

The Inscrutable Question: First Cause of National Discipline Is Apostate Clergy, Jere 23:1-2; Terminal Discipline Imposed upon Eli & His Sons, 1 Sam 2:27-31, 34

- 11- Their sins are exposed in:

1 Samuel 2:22 - Now Eli was very old; and he heard all that his sons were doing to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who served at the doorway of the Tabernacle.

v. 23 - And he said to them, "Why do you do such things, the evil things that I hear from all these people?"

1 Samuel 2:25 - "If one man sins against another, God will mediate for him; but if a man sins against the Lord, who can intercede for him?" But they would not listen to the voice of their father, for the Lord desired to put them to death.

- 12- In every dispensation, some individuals are sanctified, that is, set apart for special service to the Lord. Such divinely chosen people are given precise direction with regard to their duties. In the case of the Levites, they were responsible to carry out the daily chores inside the holy place and the outer court of the Tabernacle, to perform the sacrifices, to officiate at the feast-day rituals, and to utilize these things to instruct the people in the theology of each.
- 13- When men who possessed divine authority failed to use that authority to glorify God they engaged in a level of public sin that was always dealt with harshly by the Lord.
- 14- We have studied the case where Moses, commanded to speak to the rock for water, struck it twice instead. This failure by Moses to follow precisely the mandates given to him by the Lord resulted in him not being allowed to enter into Canaan.
- 15- The fate of Hophni and Phinehas was far more thorough, in fact, terminal. Further, during their time of administrating the priesthood in Israel the people lost the thought as a result. Although the priesthood was the catalyst for the decline of Israel, the people were personally responsible for their failure to remain positive.
- 16- Jeremiah makes it clear that national decline begins with the failure of spiritual leadership in any given dispensation:

Jeremiah 23:1 - Woe to the shepherds [**Levitical priesthood**] who are destroying [**spiritual corruption that leads to destruction**] and scattering the sheep [**Jews**] of My pasture [**Judah**]!" declares the Lord.

v. 2 - Therefore thus says the Lord God of Israel concerning the shepherds who are tending [**teaching false doctrine**] My people: "You have scattered My flock and driven them away, and have not attended to them [**by teaching the ritual plan of God**]; behold, I am about to attend to you for the evil of your deeds [**personal discipline to apostate priests**]," declares the Lord.

- 17- This verse gives us the key to why our nation's wall of fire was lifted last month. For too long the pastors of this client nation have meddled with God's Word, distorted the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and promoted as righteous the behaviors of heathen. Too many pastors have participated in the tearing down of the four divine institutions while ignoring their clear teachings in the Scripture.
- 18- The human race is a fallen race infected with the trends of the sinful nature that must be kept in check by divine revelation. Without this vision of biblical truth, the people perish.
- 19- If the priests and pastors fail to reveal the principles of the plan of God in their respective dispensations, including those that restrain the sinful nature, then ultimately the people will degenerate into evil. Such is now the case in America and such was the case in Israel in the time of Eli and his "sons of Belial."

- 20- The Lord placed a curse on the house of Ithamar, decreeing that they would not forever hold the office of high priest and the priesthood in Israel. Eli gets dressed down by the Lord in:

1 Samuel 2:27 - Then a man of God [**an unnamed prophet**] came to Eli and said to him, “Thus says the Lord, ‘Did I not indeed reveal Myself to the house of your father [**Aaron**] when they were in Egypt in bondage to Pharaoh’s house?’

v. 28 - ‘And did I not choose them from all the tribes of Israel to be My priests, to go up to My altar, to burn incense, to carry an ephod before Me,; and did I not give to the house of your father all the fire offerings of the sons of Israel?’

v. 29 - ‘Why do you kick [**בַּעַט / baat /: negative volition toward divine mandates**] at My sacrifice and at My offering which I have commanded in My dwelling, and honor your sons above Me, by making yourselves fat with the choicest of every offering of My people Israel?’

v. 30 - “Therefore the Lord God of Israel declares, ‘I did indeed say that your house [**Eli**] and the house of your father [**Ithamar**] should walk before Me forever’; but now the Lord declares, ‘Far be it from Me—for those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me will be lightly esteemed.’

- 21- Hophni and Phinehas, and by his failure in leadership, Eli, had failed to honor the Lord in their assignments at the Tabernacle, reviewed by the prophet in verses 28 and 29. The word “honor” is the Piel participle followed by the Piel imperfect of the verb:

כָּבַד / kaveth / - honor; glory.

- 22- *Kaveth* is the root word of its derivative, *kavoth*: glory. Those who glorify God will be glorified by Him. Eli, Hophni, and Phinehas could only glorify God by faithfully, consistently, and precisely performing the duties associated with their office of priest. To deviate from their assignment for personal gain was considered by the Lord to not only be a failure to glorify Him but a manifestation of a mental attitude of contempt. The English translation is “despise” and is the Qal active participle of the verb:

בִּזָּה / baza / - to despise; disdain; hold in contempt.

- 23- The basic meaning is “to accord little worth to something.” Such an attitude undervalues something, e.g., the duties of the priesthood, or someone, e.g., the Lord who elected them to the honorable position of priest and assigned them the responsibilities of teaching doctrine through the ritual system instituted by Him.
- 24- The verb reveals an attitude of disobedience to divine will that resulted in an outward display of contempt. The exact opposite of this concept is *kaveth*, to honor.
- 25- These three men have “kicked” against the mandates of their office and instead submitted to the desire and will of the sinful nature. The result of such thoughts, decisions, and actions by those who shepherd God’s people is demotion. The English translation is “lightly esteemed” and is the Qal imperfect of the verb:

קָלַל / qalal / - to be lowed in position of importance; to be cursed.

- 26- This word implies that the person cursed has been stripped of his function and as a result suffers a loss of prestige. It implies the condition that results from breaking a covenant, the details of which are clearly reviewed by the prophet in verses 28 and 29.
- 27- The curse is imposed upon Eli, his sons, and the line of Ithamar:

1 Samuel 2:31 - ‘Behold, the days are coming when I will break your strength and the strength of your father’s house so that there will not be an old man in your house.’



v. 34 - 'And this will be the sign to you which shall come concerning your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas: on the same day both of them shall die.'

- 28- Pastors who do not properly shepherd the flock assigned to them by God will come under severe punishment from their senior-ranking Authority, the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 29- The pastors of America have chosen to ignore their calling which is to study and teach the flock assigned to them. The end result is a population that is ignorant of the Word of God and therefore has no inventory to consult in time of crisis.