

Lesson 21 - God Will Honor Those Who Honor Him

Samuel 1 - 8

Purpose: To help us understand the blessings of honoring and pleasing the Lord above themselves, others, or the world.

My lessons take a different path than the Gospel Doctrine lesson manual. The lesson outline looks closer at the doctrinal topics included in the lesson purpose and scripture block. The lessons are designed to challenge mature, active Latter-Day Saints who have a solid Gospel foundation and are looking for insights into the scriptures that will broaden their faith and understanding.

If you are interested in downloading the Powerpoint file, links to source material or reading posts about improving Gospel Doctrine class preparation, delivery and engagement, you can join my Facebook Group and have full access to the content posted there. The link is <https://www.facebook.com/groups/188904648521022/>

Last Week's Lesson Challenge

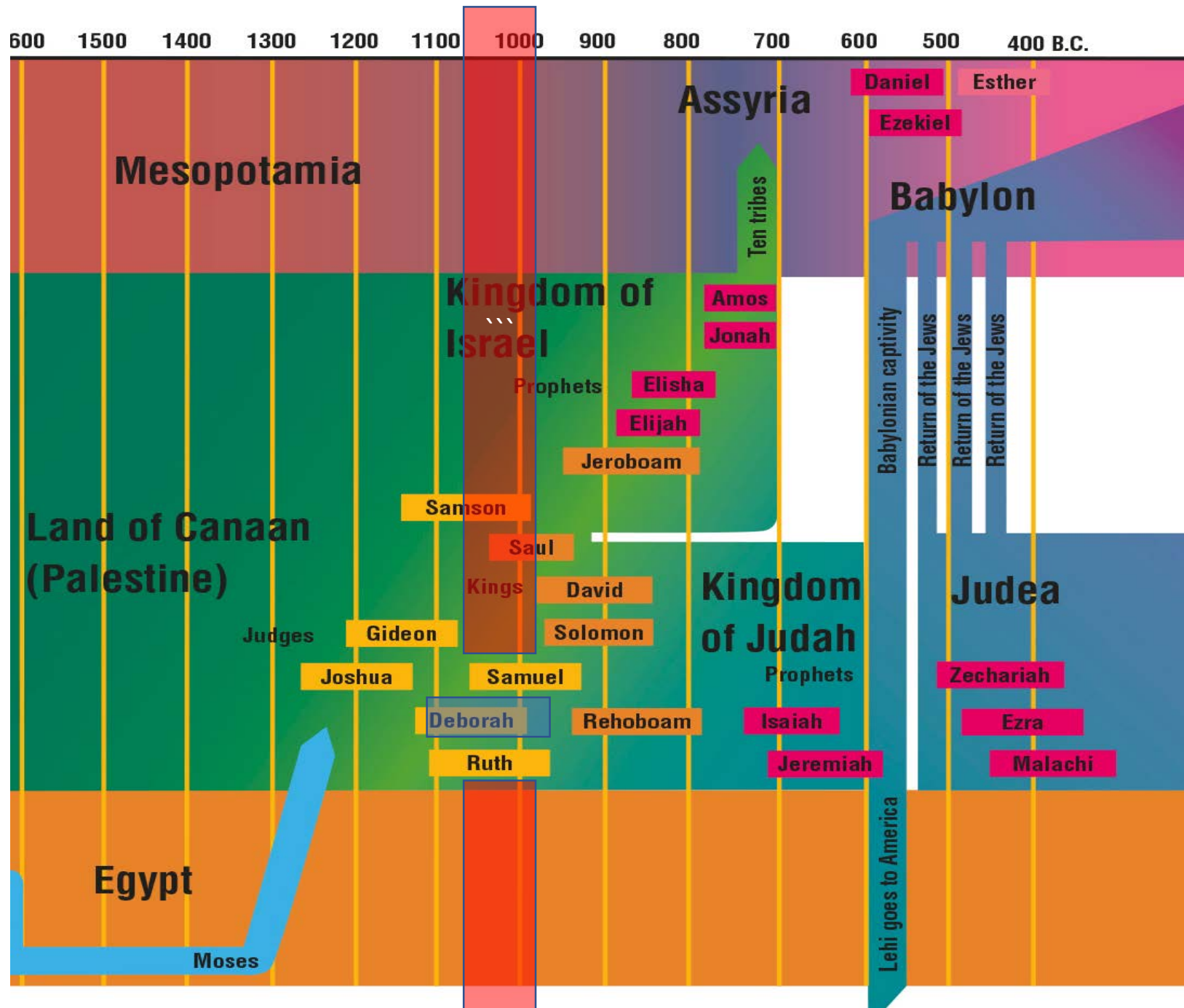
There are few stories in the scriptures about truly righteous women. Naomi, Ruth and Hannah exemplify a love for Jehovah and a willingness to sacrifice to live the two great commandments – loving God and loving our neighbor as ourselves.

