

Eli's Judgment

Intro: As a basis for our study let us notice God's message to Samuel as recorded in 1 Sam. 3:11-13 "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 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." This message to Eli from God is a sentence of doom. It tells of a coming judgment, not only upon this man but also upon all his house. No cold-blooded murderer at a judgment bar was ever more seriously sentenced to death than is old Eli sentenced. Sharing in his condemnation are those that he tenderly loves.

I. WHO IS THIS MAN ELI?

A. Not an ungodly man.

1. From what one reads in our text one might think that Eli was corrupt.
2. We might think of some vile murderer, mean of character and disposition.
3. We might think he was a great, evil sinner.
4. Instead, he was a very pious man and aged priest.

B. He was judge over Israel for 40 years.

1. During that time it had been his task to hear God's messages and be God's spokesman to man.
2. We do not see outward evil and sin in his life. He was guiltless of any aggressive crime.

C. Notice some of his virtues.

1. Though old in years, he had a youthful heart.
 - a. The Bible tells us that Samuel loved Eli and Eli loved Samuel; a compliment to both.
 - b. At sunrise and sunset they were walking arm in arm.
2. He was generous.
 - a. For long years he had been priest.
 - b. He now sees himself being set aside for the young Samuel to take his place.
 - c. He does not rebel. He does not grow bitter nor give way to envy and say hard things about his successor.
3. He was a man of fine spiritual insight.
 - a. You see a man patiently teaching the youthful Samuel.
 - b. See his instruction in 1 Sam. 3:8-9 "8 And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here *am* I; for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the LORD had called the child. 9 Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place."
 - c. He well knew that man could not direct his own steps.

II. WHAT WAS WRONG WITH ELI?

A. Why was this judgment pronounced not only against Eli's house, but against Eli himself?

1. As we see all his good points, we ask, "What was wrong?"
2. The answer is in our text.

B. Guilty by what he failed to do.

1. He was not guilty of positive, aggressive sin, but his sons were.
2. The evil doings of his sons (Hophni and Phinehas) were not hidden from his eyes.
 - a. 1 Sam. 2:12, 17, 22 ¹²Now the sons of Eli *were* sons of Belial; they knew not the LORD. 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. 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. 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. ¹⁷Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD: for men abhorred the offering of the LORD. ¹⁸But Samuel ministered before the LORD, *being* a child, girded with a linen ephod. ¹⁹Moreover his mother made him a little coat, and brought *it* to him from year to year, when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. ²⁰And Eli blessed Elkanah and his wife, and said, The LORD give thee seed of this woman for the loan which is lent to the LORD. And they went unto their own home. ²¹And the LORD visited Hannah, so that she conceived, and bare three sons and two daughters. And the child Samuel grew before the LORD. ²²Now 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."
 - b. 1 Sam. 2:23-24 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."
 - (1) He had complete knowledge of their wickedness.
 - (2) He was well aware that they were bringing shame upon themselves and upon the high priestly office to which they were called.
 - c. Eli's sin was simply that he failed to restrain them.
 - d. Thus, Eli shared in their guilt and doom.
 - (1) 1 Sam. 2:29 ²⁹Wherefore 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?"
 - (2) Eph. 5:11 ¹¹And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*."
 - (3) 2 John 9-11 ⁹Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. ¹⁰If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed: ¹¹For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."
 - (4) Mat. 10:37 ³⁷He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me."

C. Why did Eli not restrain them?

1. Some have thought he was simply too busy. This is not the case.
2. Eli did give them a mild rebuke.
 - a. 1 Sam. 2:22-25 ²²Now 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."
 - b. This was too mild a way to deal with such scandalous sin.
 - (1) They should have immediately been taken out of the priesthood.

- (2) They should have been stoned for being sons of Belial; Deu. 17:3-5 ⁴³ And hath gone and served other gods, and worshipped them, either the sun, or moon, or any of the host of heaven, which I have not commanded; ⁴ And it be told thee, and thou hast heard *of it*, and inquired diligently, and, behold, *it be true, and the thing certain, that* such abomination is wrought in Israel: ⁵ Then shalt thou bring forth that man or that woman, which have committed that wicked thing, unto thy gates, *even* that man or that woman, and shalt stone them with stones, till they die.”
 - (3) The law provided for the stoning of such rebellious children, Deu. 21:18-21 ¹⁸ If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and *that*, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them: ¹⁹ Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place; ²⁰ And they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son *is* stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; *he is* a glutton, and a drunkard. ²¹ And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear.”
3. It simply was that Eli was too soft, too easy.
 - a. Eli was too good-natured and weak towards his sons.
 - b. He loved them but not enough to restrain them.
 - c. Thus, the Lord punishes not only the children, but Eli as well.

