

Broomfield



# PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH MINISTRY OF THE WORD

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## *Apostasy and Its Attributes, Part 7*

### **Is Eli Saved?**

Over the past couple of months we have been considering the theme of apostasy. Apostasy references a falling away from Christ, fidelity to Him and service in His kingdom. This passage is about apostasy. It details the actions of a man who genuinely loved Christ and God's response to his sin.

And thus we've been considering the sober message of (a) how apostasy manifests itself in the life of a believer, and (b) the reasons, the consequences, and the signs of mediocre Christianity. And yet through it all, a question has continually surfaced: "How is it that we can consider Eli to be a believer here?"

Now I realize the reason we ask this question is because on the one hand, what Eli is accused of in the opening chapters of Samuel is quite serious — and so we pause and say, "How could he have loved Christ?" And yet we also ask the question because we live in a church culture which has bought into the lie that if you come to Christ, you no longer will struggle with sin. This church culture believes that Christians are superior to the non-Christian. It teaches that being a Christian makes you- apriori- a better parent, scientist, doctor, lawyer, worker, student, etc. And because of this, we are left in the face of our sin to down play it, redefine it, and ignore it, and sadly, rarely to address it!

Brothers and sisters, in contrast to the prevailing attitude and belief of so many in the body of Christ today, listen to how the word of God describes the child of God.

John 2:24-25, "But Jesus did not commit himself unto them [Jews, followers of Yahweh, visible children of God], because he knew all men, And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man."

Paul as a believer wrote this about himself:

Romans 7:18, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not."

Matthew 26:33-34, "Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended. Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice."

Galatians 5:17, "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these

are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.”

2 Samuel 11:4, “And David [the Prophet of God who penned over seventy-three Psalms] sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her;”

Paul had this to say about Peter:

Galatians 2:11, “But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.”

Paul said this of himself:

1 Timothy 1:15, “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.”

From these passages it should be obvious that Christian apostasy — infidelity in our walks with Christ — is something that all in Christ will struggle with. In fact, as I consider the sins of Eli in our text and the assertion of some that he could not have been saved, I conclude that if Eli wasn't saved, then neither are we.

After all, what in this book is Eli guilty of? He is guilty of the same things as are we every time we sin.

Eli is guilty NOT of disowning God. In fact, he is not even guilty here of adultery, witchcraft, drunkenness, idolatry, deceit, scheming, pride, or envy and many of other sins that have been attributed to servants of God in Scripture. Rather, he is guilty of giving more honor to himself and his children than the Lord — which is the seminal passion behind all sin!

And so I ask, “Is this something that could be named among the people of God?”

Indeed! Dr. John MacArthur detailed the sordid history of the patriarchs and so the pillars of Christianity:

“Soon after God delivered Noah and his family through the Flood, Noah became drunk and acted indecently. Abraham, the father of the faithful, doubted God, lied about his wife, and committed adultery with her maid. Isaac told a similar lie about his wife when he thought his life was in danger. Jacob took advantage of his brother Esau's weakness and extorted the birthright from him. Moses was a murderer, and in pride he struck the rock instead of speaking to it as God had instructed. His brother, Aaron, the first high priest, led Israel in erecting and worshiping the golden calf at the very time Moses was on Mount Sinai receiving the law from God. Joshua disobeyed the Lord by making a treaty with the Gibeonites instead of destroying them. Gideon had little confidence in himself and even less in God's plan and power. Samson was repeatedly beguiled by Delilah because of his great lust for her. David committed adultery and murder, was an almost total failure as a father, and was not allowed to build the Temple because he was a man of blood. Elijah stood fearlessly before 850 false prophets but cowered before one woman, Jezebel. Ezekiel was brash, crusty, and quick to speak his mind. Jonah defied God's call to preach to the Ninevites and resented His grace when they were converted through his preaching.”<sup>1</sup>

The bad news is that each and everyone of us struggle with the sin of Eli. Now if you don't believe that,

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. John MacArthur, Matthew 8-15, pages 130-131

according to 1 John 1, you just sinned.

