

CHAPTER 2

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 2

In this chapter the song of Hannah is recorded, ([1 Samuel 2:1-10](#)), and an account is given of the return of Elkanah and Hannah to their own home, and of the care she took yearly to provide a coat for Samuel, and of her being blessed with many other children, and of the growth and ministry of Samuel before the Lord, ([1 Samuel 2:11,18-21,26](#)), and of the wickedness of the sons of Eli, ([1 Samuel 2:12-17](#)), and of Eli's too gentle treatment of them when he reproved them for it, ([1 Samuel 2:22-25](#)) and of a sharp message sent him from the Lord on that account, threatening destruction to his house, of which the death of his two sons would be a sign, ([1 Samuel 2:27-36](#)).

Ver. 1. *And Hannah prayed and said*, etc.] She had prayed before, but that was mental, this vocal; she had prayed and was answered, and had what she prayed for, and now she gives thanks for it; and thanksgiving is one kind of prayer, or a part of it; (see [1 Timothy 2:1](#) [Philippians 4:6](#)), wherefore though what follows is a song, it was expressed in prayer; and therefore it is said she prayed, and that by a spirit of prophecy, as the Targum; hence she is by the Jews^{f37} reckoned one of the seven prophetesses; and indeed in this song she not only relates the gracious experiences of divine goodness she had been favoured with, and celebrates the divine perfections, and treats of the dealings of God with men, both in a way of providence and grace; but prophesies of things that should be done hereafter in Israel, and particularly of the Messiah and of his kingdom. There is a great likeness in this song to the song of the Virgin Mary; compare ([1 Samuel 2:1](#)) with ([Luke 1:46,47](#)) and ([1 Samuel 2:2](#)) with ([Luke 1:49](#)) and ([1 Samuel 2:4,8](#)) with ([Luke 1:51,53](#)),

my heart rejoiceth in the Lord: not in her son the Lord had given her, but in the goodness and kindness of the Lord in bestowing him on her, as an answer of prayer; which showed great condescension to her, the notice he took of her, the love he had to her, and his well pleasedness in her, and his acceptance of her prayer through Christ; she rejoiced not in her husband, nor in the wealth and riches they were possessed of, nor in any creature

enjoyments, but in the Lord, the giver of all; nor in her religious services and sacrifices, but in the Lord Christ, through whom her duties were acceptable to God, and who was the antitype of the sacrifices offered; and it is in the person, offices, and grace of Christ, that we should alone rejoice: (see ^{¹⁰⁰⁴Philippians 4:4 3:3) this joy of Hannah's was not worldly, but spiritual; not outward, but inward; not hypocritical, but real and hearty:}

mine horn is exalted in the Lord: which supposes that she had been in a low estate, was crest fallen, and her horn was defiled in the dust, as Job says was his case, (^{¹⁸¹⁶⁵Job 16:15), when God had shut up her womb, and her adversary upbraided her with it, and provoked and fretted her; and when she was so full of grief, that she could not eat her food, and prayed in the bitterness of her soul; but now she could lift up her horn and her head, as horned creatures, to whom the allusion is, do, when they are lively and strong; now she could look pleasant and cheerful, and even triumph, being raised to an high estate, and greatly favoured of the Lord, to whom she ascribes this change of her state and circumstances: it was owing to his power and grace that she was thus strengthened and exalted; as it is owing to the same, that the people of God, who are in a low estate by nature, are raised out of it in conversion, and brought into an open state of grace and favour with God, and put into the possession of rich blessings and mercies, and have hope of eternal glory, on account of which they can exult and triumph:}

my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; meaning Peninnah, and those that provoked her, and upbraided her with her barrenness, to whom she was not able to make any reply; but now her mouth was opened, and she could speak largely, and did; not in a way of reproach and reviling, in retaliation for what she had met with from others; but in prayer to God, to whom she could come with open mouth, and use freedom and boldness, and plead with importunity, fervency, and in faith, and in praise and thanksgiving to him for the great and good things he had done for her, and would now freely and largely speak of them to others; to some, her friends, to their joy and pleasure; and to others, her enemies, to their grief and confusion:

because I rejoice in thy salvation; not only in temporal salvation wrought by the Lord for her, whereby she was delivered from the reproach of barrenness, through a son being given unto her; but in spiritual and eternal salvation, through the Messiah, she had knowledge of, and faith in, as

appears from (^{<0120>}1 Samuel 2:10), as all believers in him do, as it is contrived by the wisdom of God, wrought out by Christ, and applied by his Spirit; it being so great, so suitable, so perfect and complete, entirely free, and of an everlasting duration; (see ^{<0115>}Psalm 20:5 ^{<0119>}Isaiah 25:9).

Ver. 2. *There is none holy as the Lord*, etc.] From the consideration of what the Lord had done for her, which had filled her heart and mouth with joy and praise, she is led to celebrate the perfections of God, and begins with his holiness, in which he is glorious, and which appears in all his ways and works; he is essentially, originally, independently, perfectly, and immutably holy, as others are not. Angels are holy, but not of themselves; their holiness is from the Lord; nor is it perfect in comparison of his, and therefore they cover their faces while they celebrate that perfection of his; nor immutable, at least not naturally so, as the loss of it in those that fell demonstrates. Of men, some under the legal dispensation were holy, not truly, but in a typical and ceremonial sense; some are only outwardly and hypocritically holy, and only so in the sight of men, not in the sight of God; and those that are truly holy, being called to holiness, and have the principle of it implanted in them, and live holy lives and conversations; yet though there is a likeness of the holiness of God in them, being made partakers of the divine nature; it is far from an equality to it; for the holiness of the best of men is imperfect; they are not without sin in them, nor without sin committed by them, and perfection is disclaimed by them all; but the Lord is without iniquity, just and true is he; none in his nature, nor in any of his works, not the least shadow thereof:

for [there] is none besides thee; there is no God besides him; no being but what is of him, and none is holy but by him; the holiness of angels is from him; the holiness of Adam in innocence was of him; and all the holiness of his chosen ones comes from him, to which they are chosen by him, and which is secured in that choice unto them, and are sanctified by God the Father, in Christ, and through the Spirit:

neither is there any rock like our God; the word rock is used for Deity, and sometimes for a false one, (^{<0521>}Deuteronomy 32:31) and so it may here, and the sense be, there is no god like to our God; there is indeed none besides him; there are fictitious gods, and nominal ones, as the idols of the Gentiles, and who are so in an improper and figurative sense, as magistrates; but there is but one true and living God; nor is there any like him for the perfections of his nature, and the blessings of his goodness,

whether in providence or grace. Under this metaphor of a rock, our Lord Jesus Christ is often signified; he is the rock of Israel, the rock of refuge, and of salvation; and there is no rock can do what he does, hide and shelter from the justice of God; there is no rock like him for strength and duration; none like him for a foundation to build upon, or for safety and protection from the wrath of God, and the rage of men, (see ^{<1983>} Psalm 18:31).

