

## Lesson Two I Samuel 1-3 Samuel – “Because I have asked him of God”

Samuel – Prophet, Priest and Judge

### Introduction:

In the introductory lesson we considered the differences and primary roles of judges, prophets and priests. Occasionally we observe some overlap in these roles by specific characters. Samuel appears to cross these lines as he serves as the first prophet in the land, but being raised by the High Priest he served in priestly functions as well. Also, with his unique anointing, in some capacities Samuel served as perhaps the last, and possibly the most significant judge of Israel prior to the establishment of the sovereign reign of kings.

### Chapter 1: Birth of Samuel

As Samuel plays a significant role in the introduction of kings to Israel, it is important to look at some of the roots of this amazing man chosen by God.

- Though Samuel’s family lives in the land of the Ephaimites, Elkanah, the father of Samuel is a descendent of Levi, most likely living in one of the cities within Ephraim dedicated to the Levites. I Chronicles 6:22-28 provides an in depth chronology of the Levites and specifically lists Elkanah and Samuel.
- Samuel was born by a gracious act of God bestowing a blessing on his mother, Hannah (I Samuel 1). Hannah was married to Elkanah but she was barren. Elkanah had another wife, Peninnah, who had born children to Elkanah and she also provoked Elkanah regularly for her barrenness. Now Elkanah loved Hannah deeply and gave her double portions as an act of his love and devotion, grieved for her sorrow of being barren, and even commented, “*Hannah, why do you weep and why do you not eat and why is your heart sad? Am I not better to you than ten sons?*” (I Samuel 1:8)

**Barrenness** – We read many times of this issue of barrenness throughout the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament); Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel and now Hannah. Why has God chosen this issue of barrenness to factor so prominently in the work He is doing to prepare the world for His mighty plan of redemption? Two thoughts worth considering are:

1. God is emphasizing His control over the world and mighty works He is about to perform through the lives of the sons to be born. He alone is the author of all life and His works are often underscored or highlighted by miraculous acts of giving life when it appears there is no possibility of it. Sarah, for example was 90 years old, post menopausal when she gave birth to Isaac, the promised son who had been promised 25 years earlier.
2. Eric Robinson has suggested the barren woman motif is a picture of Israel itself, acting as a barren wife longing to give birth to the promised Messiah. Just when it seems the barrenness will never subside, Mary gives birth to Yeshua, Jesus, and the Light of the World. Note that Mary has no trouble with conception, a very young

woman, and betrothed, very willing to accept the role God has chosen for her, and when God deems the time right, pregnancy occurs.

### **Hannah's Prayer for Deliverance from Barrenness**

During one of the feasts when offerings were brought to the Tabernacle, located at this time at Shiloh, righteous Elkanah and his family would make the journey and take their offerings and tithes. Many historians suggest this would have been at Shavuot or Pentecost as it is called in Acts, a festival occurring 50 days after Passover and associated specifically with the wheat harvest. However, others suggest it could also have been at Feast of First Fruits at the end of summer or even Feast of Tabernacles later in the fall. It is a feast where the offeror takes his offering, presents it to the priest, then receives a significant portion of it back for the purpose of his family rejoicing with other Hebrew families before God. Elkanah would receive back the family portion and give a double portion of that to his beloved Hannah. (Leviticus 3; 7 and Deuteronomy 12:15-19 and 16)

During one of these feasts in Shiloh, Hannah excused herself and went to the courtyard of the Tabernacle to pray. Eli, the High Priest was seated near the door post and observed this child of God pouring her soul out to Him, weeping, emotional, lips moving but no sound from her voice was discernible. Hannah's prayer is one of those rich promises to God that has often been read and shared, *"O LORD of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, and not forget Your maidservant, but will give Your maidservant a son, then I will give him to the LORD at the days of his life., and a razor shall never come on his head"* (v. 11). Eli thought she was drunk and approached her to chastise her. She convinced Eli she was vexed in her heart, that she carried a heavy burden and was entreating God for relief. Eli pronounced a blessing over her, "Go in peace; and may the God of Israel grant your petition that you have asked of Him". Hannah responded, "Let your maidservant find favor in your sight". And she went away with her sadness lifted.

### **Samuel is Born**

Elkanah and family returned home, he had relations with Hannah and Samuel was conceived. When the baby son was born, Hannah named him Samuel, saying, *"Because I have asked him of God"*. Hannah dedicated Samuel to God and intended to keep her vow. She dedicated Samuel to be a Nazarite all the days of his life, one dedicated to God who drank no wine or even ate grapes, and never cut his hair (Numbers 6:1-21). Other Nazarites dedicated from birth include Samson the judge and John the cousin of Jesus.

(Vs. 24-28) When Samuel is weaned, perhaps at age 3-5, Hannah fulfills her vow to God and takes Samuel and an offering to Shiloh and presents the boy to Eli the High Priest as a boy who has been dedicated to God for life (Nazarite). The offerings are made, God is worshipped and Samuel is left at the Tabernacle under the care of the High Priest, Eli.