1 John 1:8, “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”

1 John 1:10, “If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.”

However, the good news is that as great as may be our passion for and love of sin and our longing to honor ourselves above God in Christ, God will not allow us to consummate these desires — our passage is proof of this.

## God Thwarts Apostasy

God thwarts Mediocre Christianity. God confounds Christian Apostasy. And our passage illustrates that very point. Consider with me three ways in which Eli's apostasy was brought to naught. First notice that Eli's rebellion could not thwart God's grace.

1 Samuel 2:33, “And the man of thine, **whom I shall not cut off from mine altar**, shall be to consume thine eyes, and to grieve thine heart: and all the increase of thine house shall die in the flower of their age.”

This verse is quite similar to the curse formula found in Leviticus 26. Moses warned the people of God that this fate awaited them if they rebelled against God.

Leviticus 26:16, “I also will do this unto you; I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague, that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart: and ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it.”<sup>2</sup>

Indeed, Eli would reap the consequences of his sin in his body! His sin would devastate him. It would cause him sorrow and pain would fill his heart! And yet we read here that in spite of all that Eli did, nevertheless he would not reap the fullness of what his sin deserved. This is the emphasis of the phrase, “whom I shall not cut off from mine altar.”<sup>3</sup>

God would have been just in destroying Eli's line.<sup>4</sup> His sin was great; his heart was hardened. And yet in spite of it all, we read indications here that God showed him mercy. Not only would Eli's line continue, but they would not be cut off from the sanctuary.

Such is the amazing grace of God! Do you see it? It always thwarts man's rebellion!

Psalm 103:10-14, “He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our

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<sup>2</sup> Compare also Deuteronomy 28:65

<sup>3</sup> There is quite a divergence here in Bible translations. Most translate this something like, “The man of you whom I shall not cut off from my altar shall be spared only to blind your eyes with tears.” While this is a fine translation, the only problem is that Eli is soon to be dead. Accordingly, it will be very difficult for Eli's descendants to blind his eyes with tears if he is dead (some avoid this by changing the 2 person singular possessive pronoun, “your,” to a 3 person plural, “their”- yet this isn't true to the Hebrew). Accordingly, the better and fair translation of this passage is as the NASB95. ““Yet I will not cut off every man of yours from My altar so that your eyes will fail from weeping and your soul grieve, and all the increase of your house will die in the prime of life.”

<sup>4</sup> Compare also 1 Corinthians 11:30, “For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.”

iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.”

Indeed! Sin — no matter how great it may be — cannot thwart God's grace if He wills to extend it!

This is the first truth that we can derive from this text about apostasy — it cannot thwart God's grace!

## **Do You Believe this Truth?**

Do you believe this brothers and sisters?

Do you believe that God's grace is greater than your sin?

Do you believe that though you are the chief of all sinners, God still loves you?

Do you believe that in the end, God's grace will win out over your sin?

Many say no that they do not believe this truth. After all, they say that there are passages in Scripture that show that man can thwart God's grace. For example there are passages in Scripture like Genesis 27 where Esau wept with great tears of sorrow and remorse for his sin, and yet saw no mercy. What about Pharaoh, Judas, Hophni and Phinehas, and many more in Biblical history found no mercy though they expressed sorrow?

Family of God, may I share with you why this was so. Why Esau — though he wept and grieved — found no mercy? You will find no mercy if you too merely weep and cry over your sin. Hebrews 12 explains why Esau received no mercy from God.

Hebrews 12:15-17, “Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled. Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.”

Why is it that Esau, Pharaoh, Judas, and many others in redemptive history sought for forgiveness but did not find it? Because all their weeping, mourning, sadness, tears, and sorrow were void of repentance!

## **Repentance**

Our catechism states that “Repentance is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavor after, new obedience.”<sup>5</sup> The key element we must walk away with is that Biblical repentance involves the “turning from reliance upon self unto God.”

In fact this is what the Thessalonians did.

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<sup>5</sup> Answer to Westminster Shorter Catechism question #87.

1 Thessalonians 1:19, “For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, **and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.**”

See when everything has been said and done this is where it all settles. In the end when we've wept the last tear and we are beside our self on account of our sin — On whom or in what will you rely?