Ver. 3. *Talk no more so exceeding proudly*, etc.] At such an high rate, in such an overbearing manner, as if above everyone; this may have respect to Peninnah, and all that joined with her to provoke Hannah to anger, and make her fret, insulting and triumphing over her, because she had not children, as they had; but now their mouths would be stopped, and their talk over, and not give themselves the haughty airs they had done, at least there would be no occasion for them:

let not arrogancy come out of your mouth; arrogating to themselves, and to their merits, what they enjoyed, as children, riches, etc. when all come from the Lord; or what is “hard” ^{f38}, intolerable, which bears so hard on those to whom it is said, that it cannot be bore with; or what is “old” ^{f39}, and trite, old sayings concerning barren women, as if of no use in the world, and disagreeable to God, and as having no share in his favour. The Targum renders the word by reproaches, or blasphemies:

for the Lord is a God of knowledge; or knowledges ^{f40}: of perfect knowledge; he knows all persons and things; he knows himself, his perfections, purposes, thoughts, words and works; he knows all his creatures, animate and inanimate, rational and irrational, angels and men; the hearts of all men; all that they say, all their hard sayings, all their proud, haughty, overbearing expressions, calumnies, and reproaches, as well as all they think and all they do, good or bad; and God will sooner or later convince them of and punish them for their hard speeches against his people: and he is the author of all knowledge, natural, civil, spiritual, and evangelical:

and by him actions are weighed: his own actions; his works “ad intra”; his purposes and decrees, the counsels of his will, and the thoughts of his heart, the things his mind is set upon; all his appointments and designs, his whole will and pleasure; all are pondered by him, and are formed with the utmost wisdom, and for the best ends and purposes: and all, his actions and works without, whether of creation, providence, and grace, all are weighed and done according to infinite wisdom, unerring justice and truth; all

respecting things temporal or spiritual, what relate to the outward estate of men, or to their everlasting happiness: all the actions of men, as they are known unto him, they are weighed and examined by him, whether they proceed from a right principle to a right end or not; upon which, many actions, thought to be good, are not found to be so, and others, though good, yet not found perfect before God; so that there is no justification nor salvation by the best: or the sense is, such actions as are done well, they are “directed to him”^{f41}; as they are ordained by him that men should walk in them, they are for his use, and are done with a view to his glory. There is a double reading of these words; the marginal, which we follow, is “to” or “by him” actions are directed or weighed; but the textual reading is a negative, “actions are not weighed”^{f42}, or numbered; the works of God cannot be comprehended, or the actions of men are not disposed and ordered without his will and pleasure, or cannot be performed unless he wills or permits; and all are disposed of, overruled, and directed, to answer his own ends and purposes.

Ver. 4. *The bows of the mighty men are broken*, etc.] Hannah, from relating gracious experiences, and celebrating, the divine perfections of holiness, omniscience, and sovereignty, passes on to take notice of the dealings of God with men in providence and grace; bows are here put for all military arms, which men of might and war make use of, and which God can easily break in pieces, and so make war to cease in the earth, and hinder warlike men from doing what they design and attempt; they are enfeebled and weakened by him, and their hands cannot perform their enterprises: so the bows of Satan, and his principalities and powers, are broken, and his fiery darts are quenched, and the people of the Lord enabled to stand against him, and wrestle with him and them, being strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, as it follows:

and they that stumbled are girt with strength; who, through weakness, are ready to stumble at everything they meet with in the way; yet, being girded with strength by the Lord, are able to do great exploits, as David did, that being his case, (¹⁹⁸⁹Psalm 18:29,32), so such as are weak in grace, in faith, in knowledge, and ready to stumble at every trial and exercise, let it come from what quarter it will; yet being girded by the Lord with strength, are able to exercise grace, perform duty, go through every service they are called to, whether in a way of doing or suffering, to bear the yoke and cross of Christ, to oppose every enemy, to walk on in the ways of God, and to persevere in faith and holiness to the end.

Ver. 5. *They that are full have hired out themselves for bread,* etc.] Such as have been full of the good things of this life have been stripped of all, and reduced to such circumstances as to be obliged to hire themselves out to persons to labour under them for their bread. Hannah has either respect to some instances she had known, or prophecies of what would be hereafter, and was fulfilled in the Israelites, when in the hands of the Egyptians and Assyrians, (Lam 4:6) and may be exemplified in the case of the prodigal son, (^{<40513>}Luke 15:13-16) and is true of such who have larger gifts, but not grace, and which they exercise for lucre sake, and are mere hirelings; and of self-righteous persons who are full of themselves, of their goodness and righteousness, purity, and power; are quite mercenary do all they do for gain, work for life, and labour for perishing meat, and for that which is not bread, and is unsatisfying:

and they that were hungry ceased; that is, from being hungry, being filled with good things, having a large and sufficient supply to satisfy their craving desires, (^{<40513>}Luke 1:53). Such are the changes sometimes in Providence, that those who have lived in great plenty and fulness are obliged to work for their bread; and, on the other hand, such as have been starving, and in furnishing circumstances, have been brought into very plentiful and affluent ones. The “hungry”, in a spiritual sense, are such who hunger and thirst after Christ, and his righteousness, for justification before God; after him and his blood for the remission of their sins, and the cleansing of their souls; after him, and salvation by him, in whom alone it is to be had; after a view of interest in him, and a greater degree of knowledge of him; and after more communion with him in his word and ordinances; and after the enjoyment of them for that purpose: now when they enjoy what they are craving after, they cease to hire out themselves for bread, as others do; they do not cease from working, but from dependence on their works, on which they cannot feed and live, having found and got other and better bread to feed upon; they cease to be hungry, for they are filled and satisfied with the love of God, with the righteousness of Christ, with the blessings of grace, and salvation by him, with the goodness of his house, and with all the fulness of God and Christ; and so having what satisfies them, they desire no other food, shall have no more want, or be in a starving condition any more, especially this will be the case hereafter:

so that the barren hath born seven; meaning herself, who had born many, even five children besides Samuel, (^{<4020>}1 Samuel 2:20,21) which either was

the case before this song was delivered; or rather what she believed would be the case after Eli had blessed her, and prayed for the children by her; seven being a number put for many, (²¹¹⁶Proverbs 24:16 ²¹⁰¹Isaiah 4:1)

and she that hath many children is waxed feeble; and incapable of bearing more; and stripped of what she had; this may be understood of Peninnah, concerning whom the Jews have this tradition ^{f43}, which Jarchi relates, that when Hannah bore one child, Peninnah buried two; and whereas Hannah had five, Peninnah lost all her ten children. This may be applied to the case of the Gentile and Jewish churches, under the Gospel dispensation, when more were the children of the desolate or barren, the Gentiles, than of the married wife, the Jews, (²⁵⁰¹Isaiah 54:1).

Ver. 6. *The Lord killeth, and maketh alive*, etc.] Which is true of different persons; some he takes away by death, and others he preserves and continues in life; and of the same persons, whom God removes by death, and restores them to life again, of which there are instances both in the Old and New Testament; and be they which they will, both are of God, he is the great Disposer of life and death. Death is of him; it is by his appointment; it is sent by his order; and when it has a commission from him, there is no resisting it; and let it be brought about by what means it will, still it is of God: and life is of him; it is first given by him, and it is preserved by him; and though taken away, it shall be restored at the resurrection of the dead; of which some interpret this clause, as Kimchi and Ben Gersom observe: and what is here said is true, in a spiritual sense; the Lord kills by the law, or shows men that they are dead in sin, and in a legal sense; and he makes alive by his Spirit, through the Gospel, quickening such who were dead in trespasses and sins; which is his own work, and the effect of divine power and grace; (see Gill on "⁶⁵²³Deuteronomy 32:39").

he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up; he bringeth some very near to the grave, to the very brink of it; so that in their own apprehensions, and in the opinion of their friends, they are just dropping into it, and no hope of recovery left; when he says to them "Return", and brings them back from the pit, and delivers them from going into it, (¹⁸³²Job 33:22,28,30 ¹⁹¹¹Psalm 90:3) and even when they are laid in it, he brings up out of it again, as in the case of Lazarus, and which will be the case in the resurrection, (⁴¹⁵³John 5:28,29).

