

-Save This Page as a PDF-

God's Rejection of 'Eli's House

First Samuel 2: 27-36

God's rejection of 'Eli's house DIG: What did God expect of His priests? Why did YHVH hold 'Eli responsible for the sins of his sons? What was 'Eli more concerned with? What will happen to those who do not honor ADONAI? How did that play out in the life of 'Eli? Who was the high priesthood given to?

REFLECT: What does ADONAI expect of us who are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood (First Peter 2:5)? What inheritance are you passing on to your descendants? What do you need to change? What lesson do we learn from seeing little Samuel serve in the failing priestly house of 'Eli?

Those who honor Me, I will honor.

The godly prophet (2:27-34): A man of God came to 'Eli at Shiloh and told him. The unnamed **man of God** was the first to pronounce to 'Eli the destiny of **his** whole **family** in the light of the depravity of **his** two **sons** (**to see link click [Ar](#) - 'Eli's Wicked Sons**).⁸² The title **man of God** is used some seventy times in the TaNaKh and usually refers to a **prophet** sent by the **LORD**. He dealt with the **past**, **present**, and **future** of 'Eli's house.

First, the prophet dealt with the past, and reminded 'Eli that **his** position as **high priest** was a gift of **God's** grace. **And told him, "Here is what ADONAI says: Didn't I reveal myself to Aaron's clan when they were in Egypt, serving as slaves in Pharaoh's household (2:27)? Didn't I choose your ancestor out of all the tribes of Isra'el to be my priest, go up to My altar (see the commentary on Exodus [Fp](#) - Altar of Incense in the Sanctuary: Christ, Our Advocate with the Father), burn incense and wear an ephod in My presence (see Exodus [Fz](#) - Make the Ephod of Gold, Blue and Purple Yarn)? Didn't I assign to your ancestor's clan all the offerings of the people of Isra'el made by fire (2:28)? YHVH had chosen Aaron to be the first high priest and given him the privilege of passing that honor on to his eldest son (Exodus 4:14-16 and 28:1-4).** It was a privilege for the high priest and his sons to offer sacrifices on the bronze altar, burn incense on the Altar of Incense, wear sacred garments, and eat of the holy offerings.⁸³



Secondly, the man of God focused on the present, and accused 'Eli of putting **his** own **sons** ahead of **ADONAI**, and even shared in **their sins** (the "you" at the beginning of **verse 29** is plural and includes 'Eli with **his sons**). To tolerate **sin** and not deal with **it** severely is to participate in that **sin (3:13)**. As **high priest**, 'Eli had the authority to discipline **his sons**, but **he** refused to do so. **Do not share in the sins of others (First Timothy 5:22)**. If 'Eli **himself** had been a man of **God**, concerned for the glory of **God**, **he** would have objected to **their** behavior and called on **them** to repent; and if **they** refused, **he** would have replaced **them**.⁸⁴ **So why are you showing such disrespect for My sacrifices and offerings, which I ordered to be made at My dwelling? Why do you show more honor to your sons than to Me, making yourselves fat with the choicest parts of all the offerings of Isra'el My people?**

Thirdly, the heart of the prophet's message centered on the future: **YHVH** had given the **priesthood** to **Aaron** and **his descendants forever**, and nobody could take that **honor (Exodus 29:9, 40:15; Numbers 25:13; Deuteronomy 18:5)**. In the past, **ADONAI**, the **God of Isra'el**, said: **I did indeed say that your family and your father's family would walk in my presence forever**. However, **God's** servants can't live any way they please and expect the **LORD** to **honor** them. **But now ADONAI** says: **Therefore, those who honor Me, I will honor, but those who despise Me will be cursed (2:30)**. The privilege of the **priesthood** would remain with the **tribe of Levi** and the **house of Aaron**, but **Ha'Shem** would take it away from 'Eli's branch of the **family**.⁸⁵

The day is coming when I will break your strength and the strength of your father's family, so that no one in your family will live to old age. You will see the distress of My dwelling, which turned out to include the capture of the Ark (see [Bb - The Philistines Capture of the Ark](#)), and ultimately, moving the Tabernacle from Shiloh to

Nov (see the commentary on [the Life of David Av - David at Nov](#)). **And never will anyone in your family live to old age.** There would be no more **old men** like 'Eli. **Still Ha'Shem would not cut off every young man from His Altar (2:31-33)**, because we know that **Abiathar** escaped the slaughter of **the priests** a **Nov** (see [the life of David Bd - Sha'ul Kills the Priests of Nov](#)), which was a partial fulfillment of this prophecy. But eventually, **all your descendants will die in the prime of life.** But in the meantime, **they** would have to beg for food and would plead for an opportunity to serve. **Everyone left in your family will come, prostrate himself before him for a silver coin or a loaf of bread, and say: Please, won't you give me some work as a priest, so I can have a scrap of bread to eat (2:36)?** But even worse, very soon 'Eli's two pampered **sons** would **die** (see [Bc - The Death of 'Eli](#)). **Your sign that this will occur will be what happens to your two sons Hophni and Phinehas - they will both die on the same day (4:17).** So, where could **Ha'Shem** find a faithful **high priest**?

