



WEEKLY
CHRISTIAN
FOCUS

TRUE PASTORS PART III
THE HOUSE OF ELI.

Greetings again as we continue this amazing series on 'True Pastors!'

We are taking a short hiatus here in part III. In parts I and II of this series, we have introduced already a lot of scripture and thoughts about True Pastors and their value, abilities, and supporting them etc., **and we will continue that and more in the next and final few editions shortly, by God's Grace.**

Today, however, we are diverging into an interesting lesson in the Bible, and that is, the fall through sin, of one 'Pastor' so to speak, and the rise of the 'next' pastor. Now in this story, the Pastor who 'fell' failed the Lord and the Pastor who rose was an eternally 'successful' man of God. But it doesn't always work that way, sometimes it can be the opposite!

We are looking through the murky clouds of history, back to an age just over 3,000 years ago in the land of Israel. We will be delving into the lives of the two High Priest and Judges, Eli and Samuel.

THE HOUSE OF ELI.

The story of a potentially

good 'Pastor' who ultimately failed the Lord.

Today, we are looking at 1 Samuel chapters 1 to 4 in the Old Testament of the Bible.

In this issue:

- Some basic facts and thoughts
- The Potential
- The good or bad choices Pastors make
- The success or the failure of the man of God
- The rise of God's choice for the man of God.

Greetings.

Some basic facts and thoughts:

In ancient Israel, during the time of the Judges, if a person was a High Priest for the nation, then this was a hugely significant calling of God, and so also was being called as a prophet of God, or THE Prophet of God and His **sole** representative for the whole Nation. These two positions were sometimes one and the same, and sometimes different.

The Bible says 'don't seek to be teachers, because unto you is the greater

condemnation.' James 3:1

God appointed, for a few generations, that 'Judges' (Judges 2:16-18) would rule the tribes of Israel. Some of these judge were also 'Prophets' of whom Samuel was one. Recognised and revered prophets of God had a lot of clout and power among the people of Israel in those days.

It often happens in the Bible that the two lives of important people overlap each other time-wise. With one rising and the other falling in the eyes of God. They can both be good men or women or one a failure and the other a success.

We see this very clearly in the contrast between people like Saul and then David, Jacob and Esau, Cain and Abel, Abraham and Lot, etc., and we can even boil it down to God and the Serpent! Also between those who truly hungered and thirsted after God's Righteousness and those who wanted the world's present pleasures, rewards and tempting trinkets! Paul said: 'Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world.' (2 Timothy 4:10) Moses forsook the pleasures of Egypt,

counting them as no esteem compared to the riches of Christ. Hebrews 11:24-27

The Potential

The House of Eli was originally a spiritual house of great potential, otherwise God would not have allowed him to be put into the position of High Priest in the beginning!

God did not 'make a mistake' in choosing Eli as a High Priest for the entire nation.

He must have had some good attributes from God to enter this Priesthood. And the same lesson, which is the meaning of this whole article is this,

You can be chosen by God, He has called you for His Glory and wishes to use you and work with you to establish the faith of millions of people.... Yet you could still not reach your potential that God has for you.

But something went wrong somewhere and somehow with dear Eli. We are not told in the Bible what it was exactly, so we can only surmise, but we do have a few clues that I will speak of in a minute.

Firstly let us re-emphasise that if God has chosen you as a Pastor or a servant, missionary or teacher of God's People, you are off to a very great start!

I remember well, the very first verse in the Bible that I saw, after I had received Jesus into my life was this:

John 15: 16 ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain:

that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

God does not make mistakes about WHO He chooses.

It is done in His mind. Humans, looking on, often do not understand this, but God sees potential where there none exists in the minds of men.

I can verify this from my own life, often! People who expected me to 'fall by the wayside' or fail in my walk with Jesus, did not hesitate to speak out various (un)truths when I was very young in my late teens and early twenties (!), but I am still here today, fifty years later, and those (tiny few) who spoke out against me are all actually dead, even though they themselves were servants of the Lord, in their time.

I sympathise to a degree with dear Pastor, High Priest and Judge of Israel, Eli. I believe he wanted to do good, to be good and to do what God wanted him to do, but he still 'blew it', sad to say.

Once you are on this road of service to God, a great many things can happen to trip you up, or deceive you, not the least of which being your own sins or mistakes which you may have brought upon yourself.

However Eli continued as a servant to the Lord and did so for 40 Years.

The choices; good or bad.

It seems though that Eli had a couple of personality weaknesses. **Now, it is not wrong to have personality**

weaknesses. We all have them, and despite them God can use any of us for His Glory!