Ver. 7. *The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich*, etc.] Which is true in a natural sense of the same persons, as might be exemplified in the case of

Job; and of different persons, as in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus; for both poverty and riches are of God, (see ~~AMP~~ Proverbs 22:2 30:8). Poverty is of God; for though it is sometimes owing to a man's own conduct, yet that there is such a difference among men in general, that some should be poor, and others rich, is owing to the wise providence of God, that men may be dependent on one another. Riches are of God, and are the gifts of his bountiful providence; for though they are oftentimes the fruits of industry and diligence, as means, yet not always; and whenever they are, they are to be ascribed to the blessing of God attending the diligent hand. This is also true in a spiritual sense; for though spiritual poverty is owing to the fall of Adam, and to the actual sins and transgressions of men, whereby they become poor and miserable, yet all this is not without the knowledge and will of God: and it is he that makes men sensible of their poverty, and then makes them rich in spiritual things, with his own grace, and the blessings of it, with the riches of grace here, and of glory hereafter; all which flow from the good will of God, who has laid up much for his people, bestowed much on them, and entitles them to more; and which come to them through the poverty of Christ, who, though he was rich, became poor, that they through his poverty might be made rich, (~~AMP~~ 2 Corinthians 8:9) he bringeth low, and lifteth up; which has been verified in the same persons, as in Job, Nebuchadnezzar, etc. and in different persons, for he puts down one, and raises up another; so he rejected Saul from being king, and took David from the sheepfold, debased Haman, and raised Mordecai to great dignity: and, in a spiritual sense, the Lord shows men the low estate and condition they are brought into by sin, humbles them under a sense of it, brings down their proud spirits to sit at the feet of Jesus, and to submit to him, and to his righteousness; and he lifts them up by his son out of their fallen, captive, and miserable estate, and by his Spirit and grace brings them out of the horrible pit of nature into the state of grace; sets them upon the rock Christ, and makes their mountain to stand strong by the discoveries of his love, and will at last lift them up to glory, and place them on the same throne with Christ.

Ver. 8. *He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill*, etc.] This is but a further illustration of what is before expressed. Literally; such poor as are beggars, are those that are extremely poor, that sit in the dust and beg, and have nothing but a dunghill to lie on; yet God is able to raise and lift up persons in such an extremely low condition to a very high one: spiritually; such are the poor, who are poor in

spirit, and spiritually poor, and are sensible of it, and they, and they only, are beggars. For all that are poor, as they are not sensible of their poverty, so they beg not; but some are and beg; they knock at the door of grace and mercy; their language is petitionary, they entreat the grace and mercy of God; their posture is standing, and waiting till they have an answer; they are importunate, and will not easily take a denial; and they observe all opportunities to get relief, and are thankful for everything that is given then. Their conditions, in which they are, is represented by the “dust” and “dunghill”; which in general denotes that they are in a mean estate, in a sinful one, and in a very polluted and loathsome one; in this condition the Lord finds them, when he calls them by his grace; and from this he raises and lifts them up by his Spirit and grace, out of which they could never have raised themselves; and in which estate of sin and misery they must have lain, had he not exerted his powerful efficacious grace, in bringing them into a glorious one, next described:

to set them among princes the people of God called by grace, who are the sons of the King of kings by adoption, manifested in their regeneration and faith; have a princely spirit, the spirit of adoption, a free, generous, and bountiful one; live and look like princes, are well fed and clothed, and attended; have the riches of princes, and are heirs of a kingdom: and to be set among them, is to be made one, and ranked as such; to have a place and a name in the church, and among the people of God; to sit down with them at the table of the Lord, and have communion with them: and to make them inherit the throne of glory; eternal glory and happiness, which as it is signified by a kingdom and crown, so by a throne, and is the same with Christ’s, (~~Rev~~ Revelation 3:21) and therefore must be a glorious one: and this is had by way of inheritance; not obtained by industry, nor purchased with money; but comes by adoption grace, and belongs only to children, is a bequest of our heavenly Father, and comes through the death of Christ the testator; and this phrase denotes not barely the right unto, but the possession of his happiness and glory:

for the pillars of the earth are the Lord’s, and he hath set the world upon them; the earth has its foundations on which it is laid, and its pillars by which it is supported; but these are no other than the power and providence of God; otherwise the earth is hung upon nothing, in the open circumambient air: and that God can and does do this may well be thought, and to do all the above things in providence and grace, related in the preceding verses; in the support, and for the proof of which, this is

observed. Figuratively, the pillars of the earth may design the princes of the world, the supreme rulers of it, and civil magistrates, who are sometimes called cornerstones, and the shields of the earth, (~~3804~~ Zechariah 10:4 ~~4970~~ Psalm 47:9), and so pillars, because they are the means of cementing, supporting, and protecting the people of the earth, and of preserving their peace and property. Likewise good men may be meant in a figurative sense, who, as they are the salt of the earth, are the pillars of it, for whose sake it was made, and is supported, and continued in being; the church is the pillar and ground of truth; and every good man is a pillar in the house of God, and especially ministers of the Gospel; (see ~~6082~~ Revelation 3:12 ~~5485~~ 1 Timothy 3:15 Gal 2:9 ~~4000~~ Proverbs 9:1).

Ver. 9. *He will keep the feet of his saints*, etc.] Now follow promises and prophecies of future things respecting the Israel of God, either in a literal or spiritual sense. By “his saints” are meant not angels, though they are his Holy Ones, but men, and a body of them; who though unholy in themselves, nor can they make themselves holy, yet are made so by the grace of God, in consequence of electing grace, by which they are chosen to be holy, from Christ the source and spring of all holiness, by the Holy Spirit of God, as the efficient cause, and which is done in the effectual calling; hence they live holy lives and conversations, though not altogether without sin in the present state. The word also signifies such to whom God has been kind and gracious, and on whom he has bestowed blessings of goodness, and who are bountiful and beneficent to others. These are the Lord’s, whom he has set apart for himself, and has sanctified in Christ, and by his Spirit; and of these he is keeper, not angels, nor ministers of the word, nor themselves, but the Lord himself is the keeper of them; and who is an able, faithful, tender and compassionate, constant and everlasting keeper of them; and particularly he keeps their “feet”; he indeed keeps their whole persons, their bodies and souls; the members of their bodies, and the powers of their souls, their head, their heart, their affections, from turning aside from him; he guides, directs, and orders all their actions and goings; he keeps their feet in his own ways, where he has guided them; he keeps them in Christ the way, and in all the paths of faith, truth, righteousness, and holiness, and in the way everlasting: he keeps them from falling; for though they are liable to fall into sin, and by temptation, and from a lively exercise of grace, yet not totally and finally; they are secured from it by his love to them; the promises he has made them; his power exerted on their

behalf; their being in the hands of Christ, and the glory of all the three Persons concerned herein:

and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; sin has spread darkness over all human nature; every man is born and brought up in darkness, and walks in it: a state of unregeneracy is a state of darkness, in which wicked men continue; and they are in the dark about God, the perfections of his nature, his mind and will, word and worship; about Christ, and the way of life, peace, and salvation by him; about their own state and condition by nature, and the danger they are in; about the nature and necessity of regeneration; and about the Scriptures, and the doctrines of the Gospel; and living and dying; in such a state, darkness, blackness of darkness, is their portion forever: so the Targum,

“the wicked in hell in darkness shall be judged:”

and it is said they shall be “silent” in it; they are quiet, easy, and content in the state of natural darkness in which they are; they neither do nor will understand; they do not care to come to the light, but shun the means of light and knowledge; they have nothing to say of God, of Christ, of the Spirit of God, or of divine things; they can talk enough of evil things, and pour them out in great plenty, but not of any good; and when their evils are charged upon them by the law, their mouths are stopped, and they pronounced guilty, and have nothing to say why justice and judgment should not take place; and so they will be silent and speechless at the great day of judgment. Some interpret it, they shall be “cut off in darkness”; so Kimchi and Ben Melech; that is, by death, by the hand of God, by the sword of justice:

for by strength shall no man prevail; which is a reason both why God will keep his saints, and why the wicked shall be silent, or cut off and perish: with respect to good men, they are not saved, kept, and preserved by their own strength; they are not saved without a righteousness, without regeneration, without repentance towards God, and faith in Christ; neither of which they can perform in their own strength: nor can a saint keep himself from, or prevail over his spiritual enemies of himself, not over sin, nor Satan, nor the world; but it is by the power of God that he is kept through faith unto salvation: and with respect to wicked men, these shall not prevail by their strength over good men, or the church, who are built upon a rock, against which the gates of hell cannot prevail; nor can the wicked so prevail by their strength as to hinder their being cut off, and cast

into outer darkness; they have no power over the spirit to retain it in the day of death; and whether they will or not, they shall be cast into hell, and go into everlasting punishment.

