

# Come to Understanding

**They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding,  
and they that murmured shall learn doctrine. — Isaiah 29:24**

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## Sacrificing by the Stone of Zoheleth

After Israel entered into the Promised Land, they set up the tabernacle of the congregation at Shiloh:

1 And the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle of the congregation there. And the land was subdued before them. -Joshua 18

Every year, the people of Israel assembled at Shiloh for a great “feast of Yahweh” (see Judges 21:18).

Eli and his sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were the priests in the tabernacle at Shiloh. Each year a man named Elkanah brought his two wives, Peninnah and Hannah, to worship and sacrifice:

3 And this man went up out of his city yearly to worship and to sacrifice unto Yahweh of hosts in Shiloh. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, the priests of Yahweh, were there. -1 Samuel 1

While these annual trips to Shiloh were likely times for celebration and rejoicing for most of the people of Israel, they were not so for Hannah. It was on these occasions that Peninnah, “her adversary,” troubled her because she did not yet have a child:

6 And her adversary also provoked her grief, for to make her fret, because Yahweh had shut up her womb. -1 Samuel 1

It was on these occasions of going up to the “house of Yahweh,” that Hannah’s grief intensified:

7 And as he did so year by year, when she went up to the house of Yahweh, so she provoked her; therefore she wept, and did not eat. -1 Samuel 1

Tearfully weeping “in bitterness of soul,” Hannah prayed to Yahweh:

10 And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto Yahweh, and wept tearfully. -1 Samuel 1

Hannah’s tearful prayers were answered. Yahweh gave her a son, whom she named Samuel and dedicated to Yahweh’s service in the tabernacle. Afterwards, Hannah prayed and prophesied, saying Yahweh is salvation, He alone is holy, He is the Rock!

1 And Hannah prayed, and said, My heart rejoices in Yahweh, my horn is exalted in Yahweh: my mouth is enlarged over my enemies; because I rejoice in your salvation.

2 *There is none holy as Yahweh: for there is none besides you: neither is there any rock like our God.* -1 Samuel 2

As Hannah continues her prophecy, it becomes clear that her tearful prayers were not about her. She said Yahweh would “judge the ends of the earth,” “give strength to His King,” and exalt the “horn” of His “anointed” (Messiah)!

10 The adversaries of Yahweh shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: Yahweh shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength to his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed. -1 Samuel 2

Her son, Samuel, was born for Yahweh’s service during a time when the priesthood, and, consequently, the worship of Yahweh, had become corrupted. Eli had allowed his two sons, who didn’t even know Yahweh, to assume the responsibilities of the priesthood:

12 Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not Yahweh. -1 Samuel 2

Although they were going through the motions of worship, all they did was either for their own profit or pleasure (see 2 Samuel 2:13-16, 22). Eli’s sons “abhorred” (despised) the offering of Yahweh:

17 Therefore the sin of the young men was very great before Yahweh: for men abhorred the offering of Yahweh. -1 Samuel 2

Even though Eli knew what his sons were doing, he did not correct them:

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

24 No, my sons; for *it is* no good report that I hear: you make Yahweh’s people to transgress. -1 Samuel 2

Eli and his sons had failed as faithful priests of Yahweh. Therefore, the only faithful minister of Yahweh at the tabernacle was the young child, Samuel:

18 But Samuel ministered before Yahweh, being a child, girded with a linen ephod.

26 And the child Samuel grew on, and was in favor both with Yahweh, and also with men. -1 Samuel 2

Soon, an unnamed “man of God” appeared to Eli, asking him revealing questions from Yahweh. Why do you “kick” at my sacrifice and offering? Why do you honor your sons above me? Why do you “make yourselves fat,” taking the firstfruits, that which belongs to me, for yourselves?