Ruth especially is a beautiful story of faith, sacrifice and devotion. In Naomi, Ruth and Boaz, we see individuals who put Jehovah first both in thoughts and actions. If we believe the Savior's admonition to his Apostles to "Feed my sheep", Naomi, Ruth and Boaz are examples of those that follow that admonition centuries before it was said.

Our challenge last week was to, first, study the stories of Naomi, Ruth, Boaz and Hannah carefully to understand why they made the choices they made and, second, pray for the Lord's guidance in our lives to become closer to them in our own choices.

Would anyone wish to share their thoughts and experiences this past as they contemplated last week's lesson?

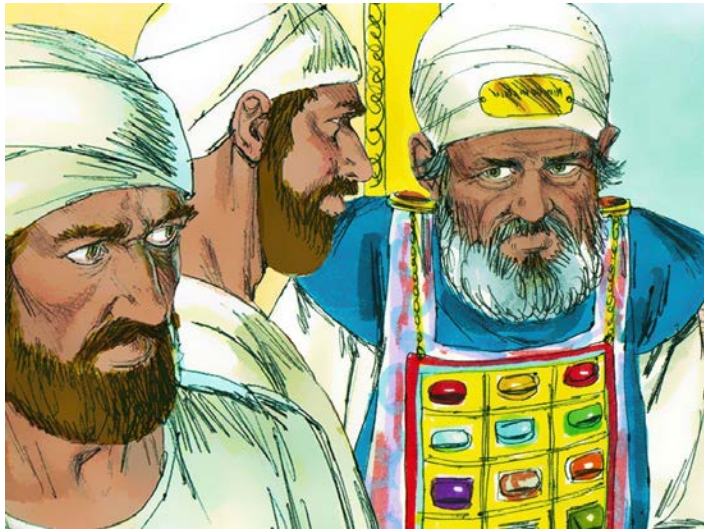
Eli and His Sons and Young Samuel



Should parents be responsible for the unrighteous acts of their children?

Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said: “The measure of our success as parents ... will not rest solely on how our children turn out. That judgment would be just only if we could raise our families in a perfectly moral environment, and that now is not possible. It is not uncommon for responsible parents to lose one of their children, for a time, to influences over which they have no control.” Elder Packer continued, quoting Elder Orson F. Whitney of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: ““Though some of the sheep may wander, the eye of the Shepherd is upon them, and sooner or later they will feel the tentacles of Divine Providence reaching out after them and drawing them back to the fold. ... Hope on, trust on, till you see the salvation of God”” ([Ensign, May 1992, p. 68](#)).

Lesson 21 is a comparison between the story of Eli, the Tabernacle High Priest, and his two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, who were also priests working in the Tabernacle and Hannah and Samuel.



Throughout most of the approximately 450-year period of leadership by judges over Israel (between Joshua and Saul), the descendants of Eleazar, Aaron's oldest son, presided as high priests at the tabernacle and represented Israel before the Lord. With the ordination of Eli, however, the Lord passed the office of high priest to a descendant of Ithamar, the fourth and youngest son of Aaron (see Num. 3:2). Eli was a devoted high priest who served 40 years as judge of Israel, the first of priestly descent also to regulate the affairs of the people (see 1 Sam. 4:18; Bible Dictionary, "Eli," 663).

Eli was a good man who gave kind consideration to Hannah in her hour of great agony and paid careful attention to the upbringing and spiritual training of Hannah's son Samuel.