Ver. 10. *The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces*, etc.] Or Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit, “shall break in pieces those that contend with him”; with the Lord, or with his people, or with Samuel particularly; for this may be considered as a prophecy of Hannah concerning her son, what God would do for him against his enemies, that should rise up, contend, and fight with him, as the Philistines; of whom Ben Gersom interprets it, whom the Lord discomfited and broke to pieces; see the literal fulfilment of this prophecy in (⁴⁰⁰⁰1 Samuel 7:1-17) in a spiritual sense all wicked men are the enemies of God, and of his people, and sooner or later shall be broken to pieces. Some, in a good sense; when they are smitten with the words of his mouth, cut to the heart, and made contrite; are humbled and brought into subjection to him, and their enmity slain and abolished, and they filled with love to him; and are so broken to pieces, that they have nothing to depend upon, or trust in for life or salvation, but apply to Christ alone for it. Others, in an ill sense; and the meaning is, that the wicked shall be utterly destroyed by the Lord, with an everlasting destruction, with an incurable and irreparable one; shall be broken in pieces like a potter’s vessel, which can never be put together again, (see ⁴⁰⁰⁰Psalm 2:9 ⁴⁰⁰⁰Revelation 2:27)

out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: as the Lord did upon the Philistines in the times of Samuel, when Israel were engaged in war with them, (⁴⁰⁰⁰1 Samuel 7:10). And the last vial of the wrath of God, poured out upon his adversaries the antichristian states, will be attended with thunders and lightnings, (⁴⁰⁰⁰Revelation 16:17,18), it denotes the terrible manner in which God will destroy his adversaries; the Septuagint version is, “the Lord ascended to heaven and thundered”; hence Procopius Gazaeus, following this version, says, Hannah prophesied of the taking up of the Saviour, and of the mission of the Holy Ghost, and of the preaching of the apostles, and of the second coming of Christ, as follows: the Lord shall judge the ends of the earth; not of the land of Israel by Samuel, as some interpret it, (see ⁴⁰⁰⁰1 Samuel 7:15-17) but of the whole world, and may refer to the government of it in general by the Lord, or to the judgment of it by his Son; for he judges none, but has committed all judgment to him; who at his first coming judged the world, by the ministry of the word in Judea and in the Gentile world, by setting up ordinances,

and by qualifying and constituting persons to act in the government of his church under him; and at his spiritual coming he will take to himself his great power and reign, and judge the whore of Babylon; and at his last or second coming he will judge the whole world, quick and dead, righteous and wicked:

and he shall give strength unto his king: either who was made king in the times of Samuel, Saul, who was the first of the kings of Israel, or David, whom Samuel anointed; and it is true of them both, that the Lord gave them strength to fight with and conquer their enemies; or rather the King Messiah, who in the next clause is called the Lord's anointed, or Messiah:

and exalt the horn of his anointed; and so the Targum paraphrases the words,

“he shall give strength to his king and enlarge the kingdom of his Messiah.”

with which Kimchi agrees, and says, the thing is doubled or repeated, for the King is the Messiah; and to him the words are applied by other Jewish writers^{f44}, ancient and modern. Christ is King over all, angels and men, particularly he is King of saints; he is Jehovah's King, set up and anointed by him from everlasting; was in time promised as such, and in the fulness of time came in that character, and at his ascension to heaven was made and declared Lord and Christ; and through the success of his Gospel in the world has appeared yet more so, and will be still more manifest in the latter day, when he shall be King over all the earth, and especially in his personal reign. Now when “strength” is said to be given him, this must be understood either of strength given to him in human nature, to perform the great work of our redemption and salvation, which required great strength; as a divine Person he needed none, as man he did; or of that strength communicated to him as Mediator, to give unto his people, in whom they have both righteousness and strength; or rather of that power and dominion given him as King particularly; all power in heaven and in earth were given him at his resurrection, and will appear more fully hereafter, when his kingdom will be from sea to sea, and his dominion from the river to the ends of the earth, (see ²⁰⁷³Daniel 7:13,14). And the same thing is meant by “horn”, which is an emblem of strength, power, dominion, and glory; hence he himself is called the horn of David, and the horn of salvation; it is a name and title given to kings, (²⁰⁷⁴Daniel 7:24 ⁶¹⁷¹²Revelation 17:12) in allusion to the horns of beasts, in which their

strength lies to defend themselves, and annoy their enemies; and the exaltation of him prophesied of may respect and include his resurrection from the dead, ascension to heaven, session at the right hand of God, the judgment of all committed to him, and the glorious exercise of his kingly office in the spiritual and personal reigns. This is the first time we meet with the word Messiah, or anointed, as ascribed to a divine Person, the Son of God; who has this name or title from his being anointed, not with material oil, but with the oil of gladness, with the Holy Ghost, and his gifts and graces without measure; and who is called the Lord's anointed, because he was anointed by his Father to be prophet, priest, and King, or invested by him with those offices even from eternity, (see ^{<4016>}Psalm 2:6 ^{<4082>}Proverbs 8:22,23) and which was more manifestly declared at his birth, his baptism, and ascension to heaven; (see ^{<4124>}Luke 2:40,52 ^{<4405>}Acts 10:37,38 2:36).

Ver. 11. *And Elkanah went to Ramah to his house*, etc.] Of which (see ^{<4019>}1 Samuel 1:19). This was after he had offered the sacrifices at the feast, worshipped the Lord, and Hannah had delivered her prayer or song of praise, and both had committed Samuel to the care of Eli, and left him with him:

and the child did minister unto the Lord before Eli the priest; he not only read in the book of the law, but learned to sing the praises of God vocally, and to play upon an instrument of music used in the service of God in those times, and to light the lamps in the tabernacle, and open and shut the doors of it, and the like; which were suitable to his age, and which might not be quite so tender as some have thought; or this may respect some small beginnings in the ministry of the sanctuary, in which he gradually increased under the inspection, guidance, and instruction of Eli, which is meant by ministering before him; the Targum is,

“in the life of Eli the priest;”

he began his ministration before his death.

Ver. 12. *Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial*, etc.] Not that Eli their father was Belial, a wicked man; but though they had so good a father, they were very wicked men, unprofitable abandoned wretches, that cast off the yoke of the law of God, and gave themselves up to all manner of wickedness:

they knew not the Lord; not that they had no knowledge of God in theory, or were real atheists, but they were so practically; they denied him in works, they had no love to him, nor fear of him, and departed from his ways and worship, as much as if they were entirely ignorant of him; so the Targum,

“they did not know to fear before the Lord,”

or serve him; or, as Kimchi,

“they did not know the way of the Lord,”

that is, practically.

Ver. 13. *And the priest's custom with the people was*, etc.] Not what was according to the will and law of God, but which the sons of Eli had introduced; and in which they were followed by the rest of the priests, and so it became an established custom, and had the force of a law, statute, or judgment, as the word signifies:

[that] when any man offered sacrifice; not any sort of sacrifice, for if it was a burnt offering, it was wholly consumed by fire, and in that the following custom could not take place; and if it was a sin offering, that was eaten by the priests, and so there was no need of taking such a method as after related; but a peace offering, part of which belonged to the Lord, the fat that was burnt, and the breast and shoulder to the priest, and the rest to the owner, who made a feast of it for his family and friends:

the priest's servant came while the flesh was in seething; that is, while those parts were boiling for the owner and his family; which was done in some part of the tabernacle, as afterwards in the temple:

with a flesh hook of three teeth in his hand; with a three forked instrument, with which he was sent by order of the priest that slew the sacrifice, and offered it, to whom belonged the parts before mentioned, allowed him by the law; but not content with these, he sent his servant, while the rest were boiling, with such an instrument as here described, to draw up more out of the boiling pot.

