

WICKED SONS BRING SORROW TO THEIR FATHER

I Samuel 4:1–18.

LESSON 55 -- Primary Course

MEMORY VERSE: “The face of the Lord is against them that do evil” (I Peter 3:12).

The Wicked Sons

The sons of Eli, the priest, were not saved and did wicked things. They took the meat offered to God, in sacrifices, before it was ready for them to take; and took more than they should take. The sons of Eli had a right to have the meat, but they should take it just as God had said they should. But they wanted to have their own way. Their hearts were bad. Their father, Eli, had not punished them as he should for doing wrong, and God was not pleased with the sons nor with their father.

The Holy Ark

The Ark of the Covenant was an oblong chest made of wood, and covered with gold. It was 45 inches long, 27 inches wide, and 27 inches deep. It contained the Tables of Stone, a pot of manna -- a sample of the food God rained down from Heaven -- and Aaron's rod. The ark was very holy and was to be kept in a holy place. God was very particular about the way it was carried, and by whom it was carried. It was carried on the shoulders of four men. The Ark meant to those people somewhat the same as the Bible means to us today.

Punished for Disobedience

The Israelites decided to take the Ark with them into the battle. They thought God would help them if the Ark was there, but that was a terrible mistake, as we shall see. God had not told them to take the holy Ark into the battle, and he was not pleased with what they were doing. He let the enemy win the battle, and they took the holy Ark into their country. Many of the Israelites were killed, and Eli's two sons were killed. Eli was an old man now, almost a hundred years old. When he heard that the Ark was taken by the enemy, and his sons had been killed, he fell down and died.

Children and Parents

When children disobey their parents they bring sorrow to their parents. But more than that -- they grieve the heart of God. It also brings great sorrow to parents if they do not punish their children and try to teach them the right things,

the things God has commanded. It is wrong for parents not to punish their children when they should. It is terrible to disobey God. God will punish those who disobey Him. He punishes them for their own good and for the help of others.

For Her Good

A little girl named Grace had been playing outdoors, and the wind blew a hard, sharp bit of cinder into her eye. It hurt so much that the tears came into her eye, but they did not wash out the cinder. When she rubbed it, that only made it hurt worse. So she ran to her mother. The mother took Grace on her knee, and with the corner of a soft handkerchief tried to get the cinder out. But that hurt so badly the little girl cried even harder. She slid down from her mother's lap, and would not let her mother help her. But the mother told her that unless she took the cinder out, it could make Grace's eye so sore that she might not be able to see any more.

Grace came back and sat on her mother's knee again; and although she could not help the tears coming into her eyes, she did not scream nor struggle, even though it hurt her. Grace understood now that her mother knew best, and it was because her mother loved her that she worked until she had the cinder out of the eye. Although it pained her, it was all for her good. Just so God sometimes permits pain to come to us for our own good.

Christian Parents

Mothers and fathers who are saved know what is best for their children. When they punish them it is for the good of the children. The greatest desire of Christian parents is to have their children saved and grow up to love and to serve the Lord with all their heart, and do all they can to help others to love Jesus and do His work.

QUESTIONS

1. Who won the battle? I Samuel 4:10.
2. What happened to the Ark of God during the battle?
I Samuel 4:11.
3. What happened to Eli's two sons? I Samuel 4:11.
4. Did Eli seem to be concerned about the Ark of God?
I Samuel 4:13.
5. Do you think Eli was a good father to his children?
I Samuel 3:13.