'Eli descended from **Aaron** through **Ithamar**, **Aaron's** fourth **son**, but **ADONAI** would abandon that line and turn to **the sons of Eleazar**, **Aaron's** third **son** and successor to **the high priesthood**. Under **David**, both **Abiathar (First Samuel 22:20-25)** and **Zadok (First Chronicles 24:1-6)** served as **high priests**, but when **Solomon** became **king**, he removed 'Eli's great-great grandson **Abiathar** from **the high priesthood** because **he** had conspired with **Adonijah** against **his father David** in **his** attempt to seize the throne (see [the Life of Solomon Ak - King Me](#)). In the list of **high priests** in **First Chronicles 6:3-15**, the names of 'Eli and **Abiathar** are omitted. Therefore, in human terms this prophecy was fulfilled when **the priesthood** was taken from **Abiathar**, and given to **Zadok**, the descendent of **Aaron's son Eleazar (First Kings 2:27 and 35)**.⁸⁶

As David McCasland recounts in his book, *Eric Liddell: Pure Gold*, a famous example of **God's honoring the honorable** is that of Eric Liddell, the Scottish Olympian who won a gold medal in the 1924 Olympics in Paris. Liddell was born and raised in China as the son of Christian missionaries. Returning to Scotland in his adolescence, he emerged as one of the finest runners Britain ever produced, at a time when British national pride greatly coveted Olympic glory. Liddell was the favorite to win the 100-meter race. But he learned that the championship race would be held on Sunday. Liddell was convinced by Scripture that he should not compete in a race on the Lord's Day, so he refused to participate. Denounced by newspapers as a traitor, and directly pressured by the Prince of Wales to compromise his principles, Liddell held firm, determined to honor **the Lord** above his personal well-being and even before his country.

A compromise was reached in which Liddell would bypass the 100 meters and instead,

compete in the 400 meters, one of the few races not run on a Sunday. Liddell had not trained for that event, yet he would run it as his sole opportunity to win at the Olympics. As he prepared that morning, a member of the British training staff approached Liddell and handed him a note. Eric opened the piece of paper on the track before the race. On it were written these words from **1 Sam 2:30**, "**He who honors Me, I will honor.**" With that piece of paper balled up in his hand, Liddell ran the race, not only winning the gold medal, but shattering the world record.

Britain went wild with praise for Liddell, but instead of cashing in on his fame, he fulfilled a commitment to return to China as a missionary. When he departed from Scotland, the crowd seeing him off was so large that more than a thousand people were unable to be admitted to his farewell. Twenty years later, Liddell was still honoring **the Lord** in China when he died bravely in a Japanese internment camp shortly before the end of World War II. At the end of the movie made in Liddell's honor, *Chariots of Fire*, the screen bore these words: "Eric Liddell, missionary, died in occupied China at the end of World War II. All of Scotland mourned." Liddell had **honored God** on the international stage, and **God honored his** name before angles and men.⁸⁷

The faithful Priest (2:35): But the future wasn't all bleak. **God's** last word on that sad situation was a word of hope. **The man of God** announced that **ADONAI** would **raise up a faithful High Priest who would please God's heart and do God's will**. So while the immediate reference was to **Zadok**, it ultimately points to **Yeshua Messiah**, who alone could have a **faithful family** and be **God's anointed Priest forever (2:35)**. Our **Lord** came from **the tribe of Judah**, so **He** had no connection with **the house of Aaron**, but was made **a High Priest** after **the order of Melchizedek** (see the commentary on **Hebrews** [Bl](#) - **Yeshua the Melchizedek Priest**). Therefore, **He** is both **Priest** and **King (Psalm 110; Hebrews 5:6; and Revelation 19:16)**.⁸⁸

What lesson do we learn from seeing little **Samuel** serve in the failing priestly **house of 'Eli**? **Samuel's** obedience reminds us to look behind the scenes to where **ADONAI** is working with grace. Regardless of fleshly appearances, the real action is always taking place wherever **YHVH** is **honored**, where **His Word** is revered, and where humble commitment to **the Lord** is sincerely lived out. The message of godly little **Samuel** and the wicked **sons of 'Eli** is that nothing is ever more important than individual godliness, in godly and gracious families, with a simple commitment to **God's Word** and to prayer. If we want to make a real difference in our lives, we will not seek out influence from the world, especially when it requires us to compromise our biblical principles. It is better for **God's** people to humbly serve **the Lord**, often behind the scenes, remembering **His** promise that

those who honor Me, I will honor.⁸⁹

Dear Heavenly Father, praise **You** for **Your** awesome gift of love and forgiveness that **You** offer to all who choose to love and follow **You** as their **Lord and Savior (Romans 10:9-10)**. You were gracious to warn ‘Eli you would punish him for scorning God’s offerings by honoring his sons above God (**1 Samuel 2:27-36**) by allowing his sons to fatten themselves on the choices part of the sacrifice. **Therefore Adonai God of Israel declares, I indeed said that your house and your father’s house should walk before Me forever. But now declares ADONAI, far be it from Me! For I will honor those who honor Me, but those who despise Me will be disdained (1 Samuel 2:30)**. Warnings are good if they are heeded. Since the warning to ‘Eli produced no repentance, no stopping of the sin, punishment was justified.

You offer to **kingdoms** the option to turn from sin and then **You** will withhold judgement. **At one moment I may speak about a nation or about a kingdom, to uproot, to pull down or to destroy it. But if that nation turns from their evil, because of what I have spoken against it, I will relent concerning the calamity that I planned to do to it. Or at another time I may speak about a nation or about a kingdom, to build up or to plant it. But if it does evil in My sight, not listening to My voice, then I will relent of the good that I had said I would do to it (Jeremiah 18:7-10)**. You did exactly what **You** said **You** would do when people repent. **Nineveh** repented after **Jonah** preached and **You** relented (**Jonah 3:10**). Thank **You** for being so gracious to offer your love to all, yet you are also wise to judge those who abuse **Your** love and live only to gratify their own selfish desires. I love to please **You** in all I do, say, and think. In **Messiah Yeshua’s** holy **Name** and power of **His** resurrection. Amen