



Lesson 58

ELI'S WICKED SONS

Story Elements

- **TEXT:** 1 Samuel 2:12-36
- **Setting:** approx. 1105 B.C.
- **Main Characters:** God, Eli, Hophni, Phineas, and an unnamed Man of God
- **Plot:** A curse is pronounced on Eli's family for his failure to restrain his wicked sons.
- **Key word(s):** " _____ "
- **Climax:** *1 Samuel 2:27 "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?"*

Eli's Wicked Sons (2:12-17)

1. Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phineas, were wretched men described as "sons of Belial" - which is a Hebrew idiom used to refer to the most _____. Notice the spiritual bankruptcy of Hophni and Phineas:
 - a. They were _____. (vs. 12)
 - b. They _____ the LORD – they were not contented with the portion of the sacrifice allotted to the priests by the Law (Deu. 18:3) but would keep for themselves whatever a three-pronged fork could snatch from a boiling pot. They also would take raw meat before it was roasted, including the fat which was designated to be burnt unto the LORD (Lev. 7:31)
 - c. They " _____ " the people of God. (cf. 1 Sam. 2:16 and 1 Pet. 5:3)
 - d. They committed adultery with the women at the _____. (vs. 22)
 - e. Their wicked lives _____ to live wickedly. (vs. 17, 24)

Matthew Henry notes: "All good men abhorred their management of the offerings, and too many insensibly fell into a contempt of the offerings themselves for their sakes."¹

Eli's Weak Rebuke (2:22-25)

2. Eli's rebuke of his sons proved to be little more than a slap on the wrist. They were ineffectively warned when they should have been _____ from office.
3. Hophni and Phineas were unmoved by Eli's words. This is a form of severe judgment from God: when people become so wicked that God allows their hearts to become _____ against any warnings or rebuke.

¹ Henry, Matthew. *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994. Print.

Romans 9:18 *Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.*

Eli Warned of God (2:27-36)

4. An unnamed prophet warned Eli of the following:
 - a. His lack of disciplining his sons made him guilty of _____ them more than the LORD.
 - b. Both his sons would die on the _____ . (vs. 34)
 - c. Eli's family would be _____ from the priesthood. (cf. 1 Sa. 2:31-33 & 1 Ki. 2:26-27)
 - d. God would raise up a faithful _____. (vs. 35)

Application

5. It seems that Eli confused Hannah for a daughter of _____ (1:16), yet he failed to recognize his own sons' sins until it was too late. It is human nature to turn a blind eye towards those whom we love while we unfairly judge others.

Matthew 7:1 *Judge not, that ye be not judged. 2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.*

6. Hophni and Phineas were everything a godly leader should not be - greedy, immoral, and _____. (cf. Titus 1:6-9)
7. The faithful priest prophesied of in verse 35 would be fulfilled in Zadok – and ultimately in _____.

Hebrews 2:17 *Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.*

Answer Key

Key words: "sons of Belial | 1. sinful men; a) unsaved; b) stole from; c) lorded over; d) tabernacle; e) encouraged others | 2. forcefully removed | 3. hardened | 4. a) honoring; b) same day; c) removed; d) priest | 5. Belial | 6. abusive | 7. Christ