Eli had two sons, Hophni and Phinehas. Together the three of them labored as priests at Shiloh in the tabernacle, where the ark of the covenant was housed. In keeping with the requirements of the law of Moses, all Israelite males were required to appear before the Lord yearly on each of the great national festivals: Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of the Tabernacles. At Shiloh, Eli also officiated in the judgment seat. Hophni and Phinehas's role as priests was to function as mediators between God and His people in their worship and offering of sacrifices.

1 Samuel 2:12-17 – KJ Version

12 ¶ Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the Lord.

13 And 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;

14 And 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.

15 Also 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.

16 And 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.

17 Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the Lord: for men abhorred the offering of the Lord.

1 Samuel 2:12-17 – NI Version

12 Eli's sons were scoundrels; they had no regard for the Lord.

13 Now it was the practice of the priests that, whenever any of the people offered a sacrifice, the priest's servant would come with a three-pronged fork in his hand while the meat was being boiled

14 and would plunge the fork into the pan or kettle or caldron or pot. Whatever the fork brought up the priest would take for himself. This is how they treated all the Israelites who came to Shiloh.

15 But even before the fat was burned, the priest's servant would come and say to the person who was sacrificing, "Give the priest some meat to roast; he won't accept boiled meat from you, but only raw."

16 If the person said to him, "Let the fat be burned first, and then take whatever you want," the servant would answer, "No, hand it over now; if you don't, I'll take it by force."

17 This sin of the young men was very great in the Lord's sight, for they were treating the Lord's offering with contempt.

“Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the Lord” (1 Sam. 2:12). The term Belial means “worthless” or “wicked” (Bible Dictionary, “Belial,” 620). They were men of greed and lust. They used their authority as priests to extort from the people the best of the meat brought before them for sacrifice (1 Sam. 2:13–16). In essence they were taking their portion before giving a portion to God! They were also committing immoral acts with the women who gathered at the tabernacle (1 Sam. 2:22). Eli knew what they were doing, and when the people saw that the priesthood at Shiloh was corrupt, they “abhorred the offering of the Lord” (1 Sam. 2:17).

1 Samuel 2:22-25

22 ¶ Now 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.

23 And he said unto them, Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil dealings by all this people.

24 Nay, my sons; for it is no good report that I hear: ye make the Lord's people to transgress.

25 If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him?

Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because the Lord would slay them.

25 If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat (plead) for him?

This is most likely an ancient proverb, quoted by Eli to impress his sons with a sense of the enormity of their sins, which were committed against Jehovah.

For man's offences against his fellow-man, there is a third superior party to arbitrate and rectify the wrongs, namely God, or God's representative, the duly appointed judge: but for man's offences against Jehovah, there is no third superior party to intercede as a mediator.

1 Samuel 2:27-36

27 ¶ And there came a man of God unto Eli, and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Did I plainly appear unto the house of thy father, when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh's house?

28 And did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to offer upon mine altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? and did I give unto the house of thy father all the offerings made by fire of the children of Israel?

29 Wherefore 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?

30 Wherefore the Lord God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now the Lord saith, Be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.

31 Behold, the days come, that I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father's house, that there shall not be an old man in thine house.

32 And thou shalt see an enemy in my habitation, in all the wealth which God shall give Israel: and there shall not be an old man in thine house for ever.

33 And the man of thine, whom I shall not cut off from mine altar, shall be to consume thine eyes, and to grieve thine heart: and all the increase of thine house shall die in the flower of their age.

34 And this shall be a sign unto thee, that shall come upon thy two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas; in one day they shall die both of them.

35 And I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in mine heart and in my mind: and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever.

36 And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left in thine house shall come and crouch to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, and shall say, Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a piece of bread.

Meanwhile...

Hannah's Prayer

1 Samuel 2:1-10

1 And Hannah prayed, and said, My heart rejoiceth in the Lord, mine horn is exalted in the Lord: my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; because I rejoice in thy salvation.

2 There is none holy as the Lord: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God.

3 Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogancy come out of your mouth: for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed.

4 The bows of the mighty men are broken, and they that stumbled are girded with strength.

5 They that were full have hired out themselves for bread; and they that were hungry ceased: so that the barren hath born seven; and she that hath many children is waxed feeble.

6 The Lord killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up.

7 The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up.

8 He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and he hath set the world upon them.

9 He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail.

10 The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: the Lord shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed.