Ver. 14. *And he struck it into the pan, or kettle, or cauldron, or pot*, etc.] Whatever vessel was made use of, larger or lesser, according to the quantity of flesh the owner boiled for himself and friends, the trident the

priest's servants brought with him, he struck into the boiler to the bottom; of it:

all that the fleshhook brought up the priest took for himself; as his own property; whereas no part of it at all belonged to him, he having had the breast and shoulder delivered to him in the first place; and yet, by this method, all that he could drag up with this three forked instrument he claimed as his own; which might be much, that would hang upon three teeth of it, or in which they were fastened; and, according to Abarbinel, each of them would bring up a pound of flesh, and perhaps more:

so they did in Shiloh, unto all the Israelites that came thither; to offer their sacrifices, which was the proper place for them, the tabernacle and altar being there; and men of all ranks and degrees were treated alike, princes and people, rich and poor; the custom universally obtained, and all sorts of men met with the same usage.

Ver. 15. *Also before they burnt the fat*, etc.] Which belonged to the Lord, and was to be offered to him by fire, in the first place, as it ought to be; and the order of sacrificing required that he should have his part first before the priest or the owner: but so impious were the priests become, that

the priest's servant came, and said to the man that sacrificed; not to the priest that offered, but to the man that brought his sacrifice to be offered by the priest:

give flesh to roast for the priest; meaning, not what was his by law, as the breast and shoulder, though for these he ought to have stayed until the fat was offered to the Lord; but other parts of the peace offering, which he had no right unto, for roasting or boiling, and yet in an imperious manner demanded it by his servant:

for he will not have sodden flesh of thee, but raw though this was not the only reason of this demand, because they liked roast meat better than boiled; but because the three forked flesh hook did not always bring up the best pieces out of the boiling pot; and therefore he resolved to have flesh raw, that he might have the best, as well as dress it to his own liking.

Ver. 16. *And if any man said unto him, let them not fail to burn the fat presently*, etc.] Or stay till they have offered the fat, as the Targum; let that be done in the first place, which may be quickly done, in a very little time, and let as much haste be made as can be to do it:

and then take as much as thy soul desireth; by which it appears that the men that brought the sacrifice had more religion at heart, and were more concerned for the honour and glory of God than the priest; being willing to suffer in their property, but could not bear that the Lord should be dishonoured, and so rudely treated: they were willing the priests should take what they pleased of theirs, though they had no right to any; only they desired the Lord might be served first, which was but reasonable:

then he would answer him, nay, but thou shall give it me now, and if not, I will take it by force; signifying, he would not stay till the fat was burnt, and the Lord had his portion, but he would have it directly; and if he would not give it him freely, he would take it whether he would or not; to such a height of insolence and impiety were the priests arrived, as to put it in the power of their servants to make such wicked demands, and treat God, and those that brought their sacrifices to him, in such a contemptuous manner.

Ver. 17. *Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the Lord*, etc.] That is, the sons of Eli; for they were the ringleaders who set these bad examples, which other priests followed, and therefore the sin is ascribed to them; and which was sadly aggravated by taking what was not their own, and by taking it in a forcible manner, and before the Lord had his part in the offering, and all this done in the tabernacle, in the presence of God; which plainly showed that they had not the fear of God before their eyes, nor any sense of his omniscience and omnipresence, any more than of his holiness and justice:

for men abhorred the offering of the Lord; it was irksome and disagreeable to them to bring their sacrifices, when they saw the law of God was not attended to, and the rules of sacrificing were not observed; such contempt of God, such abuse of sacrifices, such injury done to the sacrificers, and such covetousness and sensuality in the priests, that it even set the people against sacrifices, and made them loath them, and neglect to bring them. And this aggravated the sin of the young men, though the sacrificers were not excused hereby, (~~1~~ 1 Samuel 2:24).

Ver. 18. *But Samuel ministered before the Lord*, etc.] The ministration of Samuel, though a child, is observed both before and after the account of the ill behaviour and wickedness of Eli's sons; partly to the shame and disgrace of them, and as serving to aggravate their sin, and make it appear the more black and heinous; and partly to his honour and reputation, that he was not corrupted and turned aside from God by their evil practices.

The phrase here used is different from that in (^{<0121>}1 Samuel 2:11) there he is said to minister before Eli, under his direction and guidance, but here before the Lord; being now engaged in higher services, and which he could perform without the assistance of Eli, as in the presence of God more immediately; it seems to have respect to him when more grown in age, stature, knowledge, and experience, though here related: yet still being “a child”; not got out of his childhood, or arrived to manhood:

girded with a linen ephod; such as priests used to wear, but not Levites in common, nor extraordinary persons on extraordinary occasions, (see ^{<0128>}1 Samuel 22:18 ^{<0164>}2 Samuel 6:14). This seems to be a peculiar favour, and a special honour which Eli granted to Samuel when so very young, on account of the grace of God bestowed on him in a wonderful manner; and because brought up in the tabernacle as a holy person, and a Nazarite; and because his birth was foretold, and he asked of God, as his name signified, as Procopius Gazaenus observes.

Ver. 19. *Moreover, his mother made him a little coat*, etc.] Suitable to his stature; this was an outer coat to wear over others, and this also was such an one as the priests wore; it is the same word that is used for the priest’s robe, (^{<0204>}Exodus 28:4), and this, it is very likely, was altogether of her own spinning, and weaving, and making up; which were works women did in those times: and this Hannah did partly out of her great love to her son Samuel, and partly to lessen the expense that Eli, or the congregation, were at in the maintenance of him; and the Talmudists ^{f45} observe, that a priest might wear a garment, and minister in it, if his mother made it; and they give instances of priests, Ishmael and Eleazar, for whom their mothers made garments:

and brought it to him from year to year; for it seems this was only to be worn at festivals, and not on common days; and therefore she did not leave it with him, but took it home with her, and brought it again at the returning festival:

when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice: whether at the passover, or at Pentecost, or at the feast of tabernacles; and it is very probable she came with her husband at them all, yearly; for though she was not by the law obliged thereunto, yet her religious zeal and devotion, and her great desire to see her son as often as she could, induced her to come.

Ver. 20. *And Eli blessed Elkanah and his wife*, etc.] Not only the first time they brought Samuel to him, and left him with him; but every year they came to worship, as the Jewish commentators mostly interpret it:

and said, the Lord give thee seed of this woman; children by her, year after year:

for the loan which is lent to the Lord; instead of Samuel, who was asked of the Lord and given to him again; and as they were thereby in some measure deprived of him, and could not always enjoy him, and be delighted with him, Eli prayed for them, and gave them his benediction as a priest, that they might be favoured with other children, who might be of delight and service to them when in old age:

and they went unto their own home; at Ramah, as in (^{<0021>}1 Samuel 2:11) or to his place ^{f46}, Elkanah's; hence Kimchi concludes that Hannah was of another city originally; but the Targum is,

“to their place;”

and indeed, what was now the place or home of the one, was of the other.

Ver. 21. *And the Lord visited Hannah*, etc.] In a way of mercy, approving and confirming the blessing of Eli; or rather granting the blessing he prayed for, by giving her power to conceive, bear, and bring forth children, as the following words explain it:

so that she conceived and bare three sons and two daughters; whereby the prophecy of Hannah was fulfilled, (^{<0025>}1 Samuel 2:5), and was no doubt matter of great joy to her, though of these children we nowhere else read, nor even of their names. Josephus ^{f47} says, Elkanah had other sons by Hannah, and three daughters; which agrees not with the text:

and the child Samuel grew before the Lord: in age and stature, in grace and goodness, and improved much in the worship and service of God, both in the theory and practice of it; or became great with him, high in his esteem and favour, and was blessed with much of his presence, and with large gifts of his grace.