III. THE FAILURE OF PIOUS SOFTNESS.

A. Pious softness is not like Christ.

1. Our Lord always stood for right.
2. He drove out the moneychangers (Mat. 21; John 2).
3. He would strongly rebuke those in sin (Mat. 23).

B. The failure of it in the home.

1. Parents are to train up their children.
 - a. Eph. 6:4 ⁴⁴ And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”
 - b. Tit. 2:4-5 ⁴⁴ That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, ⁵ *To be* discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.”
2. The bringing to maturity includes:
 - a. Training
 - (1) Deu. 6:7 ⁴⁷ And 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.”
 - (2) Deu. 32:46 ⁴⁶ And he said unto them, Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day, which ye shall command your children to observe to do, all the words of this law.”
 - b. Restraining
 - (1) Pro. 3:12 ¹² For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son *in whom* he delighteth.”
 - (2) Pro. 13:24 ²⁴ He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.”
 - (3) Pro. 29:15, 17 ¹⁵ The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left *to himself* bringeth his mother to shame. ¹⁶ When the wicked are multiplied, transgression increaseth: but the righteous shall see their fall. ¹⁷ Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul.”

3. Parents must not be Permissive.
 - a. Far too many children today grow up without seeing any boundary lines for their actions.
 - b. Parents do not say "No" to their children.
 - c. Permissive parents produce permissive children and permissiveness will destroy all.

C. The failure of it in society.

1. Crime has always been a great problem of society.
2. The Scriptures clearly teach about government.
 - a. They are ordained by God.
 - (1) Rom. 13:1 ¹ "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God."
 - (2) 1 Pet. 2:13 ¹³ "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme;"
 - b. The government has the duty of keeping order.
 - (1) 1 Pet. 2:14 ¹⁴ "Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well."
 - (2) Rom. 13:3-4 ³ "For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: ⁴ For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to *execute* wrath upon him that doeth evil."
 - (3) This includes putting the evil doer to death.
 - (a) Rom. 13:4 ⁴ "For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to *execute* wrath upon him that doeth evil."
 - (b) Gen. 9:4 ⁴ "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man."
3. The government today has given in to pious softness, so punishment ceases to exist for crimes and crime runs rampant.

D. The failure of it in the church.

1. The area of withdrawal of fellowship.
 - a. God's laws are very clear concerning those who do not live according to His laws.
 - (1) 1 Cor. 5:1-13 ¹ "It is reported commonly *that there is* fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. ² And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. ³ For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, *concerning* him that hath so done this deed, ⁴ In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁵ To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. ⁶ Your glorying *is* not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? ⁷ Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: ⁸ Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth. ⁹ I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: ¹⁰ Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. ¹¹ But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or

a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. ¹²For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? ¹³But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.”

- (2) Eph. 5:11 ^{“11} And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*.”
 - (3) 2 The. 3:6, 14 ^{“6} Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.... ¹⁴ And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.”
 - (4) 2 John 9-11 ^{“9} Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. ¹⁰ If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed: ¹¹For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.”
 - (5) The reason we must withdraw fellowship is that he is not in fellowship with God; 1 John 1:6 ^{“6} If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.”
- b. The elders should be the ones leading us in this withdrawal of fellowship.
 - c. We now tolerate (pious softness) sin of every kind.
 - (1) There is no demand of Christians to live as shining lights in a world of darkness.
 - (2) Christians are allowed to live any way they wish without any fear of correction.
2. The area of toleration of false teachers.
 - a. The Scriptures are equally clear concerning false teachers.
 - (1) Rom. 16:17-18 ^{“17} Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. ¹⁸For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.”
 - (2) 1 Tim. 1:19-20 ^{“19} Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: ²⁰Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.”
 - (3) 1 Tim. 6:3, 5 ^{“3} If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, *even* the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; ⁴He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, ⁵ Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.”
 - (4) Tit. 3:10 ^{“10} A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject;”
 - b. The elders are to take the lead in this area.
 - (1) Acts 20:28-31 ^{“28} Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. ²⁹For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. ³⁰Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. ³¹Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.”
 - (2) Tit. 1:9-11 ^{“9} Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. ¹⁰For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: ¹¹Whose mouths

must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake."

- (3) Yet, we have many elders who could not tell a false teacher from a true gospel preacher. Thus, they invite the wolves into the flock.
- c. Yet, in thousands of congregations across the country, more and more there is a toleration (pious softness) of false teachers.
 - (1) What we observe today is that those standing for the truth are persecuted as too harsh and unloving.
 - (2) Thus, there is far too little of the marking and withdrawing of fellowship demanded by God.

Conclusion: God, through Paul tells us these things were written for our learning; Rom. 15:4 "4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." Let us learn from Eli's mistake so we will not fall into the same error.