Will your answer be to redefine sin such that you are guiltless? Will you compare yourself to other sinners and thereby be justified? Or **WILL YOU RELINQUISH ANY CLAIM OF MERIT OR WORTH AND SO RELY SOLELY UPON THE WORK OF CHRIST ON THE CROSS?**

See it is not enough to say that Jesus is your Savior and Lord, He in fact must be it! And so when staring sin in the face we must not deny it, down play it, or simply grieve over it. We must confess it. We must ever and always relying upon Christ for forgiveness and cleansing. This is the answer for all sin. The grace that conquers the soul! Rebellion Cannot Thwart God's Grace!

Eli's rebellion could not thwart the advancement of God's Kingdom.

1 Samuel 2:35, “And I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in mine heart and in my mind: and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever.”

At first this sounds like bad news<sup>6</sup> yet in reality it is just the opposite. Think through it with me; by this time Eli knew that he and his line have been deposed. He was deposed not only from office but also from any serious service in the kingdom of God.<sup>7</sup> The temple at Shiloh was going to see distress — in fact it was going to be destroyed.<sup>8</sup> None of his progeny would see old age.<sup>9</sup> And in fact his two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were going to die.<sup>10</sup>

Now against this bleak and dark backdrop created by Eli's sin, the question rightly would have been pondered: Is this the end? Have I in my sin completely destroyed the Kingdom of God? What will come of the worship of God? Will it endure? And what about the hundreds of Christians who follow after me? What will become of them? What have I- in my sin- done?<sup>11</sup>

Ah but then we read the good news: God has not abandoned His people. In fact far from disowning them, I want you to notice three important truths. First the Lord indeed would raise up a “faithful<sup>12</sup> priest”— in contrast to Eli's sons. This great Hebrew word used for *faithful* is where we get our English word *amen*. It references that which is solid, sure, or true. And thus, the Lord would raise up an “Amen” priest.

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<sup>6</sup> Some read this passage and interpret this as if it were bad news- but that is only because they read this text as if Eli were an enemy of God. And truly if you read this from the perspective that Eli was a God hater and thus not a child of God, you only conclude that this is bad news for Eli. But if you read this from the perspective that Eli did indeed love the Lord — in spite of his love of his sin — you see that these words would have been Eli's only consolation!

<sup>7</sup> Compare also 1 Samuel 2:30-31

<sup>8</sup> Compare also verse 32, Jeremiah 7:12, 14; 26:6-9

<sup>9</sup> Compare 1 Samuel 2:33

<sup>10</sup> Compare 1 Samuel 2:34

<sup>11</sup> Don't forget Eli is the hub of Old Testament Israelite religion at this point in time. Outside of him and Shiloh there wasn't anything else!

<sup>12</sup> אָמֵן 'aman

While this no doubt was fulfilled in the line of Zadok,<sup>13</sup> nevertheless there did come a time when the “always” of this text was violated — Zadok's line lasted up to the destruction of the temple in 70 AD.<sup>14</sup> And thus we see that this passage ultimately is fulfilled in Christ!

Christ's priesthood is everlasting.<sup>15</sup> He ever and always serves the Lord.<sup>16</sup> (Heb. 6:20). In fact, according to 2 Corinthians 1:20 and Revelation 3:14, Christ is the “Amen” of God — which could very well be an allusion to our text!

And so in spite of Eli's sin, God nevertheless would raise up an Amen Priest! This priest “would do what was in [God's] heart and soul!”

There could be no better commendation than this — that a leader in the Kingdom of God did NOT simply obey the word of the Lord BUT he also did what was in God's heart and soul!

Is this not the prerequisite of all ministry?

Jeremiah 3:15, “And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.”

Is this not a picture of Christ — who lived not for Himself but the pleasure and honor of His Father?