Ver. 22. *Now Eli was very old*, etc.] It is very probable he was now about ninety years of age, since when he died he was ninety eight, (^{<0015>}1 Samuel 4:15) which is observed to show his incapacity for the discharge of his office, and inspection into public affairs; which gave his sons opportunity

of acting the wicked part they did without reproof, and with impunity, Eli knowing nothing of it; and accounts in some measure for the gentle reproof he gave them, when he did know of it; for being old, he was not so full of spirit and vigour, and more given to tenderness and mercy; besides, his sons were grown up and married, and he had less authority over them; though he ought to have considered himself not as a father only, but as an high priest and judge of Israel, and performed his office as such; however, it must be a great affliction to him in his old age, and added to the weight of it, that his sons should behave so unworthily as they did:

and heard all that his sons had done unto Israel; who, besides what was by the law allowed them, took flesh out of the pot as it was boiling, and demanded raw flesh to roast before the fat was offered to the Lord; and in this manner they used all, without distinction, that came with their sacrifices:

and how they lay with the women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation; not that they lay with them at the door in a public beastly manner; but the women that came thither they decoyed into their own apartments, or into some of the courts of the tabernacle, and there debauched them: who these women were, and what their business at the tabernacle, is not easy to say; some think they came about business which belonged to women to do there, as to wash and clean the rooms, to sew and spin, and the like; but one would think that these latter works should be done, not at the door of the tabernacle, but in some apartment in it, or rather at their own houses, for the use of it: the Targum is, that they there assembled to pray, which is more likely, and that they were devout women; who came there in large numbers, for the word used has the signification of armies; to perform religious exercises in fasting, and praying, and bringing sacrifices to be offered for them; though they do not seem to be such, as was Anna the prophetess, (⁴¹⁵Luke 2:37) who made their abode in the tabernacle, and served God night and day with fastings and prayers, since these were only at the door of the tabernacle; nor were there in the tabernacle conveniences for such persons, as afterwards in the temple. The Jews, for the most part, by these understand new mothers, who came with their offerings for purification, attended with many other women, their relations, friends, and neighbours, and which especially, when several met together on such an occasion, made a crowd at the door of the tabernacle; and some are of opinion that these men did not lie with them, or debauch them, according to the literal sense of the word; but that they

delayed the offering of their nests of doves they brought, so that they were forced to stay all night, and could not return home; and because by this means they were restrained from their husbands, it is reckoned as if these men had lain with them^{f48}; and which they think is confirmed, in that the man of God sent to Eli, after mentioned, takes no notice of this lewdness of theirs, only of their ill behaviour as to sacrifices, but the text is so express for their debauchery, that it cannot be denied.

Ver. 23. *And he said unto them, why do ye such things?* etc.] As to impose upon the people that bring their offerings, by taking more than is due, and in a very indecent and imperious manner; and especially to defile the women when they came to worship: these were very scandalous sins, and deserved a more severe reprimand, and indeed a greater chastisement than by mere words; Eli should have rebuked them more sharply, and laid open the evil of their doings, and as a judge punished them for them:

for I hear of your evil doings by all this people; the inhabitants of Shiloh, or who came thither to worship, who were continually making their complaints to Eli; which still shows his backwardness to reprove them in the manner he did until he was obliged to it by the continual remonstrances of the people against the practices of his sons; he did not attend to the information he had from a few persons, until it became general.

Ver. 24. *Nay, my sons,* etc.] This seems to be too soft and smooth an appellation, too kind and endearing, considering the offence they were guilty of, and were now reproofing for; rather they deserved to be called sons of Belial, the children of the devil, than sons of Eli, or brutes and shameless wretches, and such like hard names:

for it is no good report that I hear; a very bad one; far from being good, scarce anything worse could have been said of them; to rob persons of the flesh of their offerings, when there was a sufficient allowance made for them by law, and to be so impious as to require what was not their due, and even before the Lord had his; and to debauch the women that came to religious worship, and that in the sacred place of worship, they also being priests of the Lord, and married men; sins very shocking and sadly aggravated, and yet Eli treats them in this gentle manner:

ye make the Lord's people to transgress: by causing them to forbear to bring their sacrifices, being used in such an injurious and overbearing way; and by decoying the women into uncleanness, and by setting examples to

others: or, “to cry out”; as in the margin of our Bibles, to exclaim against them for their exorbitant and lewd practices; so the Targum,

“the people of the Lord murmur because so ill used by them:”

this clause may be read in connection with the former, “it is no good report that I hear, which ye cause to pass through the Lord’s people”; ye occasion the people to speak ill of you everywhere, in the camp of Israel, throughout the whole nation; the report as it is bad, it is general, is in everyone’s mouth; so Maimonides ^{f49} interprets it; with which Jarchi and others agree ^{f50}.

Ver. 25. *If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him,* etc.

When one man does an injury to another in his person and property, the case is brought before the judge, he hears it, examines into it, and determines upon it, and does justice, orders that the injured person have satisfaction made him, and so the matter is ended:

but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him? all sin is in some sense against God, as it is contrary to his nature, and a breach of his law, and especially bold, daring, presumptuous sins; but there are some sins that are more immediately and particularly against God, as sins against the first table of the law, which relate to the worship of God, and such were the sins of Eli’s sons in the affair of sacrifices; all sin against God is aggravated by the perfections of his nature, and made tremendous, as being against a God of strict justice, of unspotted purity and holiness, and who is omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent; and by the relation and connection there is between God and men, he is their Creator and Preserver, the God of their lives and mercies, and of all the blessings they enjoy, and yet sin against him! who will entreat the favour of God for such persons, ask pardon for them, and beseech the Lord to be propitious and merciful to them? who on earth will do it? such persons are scarce and rare, few care to stand up in the gap between God and sinners; in some cases they ought not, in others they cannot. Eli suggests by this question, that he could not, even for his own sons; and who in heaven can or will do it? not saints departed, who know nothing of what is done below, nor angels, only the Lord Jesus Christ; he is the only Mediator between God and men, who has engaged his heart to approach unto God, and interpose between him and sinful men, and has made peace and reconciliation by his blood, and is become the propitiation for sin, and ever lives to make intercession for transgressors, and is always prevalent and successful in his

mediation and intercession; excepting him, there is none to entreat for those that have sinned against the Lord, (see ^{<small>1</small>} John 2:1,2). In answer to this question, who shall entreat for him? the Jews say ^{f51} repentance and good works; but these are insufficient advocates for a sinner, without the atoning sacrifice of Christ, who is propitiation for sin, and upon which a plea can only be founded:

notwithstanding, they hearkened not unto the voice of their father; to his reproofs and counsels, his reasonings and expostulations; though his rebukes were so gentle, and this last reasoning of his so close and strong, so nervous and striking:

because the Lord would slay them; it was his purpose and decree, his will and pleasure, to cut them off for their wickedness; wherefore he gave them up to a judicial blindness, and hardness of heart, as he did Pharaoh, so that they were proof against all advice, admonitions, and arguments used with them: some choose to read the words, “therefore the Lord would slay them” ^{f52}, because they were disobedient to the voice of their father; but the former sense is best; for his will to destroy them was not so much for their disregard to the reproofs of their father in which he himself was culpable, as for their breach of his laws.

Ver. 26. *And the child Samuel grew up*, etc.] Increased in stature and in grace, grew more and more in all respects, and better and better, while Eli’s sons grew worse and worse; the contrast between these make the one to shine and appear illustrious, and the other to look the blacker: or “he went on, and grew, and was good” ^{f53}; as he proceeded on in years, and grew in stature, he appeared more and more to be a good man, a virtuous, holy, and gracious person:

and was in favour both with the Lord, and also with men; the Lord was pleased to give him some tokens of his favour, that he delighted in him, that he was wellpleasing in his sight, and that his person and services were acceptable to him; and the more Eli’s sons disgusted the people by their ill lives and conduct, the greater esteem among them did Samuel obtain by his becoming life and conversation; all admired him, spoke well of him, and thanked God that in such bad times he was raising up one among them, of whom they had the most hopeful prospect of usefulness to them.

