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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

A2269 ~ Samuel and Eli.

Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.

While Moses and the people of Israel were at Mt Sinai in the wilderness, at God's instruction, Moses built a temporary Tabernacle known as the 'Tent of Meeting' for the people to come and worship their God while bringing their gifts and sin sacrifices. The Tabernacle was packed up and carried to whenever the Israelites moved to next. There it was set up again when the people spent time in a new place.

However, when the next leader, Joshua, divided up the Promised Land of Canaan between the different Israelite tribes, the Tabernacle was taken to a city in northern Ephraim, named Shiloh. This city was on the western side of the Jordan River and north of the Dead Sea but centrally located so that all the Israelites who wanted to make a pilgrimage and worship the Lord could do so. The Tabernacle stayed in Shiloh for more than 300 years.

At the start of the book of 1st Samuel, Eli was judge and priest at the Tabernacle at Shiloh. Eli had two wicked sons who also served as priests. Their names were Hophni and Phinehas, and they disobeyed the method by which God had commanded them to do their duties during Tabernacle sacrifices. They expressed their ungodliness by demanding a share of sacrifices that they had no right to.

Whether they did so out of contempt for God, or out of greed, or for any other reason, the fact is that Eli's sons broke God's commandment and did so in such a way that the people who brought sacrifices became angry and offended by them.

The low standard of religious and moral behaviour that was evident in Israel at this time had even affected the High Priest's family at their national worship centre in Shiloh. The LORD Himself could not allow such a situation to continue, so He took action to correct it.

Although Eli's sons ministered to God, they didn't know God in their hearts. They didn't have any inner communion with Him or conscience to fully obey His will. God was displeased with the conduct of both Eli's sons, as well as the indifference that Eli himself had toward his sons' wicked behaviour. If Eli's sons had revered God, they would have not acted in this way.

In Chapter 2 of 1st Samuel, an elderly Eli finally spoke to his sons about this and the other immoral things that they were doing. Eli said, "If one man sins against another, God will judge him. But if a man sins against the LORD, who will intercede for him?" But Eli's sons didn't take any notice of their father's warnings, so he should have dismissed them from the priesthood.

Impersonal knowledge of God is really atheism. Not only is someone who denies God an atheist, but also is anyone who doesn't know personally or have personal knowledge of divine grace. More than simply being filled with a desire to serve God, followers of God conduct themselves through God's Holy Spirit in a way that is pleasing to God and worthy of Him. When we don't behave correctly, as the priests didn't, we can expect terrible consequences for our actions. God sent an unnamed prophet to Eli, condemning him for allowing his sons to behave as they did.

Throughout their lives, Eli had honoured his sons more than God Himself. And it is God who said that He will honour those who honour Him.

Through the unnamed prophet, God also said that He would punish Eli's family and that only one more of his family line would have the honour of becoming High Priest. God would give that position away to someone who will be faithful to Him. As a sign that this message was true, God then said that Eli's two sons would both die on the same day.

Before that happened, during the time of a feast, a very upset woman named Hannah, came into the Tabernacle to pray. Her husband Elkanah was a devout Levite from the hill country in Ephraim and he came each year to Shiloh to worship the Lord and bring sacrifices. The Scriptures say that the Lord had prevented Hannah from having any children. Elkanah also had a second wife, who had given him a number of sons and daughters. The second wife made Hannah's life a misery, as she taunted her about not having any children of her own. Not having children was considered a disgrace by the Israelites and Hannah wept bitterly before God about this situation.

While at the Tabernacle, Hannah desperately prayed to the LORD, asking for a son that God could use. She promised to dedicate him to the LORD as a Nazirite for his whole life. When Eli saw Hannah praying, however, he thought she was drunk and so sharply rebuked her. She responded by telling him that she wasn't drunk but pouring out her troubles to the LORD. So Eli told her to go in peace and that God would give her what she had asked Him for. Hannah believed what Eli said and she cheerfully returned to her husband.

