

1 Samuel 3:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.

Analysis

The specific sin is restated: Eli knew his sons made themselves vile (cursed, treated with contempt) and 'restrained them not.' The Hebrew *kahah* (to rebuke, restrain) indicates the action Eli failed to take. He spoke (2:23-25) but did not act decisively. The sin requiring atonement is not merely the sons' wickedness but Eli's passive tolerance. His failure to exercise rightful authority constituted betrayal of both divine trust and parental responsibility. Those with power to restrain evil bear guilt when they fail to act.

Historical Context

Eli's failure represents a pattern seen in parental and leadership failures throughout Scripture. David's similar failure with Adonijah (1 Kings 1:6) followed the same pattern of knowing but not restraining. Authority carries responsibility to act.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. What is the difference between speaking against evil and actually restraining it?
2. What areas of rightful authority are you failing to exercise?

Interlinear Text

עַד בֵּית וְ אֶת שָׁפֵט וְהַבָּיִת דְּתַי
For I have told כִּי לֹא וְהַבָּיִת דְּתַי
H5046 H0 H3588 him that I will judge H589 H853 his house for
H8199 H1004 H5704

מִקְלָל יְמִינָה עַוְלָם אֲשֶׁר בְּנָוֹן וְאֶשְׁר
ever for the iniquity which he knoweth made themselves vile
H5769 H5771 H834 H3045 H3588 H7043

לְקַמְּם בְּנֵי אֶל אָבִיו כִּי הַבְּנָה
because his sons and he restrained
H1992 H1121 H3808 H3543 H0

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 10:37 (Parallel theme): He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

Proverbs 19:18 (Parallel theme): Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying.

1 Samuel 2:12 (Parallel theme): Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the LORD.

1 Samuel 2:17 (Sin): Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD: for men abhorred the offering of the LORD.

Ezekiel 18:30 (Judgment): Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.

Ezekiel 7:3 (Judgment): Now is the end come upon thee, and I will send mine anger upon thee, and will judge thee according to thy ways, and will recompense upon thee all thine abominations.

1 Kings 1:6 (Parallel theme): And his father had not displeased him at any time in saying, Why hast thou done so? and he also was a very goodly man; and his mother bare him after Absalom.

Proverbs 29:15 (Parallel theme): The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org