Ver. 27. *And there came a man of God unto Eli*, etc.] A prophet, as the Targum; he had gifts and graces bestowed on him by the Lord, qualifying

him for that office; he came from God, and spoke in his name, as prophets used to do: who this was is not said, nor can it be known with certainty; many conjectures are made; some think he might be Phinehas, as Ben Gersom and Abarbanel ^{f54}, which is not at all likely; it is not probable that he was living, for if he had been alive, Eli would not have been high priest; the more ancient Jews say ^{f55} he was Elkanah, the father of Samuel; and so Jarchi; and he is said in the Targum on (~~9000~~1 Samuel 1:1), to be one of the disciples of the prophets, and was reckoned by them among the two hundred prophets that prophesied in Israel ^{f56} but of his prophecy we nowhere read in Scripture, or that he was one: other's ^{f57} think he was Samuel himself, who through modesty conceals his name; but he was now a child, as in the preceding verse; indeed, some are of opinion that what follows is recorded in this chapter by way of anticipation, and properly belongs to, and is a part of the message sent from the Lord by Samuel to Eli, in the following chapter:

and said unto him, thus saith the Lord; using the language prophets in later times did, who spake not of themselves, but in the name of the Lord; and from whence it appears that this was not a divine Person, the Son of God in human form, since he never used to speak in this manner when he appeared:

did I plainly appear to the house of thy father, when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh's house? he did; this was evident and certain, and a wonderful instance of condescending goodness: the house of his father is the house of Aaron, who, and all his sons, were born in Egypt, from whose youngest son, Ithamar, Eli descended; and to whom the Lord appeared when in Egypt, and sent him to meet Moses, whose spokesman he appointed him to be; and who prophesied in Egypt, and reprov'd the Israelites, which is recorded in (~~2300~~Ezekiel 20:1-49) as say the Jews ^{f58}.

Ver. 28. *And did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest,* etc.] He did; of all the tribes of Israel the Lord chose the tribe of Levi to place the priesthood in, and of all the families of that tribe he chose the house of Aaron, Eli's ancestor, to minister in the priest's office, (see ~~1230~~Exodus 28:1)

to offer upon mine altar; burnt offerings, sin offerings, and peace offerings; this is the altar of burnt offering, which stood in the court of the tabernacle:

to burn incense; on the altar of incense, which was in the holy place, and on which incense was burnt morning and evening:

to wear an ephod before me? in which was the breastplate, with the Urim and Thummim, with which the high priest went into the most holy place, where was the ark, the symbol of the divine Presence, and where he inquired of the Lord by the above things:

and did I give unto the house of thy father all the offerings made by fire of the children of Israel? he did; the priests who were of the house of Aaron had not only the sin offerings, and part of the peace offerings, but even of the offerings made by fire, the burnt offerings; the skin of them was the priest's, and the meat offerings that went along with them, (see ^{<RB25>}Leviticus 6:25,26) and (^{<RB8>}Leviticus 8:8-10,33-35 ^{<RB8>}Numbers 18:8-10) which were given them for their maintenance. Now these instances of God's goodness to the family of Aaron are mentioned to aggravate the sins of Eli and his sons.

Ver. 29. *Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice, and at mine offering, which I have commanded in my habitation,* etc.] To be offered in the tabernacle, where the Lord had his dwelling; which they might be said to kick and spurn at, despising them, as if there were not enough of them, nor the best of them given to them for their maintenance; a metaphor taken from cattle well fed and fat, which kick and spurn with their feet at even the owners and feeders of them. The Targum is,

“why do ye use force with the holy offerings?”

that is, take them away by force, when there was such a sufficient quantity allowed them for their support. Some understand this of their driving away such, that before used to bring their sacrifices to be offered, but being so ill treated, refrained from bringing them:

and honourest thy sons above me; by suffering them to take their part of the sacrifices, and even what did not belong to them, before God had his part, or before the fat was burnt; and by continuing them in their office, to the dishonour of God, his name and worship, when they ought to have been turned out by him and punished; but by this he preferred the honour of his sons before the honour of God, and chose rather that he should be dishonoured, than that they should be censured:

to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people? they took the best pieces of the peace offerings from them by force, having no right unto them; and this they did to indulge their luxury and sensuality, which Eli connived at; and it is highly probable took part of the roasted meat his sons provided for themselves, out of the choicest pieces of the offerings of the people; since he himself is included in this clause, “to make yourselves fat”, as his sons might be, and it is certain he himself was, (~~GOHS~~ 1 Samuel 4:18).

Ver. 30. *Wherefore the Lord God of Israel saith*, etc.] This being the case, so much contempt cast upon his sacrifices, and dishonour on himself:

I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever; or minister in the priest’s office before him: if the house of Aaron in general is meant, it did continue so to do, in one branch or another of it, as long as the Mosaic dispensation lasted, which is meant by the phrase “for ever”; but since it is afterwards denied that it should, rather the house of Ithamar, or of the immediate parent of Eli, is meant, and this said when the priesthood was translated from the family of Eleazar to the family of Ithamar; when, and on what account that was done, we nowhere read. It is a tradition ^{f59}, that it was in the time of the Levite’s concubine; and because Phinehas, and the other priests, did not go from city to city, and reprove the Israelites for the many sins they were fallen into, that the priesthood was taken away out of the family of Eleazar, and translated to that of Ithamar:

but now the Lord saith, be it far from me; to continue the priesthood in the line of Ithamar; which argues no change in the purposes or promises of God, this being not a decree of his, but a declaration of his will; that if the house of Ithamar behaved well in the discharge of the office of the high priest, it should continue with them to the end of the Mosaic dispensation, but if not, it should be taken from them, and restored to the family of Eleazar; as it was in Solomon’s time:

for them that honour me I will honour; as Phinehas the son of Eleazar did at Shittim, where he showed his zeal for the Lord of hosts, and had the promise of the everlasting priesthood; and which continued in his family until the Babylonish captivity, excepting the interval in which it was in the family of Ithamar, and for what reason is not known:

and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed; as the posterity of Eli, whose sons despised the Lord, and his offerings, as appeared by their conduct; and these were killed in battle in one day, and in the times of Solomon, Abiathar, of the posterity of Eli, was thrust out of the priesthood, and Zadok, of the line of Eleazar, was put in his room, (^{<1027>}1 Kings 2:27,35).

Ver. 31. *Behold, the days come*, etc.] Or, are coming ^{f60}; and will quickly come, in a very little time the things, after threatened, began to take place, even in the days of Eli's sons, and the whole was accomplished in about eighty years after:

that I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father's house: that is, the strength of him and them, as the Targum, the strength of a man for doing business lying in his arm; meaning by it not long life, as Kimchi, who concludes this sense from what follows; but rather power and authority, or the exercise of the office of high priest, which gave him and his family great esteem and power; or it may be best of all, his children, which are the strength of a man, and the support of his family, (see ^{<1048>}Genesis 49:3)

that there shall not be an old man in thine house; as there were none when he died, and his two sons, the same day; and the children they left were very young, and Ahitub, who was one of them, could not die an old man, since Ahimelech his son was priest in the time of Saul, who with eighty five priests were slain by his order; and Abiathar his son was deprived of his priesthood in the time of Solomon; though some understand this not of an elder in years, but in office; and that the sense is, that there should be none of his family a senator, or a member of the great sanhedrim, or court of judicature; and so it is interpreted in the Talmud ^{f61}; with which agree Ben Gersom and Abarbinel.