**So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense,  
and caused them to understand the reading. — Nehemiah 8:8**

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29 Why kick you at my sacrifice and at my offering, which I have commanded *in my habitation*; and honor your sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the most chief of all the offerings of Israel my people? -1 Samuel 2

The “man of God” finally gave a chilling prophecy against Eli and his descendents. Yahweh said that He would honor those that honor Him, but that He will “lightly esteem” those that despise Him:

30 Therefore Yahweh God of Israel says, I said indeed *that* your house, and the house of your father, should walk before me forever: but now Yahweh says, Be it far from me; for them that honor me I will honor, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed. -1 Samuel 2

Eli and his family had not honored Yahweh. Therefore, the man gave the prophecy of the impending destruction of Eli’s household and descendents:

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

34 And this shall be a sign to you, that shall come upon your two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas; in one day they shall die both of them. -1 Samuel 2

Yahweh confirmed the prophecy:

11 And the ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain. -1 Samuel 4

After Saul became the King of Israel, he ordered the murder of Phinehas’ grandson, Ahimelech, along with his household of priests:

16 And the king said, You shall surely die, Ahimelech, you, and all your father’s house.

18 And the king said to Doeg, Turn you, and fall upon the priests. And Doeg the Edomite turned, and he fell upon the priests, and slew on that day fourscore and five persons that did wear a linen ephod. -1 Samuel 22

However, one of Ahimelech’s sons, Abiathar, escaped the slaughter and fled to David:

20 And one of the sons of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped, and fled after David. -1 Samuel 22

While David was running from King Saul, Abiathar served with him as the priest:

7 And David said to Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech’s son, I pray you, bring me here the ephod. And Abiathar brought there the ephod to David. -1 Samuel 30

Abiathar (his name means “my father is great”) continued to serve as a priest of Yahweh after David became the King of Israel. However, he shared those responsibilities with another priest, Zadok (his name means “righteous”). Both of these priests were descendants of Aaron’s sons, Zadok from Eleazar and Abiathar (Ahimelech’s son) from Ithamar:

3 And David distributed them, both Zadok of the sons of Eleazar, and Ahimelech of the sons of Ithamar, according to their offices in their service. -1 Chronicles 24

Zadok and Abiathar shared the priestly responsibilities of Israel, including carrying the ark of God (see 2 Samuel 15:29). Both appeared to be faithful priests of Yahweh. However, when one of David’s sons, Adonijah, rose up in rebellion against his father, the priests were put to a test:

5 Then Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, I will be king: and he prepared him chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him. -1 Kings 1

Abiathar sided with Adonijah but Zadok remained loyal to David. With Abiathar helping him at his side, Adonijah offered the sacrifice at a place called the “stone of Zohemoth,” declaring himself to be the new King of Israel. The name of the “stone of Zohemoth” is translated as the “stone of the Serpent!”

9 And Adonijah slew sheep and oxen and fat cattle by the stone of Zohemoth, which *is* by Enrogel, and called all his brothers the king’s sons, and all the men of Judah the king’s servants:

10 But Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah, and the mighty men, and Solomon his brother, he called not. -1 Kings 1

Many years earlier, Moses sang this song about Israel (which he called Jeshurun):

15 But Jeshurun grew fat, and kicked: you have grown fat, you have grown thick, you are covered *with fatness*; then he forsook God *which* made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation. -Deuteronomy 32

Likewise, the priests of the house of Eli had “grown fat” and “lightly esteemed the Rock” of their salvation. They had yielded to the temptation of winking at the Word of God in exchange for their profit and pleasure. Finally, Abiathar assisted Adonijah in the sacrifice of rebellion, which he offered at the “stone of the Serpent.”

Therefore, after Solomon was finally chosen by Yahweh and anointed as the King of Israel, he removed Abiathar from the priesthood. This fulfilled the prophecy concerning the house of Eli in Shiloh (see 1 Kings 2:27).

Will we follow Eli’s household, which, for the sake of prosperity, rebelled against Yahweh and His Word? Or will we remain faithful like the righteous priest, Zadok, and trust in the Rock of our salvation?

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