But we have to put these weaknesses under the control of God and the Holy Spirit, so that they will not 'break out' in a negative way to influence the church, or rather, the greater flock of God, or even our own family or children, **if** you have a truly godly wife, she can help you with this.

Let's look at two of Eli's weaknesses here in Scripture:

We start in 1 Samuel 1 with the story of Hannah, the dear wife of Elkanah.

1 Samuel 1: Now there was a certain man of Ramathaimzophim, of mount Ephraim, and his name was Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephrathite:

2 And he had two wives; the name of the one was Hannah,



and the name of the other Peninnah: and Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.

3 And this man went up out of his city yearly to worship and to sacrifice unto the LORD of hosts in Shiloh. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, the priests of

the LORD, were there.

4 And when the time was that Elkanah offered, he gave to Peninnah his wife, and to all her sons and her daughters, portions:

5 But unto Hannah he gave a worthy portion; for he loved Hannah: but the LORD had shut up her womb.

6 And her adversary also provoked her sore, for to make her fret, because the LORD had shut up her womb.

7 And as he did so year by year, when she went up to the house of the LORD, so she provoked her; therefore she wept, and did not eat.

8 Then said Elkanah her husband to her, Hannah, why weepest thou? And why eatest thou not? And why is thy heart grieved? Am not I better to thee than ten sons?

9 So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk. Now Eli the priest sat upon a seat by a post of the temple of the LORD.

10 And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore.

11 And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head.

12 And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli marked her mouth.

13 Now Hannah, she spake in

her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken.

14 And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? Put away thy wine from thee.

15 And Hannah answered



and said, No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the LORD.

16 Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial: for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto.

17 Then Eli answered and said, go in peace: and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him.

18 And she said, let thine handmaid find grace in thy sight. So the woman went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no sadder.

Here we find the first encounter of Eli recorded, this time with Hannah, the future mother of the great prophet Samuel. It is clear that Eli was a man of quick retort or comment. The worst thing to be in the Bible is a man or pastor who speaks quickly or rashly (Be not rash with your mouth).

He did however, to his credit,

quickly realise that he had spoken rashly and so therefore blessed the woman, who was in such agony of spirit. His blessing, as representing God to her, brought her peace, and she left in peace also.

I suppose it is easy to be rash and quick of tongue as a Pastor, but it is something to pray against, as there are so many scriptures in the Bible admonishing all of us to be quiet, still and prayerful with our mouths. I am sure you can think of many verses concerning this in Proverbs and also James Chapter 3!

However according to the Word of God, **Eli's main problem** was that he did not more seriously restrain his two sons from bad behaviour, during their upbringing.

Being privileged boys and later men, they became extremely poor representatives of their father the High Priest, and Yahweh.

For the most part, our children should reflect our values, although I acknowledge that this is not always possible, but it should not be for want of our own disobedience to the Word of God.

It is clear that Eli was an indulgent parent. We are not told about if he had a wife or if she had passed away and there is no other hint about his indulgence, except that he did not 'restrain' or rebuke or correct his sons. In fact as those sons grew up, the Bible says, 'they knew not the Lord' 1 Samuel 2: 12.

See also 1 Samuel 2: 22-25 Their sins by now were open

and apparent; they lay with various women at the place or Tabernacle of Meeting, where the people of Israel gave their offerings to the Lord. They were also corrupt and stole from the Lord. They became a huge stumbling block to God's people. Things became so bad with them, and they refused to listen to Eli's corrections, because the Lord had reached the point where HE wanted to kill them.

In fact, so important was this to God that the very first message God gave to Samuel who was probably still only 'middle school' age or less was this:

1 Samuel 3: 11 And the LORD said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle.

12 In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have (already) spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end.

13 For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.

14 And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever.

15 And Samuel lay until the morning, and opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Samuel feared to shew Eli the vision.

16 Then Eli called Samuel, and said, Samuel, my son. And he answered, here am I.

17 And he said, what is the thing that the LORD hath said unto thee? I pray thee hide it not from me: God do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide anything from me of all the things that he said unto thee.

18 And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him. And he said, It is the LORD: let him do what seemeth him good.

19 And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground.

20 And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the LORD.

21 And the LORD appeared again in Shiloh: for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD.

The Lord had already told Eli his ministry was over and had warned him some time before concerning his sons and that Eli had in fact put his own sons before the Lord. No one would survive, no person would live to be old in his family. His two sons would die in one day together in the future. An enemy would come and possess what he had. It was a terrible yet Godly message (see 2 Samuel 2: 22-16) what a specific prophecy from another man of God **well before** Samuel's message!

So here above, was the Lord building on that prophecy and telling young Samuel more information about Eli!

