever: and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually.

I would like to call upon us today to be moved to respond to the testimony of this Scripture and turn in repentance. Even though we know that temptations will rise and failures will befall us, it is still fitting for us to make the big decision to repent of the sins that so easily beset us. Make the decision to serve God today and then be ready to make it as often as it need be done.

1John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Prov 28:13 He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh *them* shall have mercy.

If you are not a child of God, you can take care of that today and become a member of the household of faith. Christ died to make you His brother or sister. Turn to God in faith and ask Him to forgive and receive you. Jesus suffered enough to cover your judgment. It would be so sad to die and go to Hell because you resisted the love of God. Today, I can show you how to pray so that you can confidently become a child of God forever.

For those who are saved, we face temptations and need to make sure we are staying on track. Is there something you need to repent of in your life? Confess it early to God so it doesn't fester in your heart.

1. What could have been - 1Sam 2:1-11
2. Dishonest ministry - 1Sam 2:12-17
3. The hardening of the heart - Rom 10:17, Prov 1:20-31, 1:33, 1Sam 2:22-26
4. Kingdoms fail in the home - 1Sam 2:29-36, 1Cor 16:13, Col 2:4-7, Prov 1:7-9, Deut 6:6-9, Ps 119:9, 1Thess 5:22
5. Repent early - 1Pet 4:17-18, 2Chr 7:13-16, 1John 1:9, Prov 28:13