

### Three "Great" Men: Contrasts at Shiloh (1 Samuel 2:11, 18-21, 26)

#### 1. Hophni and Phinehas

- The Hebrew word for "custom" in verse 13 means "judge or justice."
- Hophni and Phinehas were functioning not only as priests, but also as judges; they were responsible for hearing cases and administering justice. The priests (Levites) were the judges who would render final verdicts in cases that were more difficult (Deuteronomy 17:8-9) even though there were other judges appointed who were not Levites (Exodus 18:21-22).
- The problems in Shiloh were multi-faceted; you have wicked men in the highest positions of the land who act in their own self-interest.
- They demanded the best of meats from the offeror and the fat that belonged to the LORD (greed). They also had improper sexual relations with the women serving at the entrance to the tent of meeting (lechery).
- Eli is disappointed with his sons for their lechery; not their greed (2:22-23). Eli may have practiced the same robbery of meat and fat as his sons (4:18).

#### 2. Samuel (2:11, 18, 26)

Motherly tokens of grace: outer garment (robe)

- The ephod is not to be confused with the linen ephod (robe). Hannah would yearly make for Samuel this "priestly robe."
- Hannah would have received permission from Eli to make this robe by hand and it was to be made out of wool (Leviticus 8:7).
- The robe was only to be worn by the high priest (Exodus 28:31) yet here this young boy is fashioned in the most respectable apparel.
- Hannah's token of love (coat) was a healthy way to show her affections towards her son without interfering with his service to the LORD.
- While Hannah would delight in her son's service, Eli would be disappointed with his sons'.

Samuel's resume is in verse 11. Hophni and Phinehas' are in verse 12.

#### 3. Contrasts

##### Exhibit B:

- 2:19: Hannah's love as the mother of Samuel
- 2:22: Father's sorrow in the sins of his sons
- 2:20: Eli's blessing on Hannah and Elkanah
- 2:23-25: Eli's embarrassing disappointment in his sons
- 2:21a: the LORD's provisions of five more children for Hannah and Elkanah
- 2:25b: the LORD's purposes for the death of Eli's sons
- 2:21b: Samuel grows in the presence of the LORD
- 2:25: the sons of Eli become spiritually hardened by their own sin

##### Exhibit C:

- Hannah, as a godly woman, is barren (1:2). Her opponent has many children, and in her unrighteousness, vexes Hannah (1:6).
- An unknown country man from the hills (1:1) will father a son from a barren woman who will lead the nation of Israel from spiritual lethargy.
- Eli, who is closest to the tent of meeting (1:9) is farther away from the heart of God than Hannah, the barren, culturally shamed woman.
- Eli, as the supposed spiritual leader and high priest of Israel, could not even recognize piety and godliness expressed through prayer when it was right in front of him (1:13-15).
- Eli blessed the barren woman whom he assumed to be drunk (1:17). Her son will become spiritual leader of Israel who would replace his dynasty (Elide).
- Hannah was not the worthless woman (1:16); the sons of Eli were (2:12).
- Samuel grew in the favor of God and man (2:26). Hophni and Phinehas did neither; they had no regard for the sacrifices of God (2:16) or man (2:16-17).
- All three young men were "great." The Hebrew word for "great" can also be translated "growing." Hophni and Phinehas sinned greatly in the LORD's sight (2:17). Samuel grows up and becomes great in the presence of the LORD (2:21, 26).

#### 4. Samuel as a Type of Christ

As Paul Evans notes:

- The birth of Samuel ushered in the era of kings (anointed/messiah) in Israel. Similarly, the birth of Jesus begins a new era of the anointed one (messiah) as the true king of Israel.
- Samuel's birth foreshadowed the fall of both the Elide dynasty and Shiloh's role as Israel's religious epicenter. In the same way, Jesus' ministry signaled the end of the priesthood in Jerusalem.
- As Samuel would denounce the leadership in Israel, so did Jesus denounce the leadership of his day for their corruption (Matthew 23:1-36).
- Just as Samuel will prophesy the end of the priestly dynasty (1 Samuel 3:11-14,18) so Jesus prophesied the destruction of the temple itself (Matthew 24).
- Just as Samuel replaced Eli, so Jesus replaces the entire temple system with Himself.
- Just as the Fall of Shiloh (Psalm 78:60; Jeremiah 7:12, 14; 26:6,9) prepared the way for a new sanctuary in Jerusalem, so the fall of the temple from Jesus' day signaled the end of the old covenant and the beginning of the new. God now tabernacles no longer in Shiloh or Jerusalem, but in His people.