

For Better or For Worse Lesson 8 3Q 2007

Elkanah and Hannah: Fulfilling a Vow

Questions or thoughts from the class from this lesson?

What do you think about the fact Hannah was barren?

Last week at ASI Doug Batchelor had the SS on Samson and his women, and he pointed out that in the Bible there are 7 examples of Barren women and miracle births and they are all types of Christ:

1. Sarah- Isaac – Mount Moriah to be sacrificed
2. Rebekah – Jacob – who became Israel, twelve sons, Jesus twelve apostles
3. Rachel – Joseph – who sold into slavery, became ruler to save people
4. Monoah's wife – Samson – blessed with strength to deliver Israel from bondage and rule over them
5. Hannah- Samuel – who became High Priest
6. Shunammite woman – child died and resurrected
7. Elizabeth – John the Baptist – who greatest of prophets

Overview:

Hannah was barren and teased by Elkanah's second wife, Elkanah showed preference for Hannah but Hannah was broken hearted and prayed to God for a child and vowed to dedicate the child to God. She was blessed with Samuel who she took and left with Eli at the Sanctuary at a very young age.

What do you think of Hannah's bargain with God? What about the idea of vows in general? Once you make a vow are you obligated to keep it? Or even after the vow is made to you still have the right/freedom to break the vow? What about vows to God?

What about Herod's vow to Salome? Should Herod have kept his vow or broken it?

What about Jephthah's vow? Should he have kept it or broken it?

MONDAY

Read second paragraph – thoughts? States this action was prompted by a lack of faith, what attitude might faith have had in this situation? Have faith that God will give them a child or faith that God knows what is best and it might not be best to have a child? Do you think their distrust was in God’s ability or God’s willingness, i.e. God’s will? This would mean not distrusting God’s ability but distrusting God’s goodness, His character, believing that He really doesn’t have our best at heart – how do we struggle with this?

Read third paragraph “As we all should know...”

Thoughts? What does it mean “even our worst deeds have been atoned for”? In medicine if our diagnosis is wrong then our treatment is often wrong. In this sentence, what does it sound like the diagnosis of the sin problem is? Doing bad things? Bad deeds? Which is a bad thing because a penalty has to be applied and with that diagnosis we have the remedy – Jesus died to atone for our bad deeds. What do you think about this?

Did Jesus die to pay a penalty for bad deeds or to heal, restore and recreate this creation in righteousness? Was the problem with sin that an external penalty was demanded?

Do we need Jesus to do something to change God’s attitude toward us, to get God to forgive us? Do our deeds need to be atoned for?

No question that through Jesus and because of Jesus we have redemption and forgiveness – no question about it. But was it God working through Jesus to bring us His forgiveness or was it Jesus working to either get God to be forgiving or to give God legal precedent to be able to forgive? i.e. without Jesus God would have either been unwilling or unable to forgive us? (John 3:16, Romans 8).

Is our problem one of God being offended and angry and needing to be appeased so He will be willing to forgive? Do we have any problem with God? Only our misunderstanding of Him, only the lies that have obscured our view of Him. But do we need to be healed, transformed, recreated? Do our acts of sin need to be “atoned” or do we need to be at-one again with God? What is it that prevents us from being at one with God? Sinfulness in us, and which of us chose to be sinful? None of us, we were born infected with a terminal condition which separates us from God – then what was Christ’s mission? To restore us back to unity with God, to heal this creation, to destroy the lies that separate and rewrite God’s character back into this creation!

TUESDAY

Hannah's vow – she promised to send her son to the Lord's service – how difficult would that have been to carry out? How difficult would it be for mothers here in class to send your child, under the age of 4 to be raised by a man whose own sons behaved as Eli's did?

What enabled Hannah to do this? Remembering that her child was a special child born of God's answer to her prayer and that God had a purpose for the child's life.

Are there any lessons that can be learned from Hannah's prayer and God's response? Does God always give us what we want? If someone prays and doesn't get the answer they want does that mean that there is some sin in their life? Not, necessarily, it might mean that God sees beyond human vision and if we could see how God sees we wouldn't be asking for what we are asking for.

Let's talk about Eli and his son's for a minute, read 1 Samuel 2:22-25

1SA 2:22 Now Eli, who was very old, heard about everything his sons were doing to all Israel and how they slept with the women who served at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. ²³ So he said to them, "Why do you do such things? I hear from all the people about these wicked deeds of yours. ²⁴ No, my sons; it is not a good report that I hear spreading among the LORD's people. ²⁵ If a man sins against another man, God may mediate for him; but if a man sins against the LORD, who will intercede for him?" His sons, however, did not listen to their father's rebuke, for it was the LORD's will to put them to death.