Sometime later, Hannah gave birth to a son, whom she called Samuel because she'd asked the LORD for him. She never went back to Shiloh for probably the next 4 years until the child was weaned. Then she took Samuel, along with a special offering, and presented him to the LORD at the Tabernacle. Hannah found Eli and told him how God had answered her prayer and how she was now here to dedicate Samuel to the LORD for life. She left Samuel there with Eli at Shiloh but each year, returned to bring him a new robe to wear. Eli blessed Hannah and prayed that the LORD would give her other children in Samuel's place. Hannah had three more sons and two daughters. However, Samuel at the Tabernacle grew strong, both spiritually and physically, and one day the LORD called him to be a prophet.

DRAMA - [The Bible In Living Sound](#).

The book of 1st Samuel begins a 500-year period of the kings of Israel, which lasted from around 1,050 BC to 586 BC. Samuel was to be the last judge of Israel.

Some people might think: "Was it right for Hannah to commit Samuel to the Lord's service in Shiloh for the rest of his life?" Usually individuals made their own Nazirite vows but occasionally, a parent made the Nazirite vow on behalf of their child. The Lord answered Hannah's prayer. But this doesn't mean that the Lord will answer all our prayers according to our wishes. The Lord answers our prayers according to 'His wishes', which are in His way and His timing. If God had given Hannah a son earlier in life, she would not have dedicated him to the Lord.

Believing prayer is extremely important and God always responds to it in one way or another; but at times, God will also overrule our requests in order to work out His greater purposes. Such purposes are always good for those who put their faith in Him. In Romans, Chapter 8, it says: “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.” God loves to give. But many people pray to Him with their lips but not with a deep desire in their hearts for what they ask. When we ask in prayer and don’t receive, we should examine ourselves to see whether the desire of our hearts matches the words of our lips. If it doesn’t, we must intensify our spiritual desires at a deeper level of seeking. This process is our heavenly Father’s way of making sure that we learn not to take things for granted.

The story of Hannah reveals that God is pleased when we offer to Him our most cherished possessions. Hannah wasn’t trying to ‘bribe’ or ‘manipulate’ God when she vowed to give her son to Him. She was acknowledging that any children God gives belong to Him in the first place. By offering her son to God, Hannah was ensuring that his life would be of the greatest possible use to God and in turn, the greatest possible blessing to herself and her nation. God is always best able to use our possessions, talents, our children and ourselves when we give them all to Him.

The story of Hannah also teaches us that we may not be ready to receive from God our greatest desires until we first agree in our heart to give them up to Him. Did Hannah go home with a downcast face after leaving Samuel behind? No, her heart was filled with joy! She sang a song of praise and thanksgiving to her Lord. The Lord grants joy to those who give Him their most precious possessions. We can never out-give the Lord; as much as we give to Him, He gives us so much, much more. It's very important in the upbringing of children in the Church that they should be present in church and take part in divine worship. They need to be guided by both the church officials and their parents, so that they behave correctly when entering the church's buildings. Unfortunately, some children behave irreverently at church time, even during the most sacred moments of divine worship. Children, by their irresponsible behaviour, may bring down God's punishment on themselves.

Regrettably, because many people have grown accustomed to the way things are done during a church service, their actions become a habit, and they may not behave with respect for the things of God. But we can be sure that God doesn't allow Himself to be mocked.

Devout Christians are afraid of committing sin, for fear that they should distance themselves from their God, who is the God of love; but also that their disease of sin might harm other members of the Church and future generations.

Some people these days say that what they do in the privacy of their homes is their own business and it's no one else's. But they forget that God sees and knows everything, even their thoughts and intentions of their hearts; it is from these one day, God will judge them accordingly. No one sins alone and nor does it not affect other people. Remember how God judged the whole nation of Israel because one man, Achan, stole plundered items that belonged to God, in Chapter 7 of the book of Judges.

Hannah showed by her actions that God was the most important person in her life. Is the same true of you? Does anyone or anything, including personal ambitions, hold first place in your life? If so, ask God for forgiveness and place Him chief over everything in life. God's salvation through Christ has one condition on it: if we want God to forgive our wrongdoing, we must first forgive those who've wronged us. We will have no peace in our heart until we do.

Take to heart what the Apostle Paul said in Galatians, Chapter 2, Verse 20: "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God (that's Jesus), who loved me and gave Himself for me."

The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.

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