

1 Samuel 2:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the priests' custom with the people was, that, when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant came, while the flesh was in seething, with a fleshhook of three teeth in his hand;

Analysis

The detailed description of priestly corruption begins. The 'custom' (mishpat, which can mean either practice or judgment) of these priests perverted proper sacrificial procedure. The three-pronged fork used to select meat portions was meant to take what God had designated for priests. Instead, it became a tool for random seizure. The boiling pot - intended for the worshipers' communion meal - became the priests' personal buffet. What should have been orderly worship became chaotic exploitation of those who came to honor God.

Historical Context

Levitical law specified that priests received the breast and right thigh of peace offerings (Leviticus 7:31-34). By using a fork in boiling pots, Eli's sons claimed random portions before proper procedures were followed, mixing their allotment with the worshipers' share.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How do religious practices become corrupted from their original purposes?
2. What safeguards protect against leaders exploiting those they are meant to serve?

Interlinear Text

וְמַשְׁפֵּט	בְּפְהָן	אֶת	בְּפְהָן	בְּעֵמָה	כָּל	אִישׁ
custom	And the priests	H854	with the people	H3605	was that when any man	
H4941	H3548		H5971		H376	
offered	sacrifice	came	servant	And the priests	was in seething	while the flesh
H2076	H2077	H935	H5288	H3548	H1310	H1320
וּבְמַזְלֵג	שֶׁל שֶׁ	בְּשֻׁם	בִּידָוֹן	בְּשֻׁבְבָּשָׁל	רְבָשָׁל	בְּבָשָׁר
with a fleshhook	of three	teeth	in his hand			
H4207	H7969	H8127	H3027			

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