What does this mean? Does this mean the reason the sons of Eli didn't listen is because God didn't want them to listen so He prevented it because God wanted to kill them?

Read 1Samuel 2:27-33

1SA 2:27 Now a man of God came to Eli and said to him, "This is what the LORD says: `Did I not clearly reveal myself to your father's house when they were in Egypt under Pharaoh? ²⁸ I chose your father out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to go up to my altar, to burn incense, and to wear an ephod in my presence. I also gave your father's house all the offerings made with fire by the Israelites. ²⁹ Why do you scorn my sacrifice and offering that I

prescribed for my dwelling? Why do you honor your sons more than me by fattening yourselves on the choice parts of every offering made by my people Israel?

1SA 2:30 "Therefore the LORD, the God of Israel, declares: 'I promised that your house and your father's house would minister before me forever.' But now the LORD declares: 'Far be it from me! Those who honor me I will honor, but those who despise me will be disdained. ³¹ The time is coming when I will cut short your strength and the strength of your father's house, so that there will not be an old man in your family line ³² and you will see distress in my dwelling. Although good will be done to Israel, in your family line there will never be an old man. ³³ Every one of you that I do not cut off from my altar will be spared only to blind your eyes with tears and to grieve your heart, and all your descendants will die in the prime of life.

What do you take away from this passage? What principle is critical to understand here that many Christians have failed to understand? Had God made promises to Eli and his family? What does God say about His promise in this passage? Why doesn't God keep His promise? Does this have any bearing to the promises He made to the children of Israel? To us?

What kind of father was Eli? Did he discipline his sons?

The Lord comes to Samuel three times and then on the fourth Samuel says, speak for your servant is listening and the Lord told Samuel that Eli's sons and family were going to be wiped out – the next day Samuel tells Eli and Eli responds with:

Read 1 Samuel 3:17,18

1SA 3:17 "What was it he said to you?" Eli asked. "Do not hide it from me. May God deal with you, be it ever so severely, if you hide from me anything he told you." ¹⁸ So Samuel told him everything, hiding nothing from him. Then Eli said, "He is the LORD; let him do what is good in his eyes."

What do you think about this response? Do you think it sounds like Eli finally is doing as God would have him do? That God preferred this response? When Abraham heard God was going to destroy Sodom did he respond like Eli? When Moses heard God was going to destroy Israel did he respond like Eli? When David heard that his son was going to die did

he respond like Eli? How are these three men described? Friends of God, men after God's own heart. When we get the word from God and it is actually from God does it necessarily mean we should simply say, "He is the Lord let Him do what He thinks is best." Is that what God wants from us?

THURSDAY

TQ page 99 states, "Review the spiritual condition of Israel at that time... There were two primary categories of people in those days of spiritual dearth – the immoral and the demoralized. But then there was a third group, relatively small – the consecrated."

Is this talking about the entire world population or the nation of Israel? What was the purpose of the nation of Israel? To be witnesses to the truth to bring the world back to God for the advent of the Messiah! What is the purpose of the SDA movement? Do these very same questions apply to us?

Satan tells lies about God in order to get one of two responses from people, either to deny God exists at all or to believe such horrible things about God that people cower in fear and terror of God, are afraid and work to avoid being with Him or have someone to protect us from Him. Consider the world today and its different philosophies and see where people fall –

Agnostics and atheists

Buddhists – no God

Hindu – reincarnation to purify self through suffering until one with cosmos i.e. no God

Catholics – Jesus and saint to protect from God's wrath

Islam – wrathful and punishing God

Protestants – Jesus to assuage God's wrath and protect us and God will torment wicked in hell

Pagans – stern god who requires appeasement

What religions of the world are telling the truth about God – that He is never failing love as revealed in Jesus, that He is our Friend? Where is the group revealing this reality in their lives? What about Adventism – what were we called up for? To reveal the truth about God in our lives! To be witnesses to the world that God is not like what Satan has misrepresented Him to be. How are we doing?

FRIDAY

Read EGW comment – thoughts? Notice the key and balance here:

Key – “But it is only when she seeks, in her own life, to follow the teachings of Christ that the mother can hope to form the character of her children after the divine pattern.”

The mother is responsible for her character not the character of her children, she can only “hope” to form the child’s character correctly when she is forming her own correctly. Also the balance of the other influences beside the parental influences.

Read questions 1, 2, 3 and discuss