I am always amazed that God is not afraid to tell very deep and even violent truths to very

young people or children! The Lord must know that the right young people and children can 'handle it'.

Finally the time came that Eli and his sons died in the same day! His two sons (Hophni and Phinehas) died in battle against the Philistines. The sacred Ark of the Covenant was stolen in this battle. When battle news through a messenger came to Eli, who was sitting by a gate, he fell over in shock that the Ark of the Covenant had been stolen (under his watch! What a great shameful thing).



By Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld - Die Bibel in Bildern, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=5490686>

Please read the tragic death of Eli in 1 Samuel 4: 12-22 and his daughter in law. The House of Eli fell.

The Rise of Samuel

There are so many lessons here. Samuel we must remember was born through the prayers of his mother, she even dedicated him and forsook him to God for his service as a vow or oath to the Lord. The Lord honoured her prayer and Samuel was born. Hannah kept her vow and Samuel ended up in the house of Eli, the highest spiritual person in the land. NO ONE COULD HAVE IMAGINED WHAT GREAT THINGS WOULD HAPPEN from the vow and

desperate prayers of his mother. Only time, a long time, would tell. May God bless our truly desperate and believing mothers today who are similarly willing to make such sacrifices!

There will always be a new pastor who is going to take your place! However, this can be a very a happy situation; you have served the Lord well and for the most part tried your best to obey the Lord's call for you. As time passed, you may have had a say into who should replace you in ministry, but that is not a given.

All you can do is make sure you do not end up like Pastor Eli. It is such a tragic ending, which could have been (perhaps been) avoided, but God always has a solution.

But we cannot shed tears for the failures. Samuel over time became the new Judge of Israel. From that tiny beginning and his mother's dedication of such a tiny child, let me tell you, God raised up Samuel to be a man that the people of Israel feared immensely. (Verses below)

That child you have now in the Lord, can become a completely different person for God, once he steps into the anointing of God. You (parents/carers/relatives) should get ready for the change and truly let your son go into God's work if that is his calling, (which it ought to be in so many more cases than it is today) **

Even Jesus said to his disciples: 'Greater things than these shall you do!' Jesus was expecting after 42 months of

teaching, that his disciples would step up and step out and become the powerful men of God He saw them to be!

Let us close with a few high points of Samuel's ministry once he became an adult and fully in the anointing of God! I will put these in bullet form, with the references! Please do check them out, they will surprise you in some cases! Amen.

- Samuel strongly rebukes King Saul for his disobedience. Samuel has risen to such a degree that he has no fear of man, much less the king of Israel! 1 Samuel 15: 13-35
- The Lord tells Samuel to stop weeping over Saul and get up and do something new! 1 Samuel 16:1-2
- Samuel anoints David to be the future king even as a very young teen, in a truly impossible situation. 1 Samuel 16 whole chapter.
- Samuel, in the wrath of God, kills Agag, the king of the Amalekites and cuts him in pieces for his demonic life. 1 Samuel 15: 32-35
- The people of Israel in one situation ask Samuel in one town if he was coming 'peaceably? 1 Samuel 16 . Obviously Samuel, the great Judge and prophet has by now, acquired a reputation, that no one should mess with him! People today should obey a true prophet of God. However this

is extremely rare, as people are as confused as to who is a true prophet of God in the world today.

We come to the end of this interesting and slight divergence into two Old Testament 'Pastors!' Please pray for us as we go back in the next week or two into the lessons about Pastors truly serving Jesus today!

Love in Christ,

Jerry for the WCF Team

When did the prphet Samuel live - Google Search

** More on that coming in the new series: 'The Weight of Education!'



AND SAMUEL SAID UNTO JESSE, ARE HERE ALL THY CHILDREN? AND HE SAID, THERE REMAINETH YET THE YOUNGEST, AND, BEHOLD, HE KEEPETH THE SHEEP. AND SAMUEL SAID UNTO JESSE, SEND AND FETCH HIM: FOR WE WILL NOT SIT DOWN TILL HE COME HITHER.

12 AND HE SENT, AND BROUGHT HIM IN. NOW HE WAS RUDDY, AND WITHAL OF A BEAUTIFUL COUNTENANCE, AND GOODLY TO LOOK TO. AND THE LORD SAID, ARISE, ANOINT HIM: FOR THIS IS HE.

13 THEN SAMUEL TOOK THE HORN OF OIL, AND ANOINTED HIM IN THE MIDST OF HIS BRETHREN: AND THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD CAME UPON DAVID FROM THAT DAY FORWARD. SO SAMUEL ROSE UP, AND WENT TO RAMAH.

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