Such would be the character of the one God would raise up. Furthermore God said that he would:

1 Samuel 2:35, “And I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in mine heart and in my mind: and I will **build him a sure<sup>17</sup> house; and he shall walk before mine**

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<sup>13</sup> Compare 1 Kings 2:27, 35 The history of Aaron's children at this point would follow two lines. Recall that Aaron had four sons: Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar (Exodus 6:23). Two of the sons- Nadab and Abihu — died on their ordination day (Leviticus 10:1-2). And the other two became the line of the Jewish priesthood. Eleazar was the stronger line. Ithamar — from whom Eli descended (cf. 1 Samuel 14:3; 22:9; 1 Chronicles. 24:3) — was the weaker line.

Now Eli's progeny would continue to serve alongside the Eleazar priesthood. However recall in 1 Samuel 22:17-20 Saul came to the temple in Nob looking for David. When it was revealed that Ahimelech had helped David, all the priests (who by the way were decedents of Eli) were wiped out — all except Abiathar who was now the sole heir of Eli! But then in 1 Kings 2:27, 35 Solomon deposed Abiathar from office on account of his siding with Adonijah when it came to David's successor. Now the point is that in and throughout all this history, God would preserve His worship in a line that would faithfully serve Him — the line of Zadok.

<sup>14</sup> Speaking of the history of Zadok's line, the *New Bible Dictionary* recorded, “In the second Temple the Zadokites retained the high priesthood continuously until 171 BC, when it was transferred to Menelaus by Antiochus IV; even after that a Zadokite priesthood presided over the Jewish temple at Leontopolis in Egypt until Vespasian closed it soon after ad 70. The Qumran community remained loyal to the Zadokite priesthood and looked forward to its restoration.” Furthermore, *Harper Bible Diction* wrote, “This family controlled the Jerusalem priesthood from the time of Solomon (ca. 965 BC.) until the Exile (586 BC.). Ezek. 40:46; 43:19; 44:15; and 48:11 specify that in the rebuilt Temple only Zadokite priests would minister. This line continued to serve in the high-priesthood until 171 BC. when it passed first to the Hellenizers and then to the Hasmonaeon house. The sect of the Dead Sea Scrolls, probably founded in the aftermath of the Hasmonaeon takeover of the high-priesthood, repeatedly emphasizes the sole legitimacy of the Zadokite priests who were the early leaders and probably the founders of the sect.”

<sup>15</sup> Compare Hebrews 5:10

<sup>16</sup> Compare Hebrews 6:20

<sup>17</sup> אָמֵן ‘aman

**anointed for ever.”**

Here we see that the word for a sure or enduring house is the same word rendered faithful. And we see that this faithful priest would always serve in the presence of the King.

From this verse I want you to see that in spite of Eli's sin — in spite of the weakness and rebellion of someone as important as this High Priest — God's Kingdom would continue, remain, and in fact flourish! **TRULY SIN CANNOT THWART GOD'S PLAN!** In fact we see here that God's sovereignty included Eli and his children's sin. Notice that Eli told his sons this:

1 Samuel 2:25, **“If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against the LORD, who shall intreat for him? Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because the LORD would slay them.”**<sup>18</sup>

Benjamin Warfield wrote these words:

“Throughout the Old Testament, behind the processes of nature, the march of history and the fortunes of each individual life alike, there is steadily kept in view the governing hand of God working out his preconceived plan- a plan broad enough to embrace the whole universe of things, minute enough to concern itself with the smallest details, and actualizing itself with inevitable certainty in every event that comes to pass.”<sup>19</sup>

Recall that God promised Eli, that “there shall not be an old man in thine house for ever” (1 Samuel 2:32b).

Though Eli had sinned such that destruction and devastation was going to come upon him, his house, and Israel, nevertheless in and through it all God would “do good for Israel.”

1 Samuel 2:34, “And this shall be a sign unto thee, that shall come upon thy two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas; in one day they shall die both of them.”

We considered this verse last time. God gave Eli a sign by which He predicted the future downfall of Hophni and Phinehas. This demonstrates the fact that God indeed is in control of all things — the past, present, and future! Truly a sparrow cannot fall to the ground apart from God.<sup>20</sup>

And so herein is the consolation of all Christians who find themselves on the losing side in the battle against sin. God still is on the throne! There still remain thousands who have not bowed the knee to Baal. The gates of Hell cannot impede God's purpose and workings.<sup>21</sup> And God's will cannot and will not be thwarted — even by your sin!