Hannah's prayer shows her to have been a woman with great faith and love for God. The horn (see v. 1) symbolized power and strength. God had given her the power to bear a child. The rock (see v. 2) was a representation of protection. Jesus Christ is the rock or stone of Israel, the protector from evil (Matthew 21:42–44). In 1 Samuel 2:10 both allusions are combined into one: the Messiah is “the anointed one” who will break all adversaries of the Lord in pieces (the Greek word for Messiah, Christos, also means “the anointed one”). He it was, Hannah said, who would be given strength in that his horn (power) would be exalted before men. This passage is a choice Old Testament reference to the future Messiah and shows that Hannah was blessed with the gift of prophecy.

<https://www.lds.org/manual/old-testament-student-manual-genesis-2-samuel/1-samuel-1-15-the-prophet-samuel-and-saul-king-of-israel?lang=eng>

1 Samuel 2:18-21

18 ¶ But Samuel ministered before the Lord, being a child, girded with a linen ephod.

19 Moreover 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.

20 ¶ And Eli blessed Elkanah and his wife (Hannah), 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.

21 And the Lord visited Hannah, so that she conceived, and bare three sons and two daughters. And the child Samuel grew before the Lord.

Throughout history, is there
an established manner that
the Lord calls his prophets?

Elder LeGrand Richards of the Quorum of the Twelve said:

The Lord has his own way of calling prophets. He knew them before they were ever born here in mortality. We read in the Book of Abraham that the Lord stood in the midst of the spirits, and among them there were noble and great ones—and they couldn't be noble and great if they hadn't done something to make them noble and great. The Lord said of them: "These I will make my rulers; ... Abraham, thou art one of them; thou was chosen before thou wast born." (Abr. 3:22–23.) Isn't that a beautiful thought? The Lord stood in the midst of those spirits, and there were some there who became his prophets here in mortality.

<https://www.lds.org/ensign/1981/05/call-of-the-prophets?lang=eng>

1 Samuel 3:1-10

1 And the child Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli. **And the word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision.**

2 And it came to pass at that time, when Eli was laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, that he could not see;

3 And ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was, and Samuel was laid down to sleep;

4 That the Lord called Samuel: and he answered, Here am I.

5 And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down.

6 And the Lord called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again.

7 Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, neither was the word of the Lord yet revealed unto him.

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.

10 And the Lord came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth.



Listening As Samuel Listened

In an August 2010 Ensign article, Elder Walter F. González of the Presidency of the Seventy wrote the following:

Whether the Lord speaks to us through prophets or through the Spirit—and He will do both—we must promptly reply, “Speak; for thy servant heareth.” Many of the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants begin with a commandment to hearken. The first verse in the first section of this sacred volume begins with clear-cut counsel: “Hearken, O ye people of my church, saith the voice of him who dwells on high, and whose eyes are upon all men; yea, verily I say: Hearken ye people from afar; and ye that are upon the islands of the sea, listen together” (D&C 1:1).

Of course, hearing the words of the Lord through His prophets is much more than merely listening to a talk. When we hear the words of the prophets, we realize that those words are the will of God and that we must be willing to follow them. Similarly, hearing the words of the Lord through the Spirit is more than feeling His promptings. It is acting according to those promptings.

Listening to Him when He speaks is as important in our day as it was when Samuel walked the earth. In general conference, President Thomas S. Monson said, “I testify to you that our promised blessings are beyond measure. Though the storm clouds may gather, though the rains may pour down upon us, our knowledge of the gospel and our love of our Heavenly Father and of our Savior will comfort and sustain us and bring joy to our hearts as we walk uprightly and keep the commandments. There will be nothing in this world that can defeat us.”

<https://www.lds.org/ensign/2010/08/listening-as-samuel-listened?lang=eng>

1 Samuel 3:11-21

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.

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 any thing 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 Beer-sheba 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.

So what happened to
Eli, Hophni and
Phinehas...

1 Samuel 4:1-9

1 And the word of Samuel came to all Israel. Now Israel went out against the Philistines to battle, and pitched beside Eben-ezer: and the Philistines pitched in Aphek.

2 And the Philistines put themselves in array against Israel: and when they joined battle, Israel was smitten before the Philistines: and they slew of the army in the field about four thousand men.

