

**“God Will Honor Those Who Honor Him”**Lesson  
**21**  
Summary

*1 Samuel 2; Hannah sings praises to the Lord—Samuel ministers before the Lord—Eli blesses Elkanah and Hannah, and they have sons and daughters—Sons of Eli reject the Lord and live in wickedness—The Lord rejects the house of Eli.*

*1 Samuel 3; The Lord calls Samuel—House of Eli not purged by sacrifices and offerings—Samuel recognized as a prophet by all Israel—The Lord appears to him.*

*1 Samuel 8; Samuel's sons take bribes and pervert judgment—Israel seeks for a king to rule over them—Samuel rehearses the nature and evils of kingly rule—The Lord consents to give them a king.*

**Supplemental  
Holy Land and  
Jewish  
insights:**

**Samuel Means Dedicated to the Lord:** Hannah, the wife of Elkanah and the mother of the prophet Samuel, is described as a devout woman who made an annual pilgrimage to the Temple in Shiloh. Pouring out her anguish at her barrenness and vowing to dedicate any son born to her to the service of God, the high priest Eli heard her and added his blessing to her pleas.

*(1 Samuel 1:11)* First fruits and first born were offerings to the Lord in any case. They could be redeemed by paying money instead. Hannah gave her firstborn son to the High Priest (Kohen) and hence to the Lord.

**Firstborn:** “. . . referring to a male offspring who is the first issue of his mother's womb. According to the Torah, the firstborn, known in Hebrew as *bekhor*, has special sanctity. Therefore, he is subject to specific Torah laws . . . these laws . . . teach us that everything in the world belongs to God and man owns only what God has given to him. When a man . . . finally sees the first fruits of his labor . . . he must redeem them from their rightful owner.”

**Redemption of Firstborn Ceremony:** “In the case of a human *bekhor*, this ceremony . . . consists of redeeming the child from a *kohen* (priest) by giving the *kohen* five silver coins. During the ceremony, the father presents his son, often on a specially embellished tray, to the *kohen*, who asks him in an ancient Aramaic formula, whether he wishes to redeem the child or to leave him to the *kohen*. (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

**Eli's Sons Take Advantage of Worshipers:** This kind of profiteering is still repugnant in Jewish Law. Providing religious service for money is improper. Yet one can see religious men at the Western (Wailing) Wall waiting to assist Bar Mitzvah services on Mondays and Thursdays, (not Saturdays, Sabbaths, because no money is handled on this day). The families allowing them to assist are supposed to pay money in return. If the sum is not sufficient, often, more is demanded. It's like blessings being given with one hand while the other is cupped for a “donation.”

**Jesus Cleansed the Temple:** He was filled with reverent indignation because men were desecrating his Father's house, selling doves and lambs to be offered as sacrifice, not so much for the service but for the money they would make. He overturned the moneychanger tables and said to the sellers of doves, “Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.” (*John 2:16.*)

**Service to God Instead of Self-service Evident in Jewish Culture: Entertainment:** “After the *shivah*, (mourning period at death) a modified period of mourning continues till the thirtieth (Hebrew: *sheloshim*) day after death. During this period the mourner should not attend places of entertainment or participate in social gatherings. A mourner may not marry during the *sheloshim*.” **Sabbath:** “. . . observance of the Sabbath became the identifying mark of the Jew. It set him apart from all other religions. (In) Maccabees (2:31--41), at the beginning of the Hasmonean revolt against Syria, the Jews would not fight on the Sabbath . . . Later they realized that was a mistake and that if danger to life is involved, the Sabbath is suspended.” “The rabbis of the Talmud thought that the Sabbath is the most important of all the laws of the Torah and that by itself it is equal to all the rest. One statement is that “if Israel keeps one Sabbath as it should be kept, the Messiah will come.” They saw Shabbat as a special privilege; a gift that God gave His people Israel and as a foretaste of the world-to-come.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

**Concern for Well Being of Animals:** “Man must rest on the Sabbath and may not work his animals either. “Thou shalt not do any manner of work, neither thy son . . . nor thy servant . . . nor thy cattle” (*Exodus 20:10*).

**Sabbath Joy:** “. . . indeed it is a positive commandment, often difficult to observe, to be happy on them. The joy required is not frivolity but, contradictory though it may sound, a serious happiness. The highest level of joy according to the rabbis is the *simbah shel mitzvah*, the joy felt at performing a commandment or doing a good deed.” “For the Sabbath, there are special candlesticks and oil lamps, *Kiddush* cups, *hallah* covers and tablecloths; and for *Havdalah*, special candleholders and spice containers in many shapes and sizes, some of them masterpieces of artistic workmanship.” “Women usher in the Sabbath each week by lighting candles and blessing God “who sanctified us by His commandments and commanded us to kindle the Sabbath light.” On Saturday night, traditional Jewish families light a *havdalah* candle made of several wicks braided together, raise a cup of wine and sniff fragrant spices, thus bidding farewell to the Sabbath peace and beginning a new week.”

**Sabbath Bread:** “From Talmudic times, it was the special duty of the housewife to bake the bread for the Sabbath . . . prepared from white flour, is also called “*hallah*.” Two such loaves are placed on the festive Sabbath table as a symbol for the double portion of manna which the Israelites in the wilderness received every Friday, and because of the Showbread in the Temple, which was displayed each Sabbath.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*) On the Sabbath the *Hallah* is baked sweeter than regular bread because the Sabbath is a “sweeter” day.

**Sabbath Customs:** “Funerals may not take place on the Sabbath . . .” “In some communities it is customary for the father to bless his children on the Sabbath eve when he returns from the synagogue.” “In every town where there are Jews they must appoint ‘charity wardens,’ men who are well-known and honest that they should collect money from the people every Sabbath eve and distribute it to the poor . . .” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*) It is interesting to see the similarity of young Aaronic Priesthood bearers gathering “Fast Offerings” at the beginning of the month. Fasting is an integral part of Jewish life, yet never on a Sabbath unless it is Yom Kippur. There is a monthly Yom Kippur Katan (lesser), a day before the beginning of every month. It is a fast day, again, never on a Sabbath.

**Fasting:** “Both the prophets and the rabbis stressed that mere fasting without repentance for our bad deeds is valueless.” “Fasting is an act of repentance or of supplication seeking divine forgiveness or the prevention of disaster. Public fasts also commemorate catastrophic events in Jewish history . . . On fast days one neither eats nor drinks. On major fasts, other prohibitions are washing, wearing leather shoes, using ointments or perfumes, and other physical pleasures. There are special prayers and the Torah is read in the synagogue. Yom Kippur and Tishah be-Av are observed from sunset to sunset. All other fasts are from sunrise to sunset.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

**Morality:** “Amos cried out against the careful observance of the Temple ritual when it ignored morality as an integral part of religion. Ritual alone does not please God, who demands that it go hand in hand with mercy and compassion.” “Judaism encourages modesty as one of the means to chastity. Thus the Jewish woman is enjoined to dress and act modestly at all times. Furthermore, a man is forbidden to be alone with a woman with whom he is not permitted to have sexual relations from considerations of both chastity and modesty.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

**Israelite Kings as Role Models:** It should be considered that even though the children of Israel wanted a king for their own personal reasons, God allowed them to have kings as role models of an even greater “anticipated” King of Kings. The clothing (deep red) and the entry into Jerusalem on donkeys that have never been ridden before are examples of signs of the King of Kings.

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