Such confidence and boldness ought this to inspire in us! Yes brothers and sisters, we are weak and we struggle in so many ways — but don't ever forget that “He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6b)

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<sup>18</sup> Compare 1 Peter 2:8, “And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.”

<sup>19</sup> B. B. Warfield, *Biblical and Theological Studies*, page 276

<sup>20</sup> Compare Matthew 10:29

<sup>21</sup> Compare Matthew 16:18

Yes at times our sin has reaped dire consequences, but take comfort in knowing this truth:

Romans 8:28, “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”

Indeed as God's children we have fallen — many times — but let us realize this:

Proverbs 24:16, “For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again: but the wicked shall fall into mischief.”

And so, not only does God's grace win out over our sin every time BUT my sin never can thwart the advancement of God's Kingdom!

## The Cross

I want you to consider with me perhaps the greatest act of sin this world has ever known — the active, malicious, and sadistic offering up of Christ on the cross!

Matthew 21:33-39, “Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him.”

Such is the shocking reality of the cross!

It is a group of spoiled, wretched, sinners who think that killing the Son is the means to security. It is you and I rejecting Christ that we might enjoy our adulterous love affair with this world. And yet would you notice what God did in and through the cross. When we were at the climax of sin and rebellion, He was in His finest hour.

Romans 8:3, “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and [as an offering] for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.”

Behold the amazing grace of God!

What was man's greatest act of rebellion — the crucifixion of Christ. God used the crucifixion of Christ —man’s greatest act of rebellion — to secure the greatest act of redemption.

Though Joseph said this of his brothers, it applicable to every one of us in our sin, “And as for you, you meant evil..., but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive” (Genesis 50:20 NASB).



I hope you see from this that apostasy — Christian Apostasy — is always doomed to failure! Apostasy cannot thwart God’s grace, or the advancement of God’s kingdom.

And yet, there have been some pretty strong statements made here regarding the consequences of Eli's sin on his family..And this raises the question, “Must our sin cost us our children?”

## Will Our Sin Cost Us Our Children

Lastly notice the bitter/sweet truth that Eli’s rebellion could not thwart God’s grace toward his descendant’s place in the kingdom of God.

1 Samuel 2:33, “And the man of thine, **whom I shall not cut off from mine altar**, shall be to consume thine eyes, and to grieve thine heart: and all the increase of thine house shall die in the flower of their age.”

1 Samuel 2:36, “And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left in thine house shall come and crouch to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, and shall say, Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests’ offices, that I may eat a piece of bread.”

At first glance, we read this as bad news for Eli and his family, and it truly is. Eli's children would be left to beg from the hand of Zadok for work. Had Eli not been deposed, his children would have been the priests. And now on account of his sin, they have become beggars!

Oh wretched sin! Oh wretched self which robs from my children many Kingdom Blessings!

Yet let us not be overwrought with grief. For while my sin indeed can and will have its consequences on future generations (that is the “bitter” part of this passage)<sup>22</sup> there is good news here!

The good news is that while Eli's household would be devastated, it would not be extinguished or excluded from the Kingdom of God. Listen again to what is being promised here to Eli.

1 Samuel 2:33 (NASB), “Yet I will not cut off every man of yours from My altar...” There is an important word here, *Yet* This tells us that in spite of Eli's rebellion (the fact that his sin deserved all that we have seen and more)<sup>23</sup> God would NOT cut off Eli's offspring! They still would live... in the Kingdom... as servants of the Lord!

In other words, God's incredible plans for His Kingdom and glory still included Eli's children! Yet you say, “YES, BUT THEY'RE BEGGARS!”

1 Samuel 2:36, “And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left in thine house shall come and crouch to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, and shall say, Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests’ offices, that I may eat a piece of bread.”

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<sup>22</sup> You commit suicide and statistically you doom one of your children to that end. You beat your wife and statistically one of your children are going to do the same. You gossip, grumble, nit-pick, and complain, and you teach your children to do the same. Indeed, a parent's sin will have its consequences upon future generations!