3 ¶ And when the people were come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, Wherefore hath the Lord smitten us to day before the Philistines? Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of Shiloh unto us, that, when it cometh among us, it may save us out of the hand of our enemies.

4 So the people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring from thence the ark of the covenant of the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth between the cherubims: and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God.

5 And when the ark of the covenant of the Lord came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again.

6 And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, What meaneth the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews? And they understood that the ark of the Lord was come into the camp.

7 And the Philistines were afraid, for they said, God is come into the camp. And they said, Woe unto us! for there hath not been such a thing heretofore.

8 Woe unto us! who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty Gods? these are the Gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness.

9 Be strong, and quit yourselves like men, O ye Philistines, that ye be not servants unto the Hebrews, as they have been to you: quit yourselves like men, and fight.

On their own and without consulting Samuel the Prophet to ask Jehovah, the Israelites bring the Ark of the Covenant to the Philistine battlefield. Israel shouts and the Philistines are afraid.

1 Samuel 4:10-22

10 ¶ And the Philistines fought, and Israel was smitten, and they fled every man into his tent: and there was a very great slaughter; for there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen.

11 And the ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain.

12 ¶ And there ran a man of Benjamin out of the army, and came to Shiloh the same day with his clothes rent, and with earth upon his head.

13 And when he came, lo, Eli sat upon a seat by the wayside watching: for his heart trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came into the city, and told it, all the city cried out.

14 And when Eli heard the noise of the crying, he said, What meaneth the noise of this tumult? And the man came in hastily, and told Eli.

15 Now Eli was ninety and eight years old; and his eyes were dim, that he could not see.

16 And the man said unto Eli, I am he that came out of the army, and I fled to day out of the army. And he said, What is there done, my son?

17 And the messenger answered and said, Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people, and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God is taken.

18 And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that he fell from off the seat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died: for he was an old man, and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years.

19 ¶ And his daughter in law, Phinehas' wife, was with child, near to be delivered: and when she heard the tidings that the ark of God was taken, and that her father in law and her husband were dead, she bowed herself and travailed; for her pains came upon her.

20 And about the time of her death the women that stood by her said unto her, Fear not; for thou hast born a son. But she answered not, neither did she regard it.

21 And she named the child I-chabod, saying, The glory is departed from Israel: because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father in law and her husband.

22 And she said, The glory is departed from Israel: for the ark of God is taken.

The unhappy events that befell Eli and his sons can be instructive to parents today. It is a case of parental negligence by one who had the sacred and nontransferable responsibility to teach, encourage, correct, and restrain his children in righteousness. Eli gave Hophni and Phinehas the freedom to commit serious sins without the necessary corrective action. The results of this omission were disastrous for him, his sons, and the nation.

The Lord has placed on the shoulders of fathers and mothers the primary responsibility to rear their children. King Benjamin taught the parents of his day: “Ye will not suffer your children ... that they transgress the laws of God ... and serve the devil. ... But ye will teach them to walk in the ways of truth and soberness” (Mosiah 4:14–15).

Some fundamental ways to make parental teaching effective are

- (1) constant and caring communication between parents and children, with parents being aware day by day of what their children do and learn;
- (2) regular and well-prepared family meetings, such as family home evening, councils, prayer, and scripture study;
- (3) frequent family activities;
- (4) careful supervision and vigilance concerning the contents of movies, television programs, the Internet, books, magazines, music, and other materials so that children can be alerted and guided past the ambushes and dangers found in the media.

This Week's Lesson Challenge

Our challenge this week is to first, compare the stories of Hannah and Samuel and Eli, Hophni and Phinehas. In Hannah and Samuel's story, we see humble people acting upon their faith in Jehovah. In Eli, Hophni and Phinehas' story, we see people in positions of great responsibilities stealing sacred things for themselves and trying to intimidate those who were sacrificing to Jehovah and a father in a position of greater responsibilities "honoring" his sons instead of Jehovah.

Second, do we find ourselves in similar situations with our children. Do we teach them gospel principles? Do we teach them to act responsibly and make correct choices? While ultimately, our adult children will make their own choices about the Gospel in their lives, we can do our best to help them make correct choices while they are children.