Ver. 32. *And thou shalt see an enemy in my habitation*, etc.] Either the Philistines in the land of Israel, where God chose to dwell, who quickly after made war against Israel, and pitched in Aphek, (^{<1000>}1 Samuel 4:1) or, as in the margin of our Bibles, and other versions ^{f62}, “thou shalt see the affliction of the tabernacle”; as he did when the ark of God was taken, at the news of which he died, (^{<10017>}1 Samuel 4:17,18) and so the Targum understands it of affliction and calamity, yet not of the house of God, but of his own house; paraphrasing the words thus,

“and thou shall see the calamity that shall come upon the men of thine house, for the sins which they have committed before me in the house of my sanctuary:”

but it seems best to interpret it of a rival, which not he in his own person should see, but whom his posterity should see high priest in the temple; as they did in Solomon’s time, when Abiathar, of the family of Eli, was thrust out, and Zadok, of the family of Eleazar, was put in; for, as Kimchi observes, when a man has two wives, they are rivals or adversaries to one another, jealous and emulous of each other, as Elkanah’s two wives were, and of one of them the same word is used as here, (^{<0005>}1 Samuel 1:6) so when one high priest was put out, and another taken in, the one was the rival or adversary of the other, as in the case referred to:

in all the wealth which God shall give Israel; which points exactly at the time when this should be, even men God did well to Israel, gave them great prosperity, wealth and riches, quietness and safety, a famous temple built for the worship of God, and everything in a flourishing condition, both with respect to temporals and spirituals, as was in the days of Solomon, (see ^{<0005>}1 Kings 4:20,25 10:27) and then it was amidst all that plenty and prosperity, and when the high priesthood was most honourable and profitable, that Eli’s family was turned out of it, and another put into it:

and there shall not be an old man in thine house for ever; (see Gill on ^{<0005>}1 Samuel 2:31”) this is repeated for confirmation, and with this addition, that this would be the case for ever.

Ver. 33. *And the man of thine*, etc.]. Of his family, which should spring from him: whom I shall not cut off from mine altar: from serving there: who though he shall not be an high priest, but a common priest, as all the descendants of Aaron were,

shall be to consume thine eyes, and to grieve thine heart; that is, the eyes and heart of his posterity; who though they should see of their family ministering in the priest’s office, yet should make so poor a figure on account of their outward meanness and poverty, or because of their want of wisdom, and intellectual endowments, or because of their scandalous lives, that it would fill their hearts with grief and sorrow, and their eyes with tears, so that their eyes would fail, and be consumed, and their hearts be broken:

and all the increase of thine house shall die in the flower of their age; or “die men”^{f63}; grown men, not children, when it would not be so great an affliction to part with them; but when at man’s estate, in the prime of their days, perhaps about thirty years of age, the time when the priests entered upon their office to do all the work of it; the Targum is, “shall be killed young men:”

it is more than once said in the Talmud^{f64}, that there was a family in Jerusalem, the men of which died at eighteen years of age; they came and informed Juchanan ben Zaccai of it; he said to them, perhaps of the family of Eli are ye, as it is said, (^{<0023>}1 Samuel 2:33).

Ver. 34. *This shall be a sign unto thee*, etc.] A confirming one, that all which had been now said would be fulfilled:

that shall come upon thy two sons, Hophni and Phinehas; which Eli would live to see fulfilled on them; and when it was, he might be assured the rest would be most certainly accomplished, and it was this:

in one day they shall die both of them; as they did in battle with the Philistines, (^{<0041>}1 Samuel 4:11).

Ver. 35. *And I will raise up a faithful priest*, etc.] Not Samuel, as some, for he was not of the seed of Aaron, and of the priestly race; nor had he a sure house, for his sons declined from the ways of truth and justice; but Zadok, as it is commonly interpreted, who was put into the office of the high priest by Solomon when he came to the throne, in the room of Abiathar, of the line of Eli; who was an upright man, and faithfully discharged his office, and answered to his name, which signifies righteous, (see ^{<0045>}Ezekiel 44:15) that shall do according to that which is in my heart, and in my mind: according to the secret will and pleasure of God, as revealed in his word; do everything relating to the office of an high priest, according to the laws of God respecting it; so the Targum,

“that shall do according to my word, and according to my will:”

and I will build him a sure house; which some understand of a numerous family and posterity he should have to succeed him, so that there should never be wanting one of his seed to fill up that high office; or rather it may design the establishment of the high priesthood in his family, which was an everlasting one, as promised to Phinehas his ancestor, and which continued unto the times of the Messiah, who put an end to it, by fulfilling it; unless it

can be thought that this may refer to the temple built by Solomon, which was a firm house, in comparison of the tabernacle, which was a movable one; it was built for Zadok and his posterity, who was the first that officiated in it as a legal priest. There is one writer, who says ^{f65},

“this agrees with no man, only with our Lord Jesus, who is called our high priest, that offered up a sacrifice to the Father for us therefore to Christ properly this prophecy belongs; but, according to the history; to Zadok:”

and Christ is said indeed to be a faithful, as well as a merciful high priest, faithful to him that appointed him, and faithful to those for whom he officiated; he always did the things which pleased his Father, was obedient to his will and commands in all respects; and a sure house is built by him, his church, against which the gates of hell can never prevail: however, the next clause is by others interpreted of him,

and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever; or “before my Messiah”, as the high priests did; they were types of Christ, and represented him, and acted under him, and in his stead, and prefigured and pointed at what he was to do, when he came in the flesh, and now does in the most holy place in heaven. Though it is more commonly understood of Zadok and his posterity, walking or ministering, as the Targum, before Solomon the Lord’s anointed, and before the kings of the house of David, as they did until the Babylonish captivity.

Ver. 36. *And it shall come to pass, that everyone that is left in thine house*, etc.] That is not cut off by death, the few remains of Eli’s posterity in succeeding times, after the high priesthood was removed out of his family into another; so that they were reduced at best to common priests, and these, as it should seem, degraded from that office for their maladministration of it, or scandalous lives:

shall come and crouch to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread; which Grotius interprets of their coming to God, and bowing themselves before him, and praying to him for the smallest piece of money to cast into the treasury, and for a morsel of bread to be accepted as an offering, instead of a bullock, sheep, lamb, or even a bird, which they were not able to bring; but the meaning is, that such should be the low estate of Eli’s family, when another, even Zadok, was made high priest, that they should come and humble themselves before him, as the Targum expresses it,

beseeking him to give them a piece of silver, even the smallest piece, that is, as the word signifies, a “gerah” or “meah”, about a penny or three halfpence of our money, the twentieth part of a shekel, (^{<2652>}Ezekiel 45:12) and a piece of bread, not a whole loaf, but a slice of it, to such extremity would they be brought:

and shall say, put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a piece of bread; or into one of the wards of the priests; their custodies or courses, as the Targum; with which the Jewish commentators generally agree, and of which there were twenty four; (see ^{<1304>}1 Chronicles 24:4-19), and there are some traces of them in the New Testament, (see ^{<2005>}Luke 1:5-8), but these were regular priests, who were in those courses, and had a sufficient maintenance for them, and had not barely a piece of bread to live on, or just enough to keep them from starving, as the phrase denotes; wherefore this must be understood, as before hinted, of priests degraded from their office, on some account or another, and reduced to poverty and want; and therefore, that they might be kept from starving, would solicit the high priest in those days, and beg that he would put them in some inferior post under the priests, to do the meanest offices for them, slay the sacrifices for them, wash their pots, open and shut up doors, and the like, that so they might have a living, though a poor one; and this may reasonably be thought to be the case of Eli's posterity, in process of time, after Abiathar was deposed from the high priest's office, and was ordered to go and live upon his fields and farm at Anathoth, (^{<1025>}1 Kings 2:26) with which compare (^{<2640>}Ezekiel 44:10-14). This, as Ben Gersom observes, was a fit punishment, and a righteous retaliation on Eli's posterity, that they should be brought to crouch to others, and be glad of a morsel of bread, who had behaved so imperiously towards the Lord's people, and had taken away their flesh from them by force; and, not content with their allowance, took the best pieces of the sacrifices, to make themselves fat with them.