<sup>23</sup> Compare Lamentations 3:29

Indeed they are beggars — for they have lost many privileges when it comes to the Kingdom of God. But while they are beggars, again — don't miss it — nevertheless they are beggars as citizens of the Kingdom of God. This is the “sweet” of this passage!

## Psalm 84

Psalm 84 is a psalm of Korah in which he describes the beauty of the worship of God. After going on for 9 verses of how wonderful is God's worship, and the benefits that arise on account of God's worship Korah makes this startling statement:

Psalm 84:10, “For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.”

To fully understand what Korah is saying here, recognize that a thousand [days] outside [the temple]: is referencing the best that life on this earth could afford an individual. In other words we are not talking about living three years under a bridge. The Psalmist has in mind here the best that the mind could imagine!

When the Psalmist talks about the tents of wickedness we think of evil surroundings, smoke-filled rooms, and horrible people with horrible motives. However, family of God, “tents of wickedness” speaks of the best when it comes to the “passing pleasures of sin.” It is the pleasure of sin minus its thorns!

So what is Korah saying?

Korah is saying make me a door keeper in the kingdom of God! Give me the privilege of one day of worship! Make me a beggar in the house of the Lord! Why? Because a door keeper in the house of the Lord is far better than the best that this world has to offer!

This is the final truth we derive from this passage: Though Eli's sin would cost his descendants much nevertheless they still would be living, moving, and functioning as Kingdom citizens!

Now while this does not compensate for our sin, it nevertheless give us consolation as we close this passage.

As great as we may sin — as detrimental as may be its effects on future generations — nevertheless the salvation of our children rests with the Lord! This is a most important truth! God has promised to be a God to you and your children.<sup>24</sup>

You may have purposed to live in the lust of the flesh! Yet, God's plan for your children will remain unthwarted! In fact listen to the word of God. Unlike the cultures which surrounded Israel which punished whole families for the sin of one of its members, God said this: The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. “The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son” (Ezekiel 18:20b).

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<sup>24</sup> Compare Genesis 17:7; Acts 2:39

You say, “So it doesn't matter if I sin; my children will be unaffected?”

This is not what this text is saying. In fact it says just the opposite.

Sin never is committed in a vacuum. If you sin, those around you — including your children — will be affected!

Rather what this text is saying is that our sin will not cost our children their place in the Kingdom of God!

Now as a parent with young children, while I take this as good news, nevertheless it sobers me. While I am thankful that I am not responsible for the salvation of my children — that is God's job — nevertheless I am saddened that my sin could rob from my children kingdom blessing!

Accordingly, I invite every young parent with me to strive against sin. Let us not look lightly upon the rebellion which in the church is looked upon lightly. Let us fight the good fight of faith — resisting if need be to the point of the shedding of my blood.<sup>25</sup>

And yet as I close I want to speak to those families who have raised their children and know regret..

First I cannot imagine how any sinner who has been charged with the soul of a child could look back upon their parenting without regret? There are the missed opportunities, the inconsistencies, the times you trampled underfoot a heart, and the wasted years. To those of you who have raised your children and look with sadness upon the past, take comfort in knowing that here too God is sovereign!...

All is as God has ordained. Never, were you responsible for their salvation. Never could you have died for their sin. Their salvation was, is, and continues to rest in Christ!

So be not dismayed by past failure. Rather allow your grief and regret to compel you all the more to your knees in prayer for their soul.

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<sup>25</sup> Compare Hebrews 12:4

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Feel free to visit Broomfield Presbyterian Church when in Broomfield, Colorado. Broomfield Presbyterian Church is located at Kohl Elementary School, 10th Street and Kohl, Broomfield, Colorado. The telephone number of the church is 303-469-6912. The worship services are at 9:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. each Sunday. Broomfield Presbyterian Church is a member of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

All our sermons can be accessed via the World Wide Web. The recording for this sermon can be found at [Grace Abounding](http://broomfieldopc.com/sermons/grace-abounding). The web address for all sermons at Broomfield can be found out as follows: <http://broomfieldopc.sermonaudio.com>

## **About the Preacher**

Greg Thurston preached this sermon on July 17, 2005. Greg is the Preacher at Broomfield Presbyterian Church.