

God's Promise of Reciprocity: The Consequences of Dishonoring the LORD
(1 Samuel 2:27-36)

1. What God Has Done (v.27-28)

This "man of God" asks three rhetorical questions and makes one statement:

Question #1: "Did I not reveal myself to the house of your father...they were slaves in Egypt."

- Eli would have agreed whole-heartedly. He is referring to Aaron, through whom Eli's dynasty emerged from. They were slaves in Egypt, unable to help themselves, and the LORD graciously delivered them from their bondage.

Question #2: "Did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priests....?"

- Not only did the LORD reveal Himself to Aaron and Moses, but He also chose the Levites (Aaronic line) to be the priests. They were to go to the altar (perform sacrifices), burn incense (prayer) and wear an ephod (outward symbolization of inward dedication).

Statement: "I gave to the house of your father all my offering by fire..."

- The priests were the only ones in all of Israel who were chosen to have communion and belonging between the LORD and the worshipper as sacrifices were offered.

2. What Eli Has Done (v.29)

Question #3: "Why do you scorn my sacrifices and honor your sons above me?"

- Eli had scorned the LORD's sacrifice because he partook in some manner of forbidden meats. He either participated with his sons or he had his own "custom" of robbing the people. Perhaps he knew of what his sons were doing and "turned his head."

Notice the pronouns between v.27-28: "I, your, him, my, me." Now the LORD deals with Eli personally.

In verse 29, there is "you" and then "your." The "you" as the scorning of sacrifices is second person plural (the LORD includes Eli). The "your" is second person singular (Eli alone).

Eli honored his sons more than the LORD:

- Eli knew of what his two sons were doing and failed to remove his sons. He was more concerned with what his children thought than what would honor the LORD.

"Honoring" in our text can refer to the quality of a believer's physical and spiritual life. There are two extremes of "honoring" the LORD that may be harmful:

- A. Prosecutors: they are strong willed, and everything is black and white. They are often times harsh in the way that they interact with people. The content of their message is not wrong; it is the delivery of the content. They can often times lack mercy and grace in the way they relate to others.
- B. Passivists: they are overly sensitive to the feelings of others. They are empathetic to the point that they are afraid to upset anyone. Ultimately, they are afraid of man; they are hesitant to offend people. They want everyone to like them. They do not realize that truth divides and that darkness hates light.

3. What God Will Do (v.30-36)

A. *God will judge Eli and his house:*

- Personally (v.34): Eli himself will witness the veracity of the prophecy. The oracle will be confirmed when Hophni and Phinehas die on the same day (1 Sam. 4:11).
- Corporately (v.31-33): Saul is going to massacre 85 priests at Nob who were descendants of Eli. Eli's genealogy is through the line of Ithamar. Abiathar will be the last of the Elide Dynasty who will serve as High Priest under the reign of David. Once David dies, Abiathar will support Adonijah who is vying for the throne. When Solomon eventually becomes king, Abiathar is banished from the priesthood (1 Kings 2:26-27). He will no longer participate in the sacrificial meals thus fulfilling the prophecy of the "cutting of the arms" and the "begging for bread."

B. *God will raise up a faithful priest (v.35):*

- God's faithful priest is not Samuel. It is going to be Zadok who is in the line of Eleazar.
- Zadok was David's other priest who came to prominence under King Solomon (2 Kings 2:35). Zadok aided King David when his son Absalom attempted to usurp the throne.
- He was instrumental in Solomon becoming king and he was the first High Priest to serve in the temple that Solomon built.

- By the time 1 Kings was written, the Zadokites were the legitimate priests in Jerusalem, and thus distinguished from the Eliades who were considered to be second class citizens.

Moving beyond Zadok, God has had only one faithful priest who had been "His" priest (v.28). The LORD Jesus Christ has gone to the altar and offered Himself (Hebrews 2:17). While He burned no incense, He does intercede for His people (Hebrews 7:25). He wore no ephod but was completely committed to the Father (John 6:38).

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