## **Chapter 2 Song of Thanksgiving and curses on corrupt priests**

Vs. 1-11 As Hannah represents barren Israel, so the birth of Samuel represents so beautifully the birth of Messiah. Can we read the “Song of Thanksgiving” and not relate it fully to the songs of prophets and angels when the Messiah is born? Samuel is not the Messiah but he represents a picture of the Messiah to come. He is a boy who will become a man who will do mighty works in God’s kingdom, most notably, advancing the plan of redemption in the rise of the Kingdom of God. Just as Israel waits in travail for the coming Messiah and praises after His birth, so Hannah rejoices the end of her barrenness by praising and worshipping God.

In some ways Samuel may be more closely related to John the cousin of Jesus in the role God has given him for life. Samuel ushers in the kings over Israel, first Saul and then the Davidic order of kings. John ushers in the King of Kings, Yeshua HaMeshiach (Jesus the Messiah). Remember, both are of the priestly tribe of Levi and both are dedicated as Nazarites from birth.

(Laws regarding the Nazarite vows Numbers 6)

Verse 11 tells us so much as Elkanah returns home to Ramah while Samuel remained and ministered to the LORD before Eli the priest.

Vs. 12-17 The sons of Eli were evil in the administration of their priestly duties. They stole meat meant for offering to God on the altar, threatened congregants coming to offer sacrifices, took the fat that was to be apportioned to God, and engaged sexually with the women who served at the Tabernacle door. As sons of the High Priest who misused their priestly roles we see the similarities to the functions of the priests, Sadducees and Pharisees of Jesus’ day.

Vs. 18-21 In contrast, young Samuel ministered before Adonai as a young boy wearing a linen ephod (robe) provided by his mother. The linen ephod was a priestly garment and his youth suggests great innocence in contrast to Eli’s sons.

Elkanah and Hannah visited Samuel and Eli each year as they came to Shiloh for the feasts. Hannah brought new clothes for Samuel. Eli prayed a blessing over Elkanah and Hannah invoking God, *“May the LORD give you children from this woman in place of the one she dedicated to the LORD”*. Elkanah and Hannah returned home and God blessed them with three more sons and two daughters. Five additional children – five is the number of grace and mercy. Samuel continued to grow before the LORD.

Vs. 22-36 Eli rebukes his sons for their evil ways, but they would not listen to their father.

In vs. 27 scripture says a “man of God” came to Eli. Perhaps this was an angel or some representative of God Himself appeared to Eli to confront him on the sins of His sons. While Eli confronted his sons, he was not forceful enough or determined enough to put a stop to their immorality. Not only were they stealing from the people, they were stealing from God by taking greater portions of the offerings than was allotted according to Leviticus. Their sin was comparable to that of Aaron’s two sons, Nadab and Abihu, whom God struck dead in the sanctuary of the Tabernacle (Leviticus 10).

The “man from God” made these statements:

- I revealed myself to your father in Egypt (Aaron)
- I chose the Aaronic lineage to be My priests who would serve in My Tabernacle at My altar
- “Why do you kick at My sacrifice and at My offerings which I have commanded at My dwelling?”
- You have honored your sons above me by making yourselves fat with the choicest of every offering
- Things are about to change because God says, “I will honor those who honor Me, and I will lightly esteem those who despise me”.
- The days are coming when I will break your strength and the strength of your father’s house, so that there will not be an old man in your house.
- Eli’s sons Hophni and Phinehas will both die on the same day.
- God says He will raise up for Himself a faithful priest who will do according to what is in the Heart and Soul of God Almighty.
- I will build him an enduring house and he will walk before My anointed ways.
- Your descendents will bow before him and ask for priestly duties just to be able to eat and survive.

Change is coming!

### **Chapter Three - God Calls Samuel**

Perhaps one of the best known and loved stories in the Samuel story is the story of his calling from God. He is but a young boy, sleeping on the Tabernacle itself, when calls Samuel by name. This is a time that scripture says callings from God have been extremely sparse, even rare.

Sleeping in the Tabernacle God calls Samuel three times, each time Samuel thinks it is Eli calling him and responds to Eli. Eli sends him back and instructs young Samuel to respond to God if the call comes again – which it does. God gives young Samuel a very hard prophecy regarding Eli and his role as High Priest, all related to the evil Eli’s sons have been doing in their priestly duties.

*“Behold, I am about to do a thing In Israel in which both ears of everyone who hears it will tingle. In that day I will carry out against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. For I have told him I am about to judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knew, because his sons have brought a curse on themselves and he did not rebuke them. Therefore I have sworn to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli’s house shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever.”*

Eli required Samuel to tell him the word from God, even though it was a difficult prophecy brought against Eli’s house.

From that day Samuel grew and the LORD was with him. All Israel from Dan to Beersheba (north to south) knew that Samuel was confirmed as a prophet. The LORD appeared to him at Shiloh, revealed Himself to Samuel and spoke to Samuel. The name Shiloh, the place where the Tabernacle is set up serves as the spiritual center for Israel at this time. The name has certain messianic connections as cited on Genesis 49:10 where Jacob prophesies the scepter shall not pass from between Judah’s feet, *“till Shiloh comes”*. The Messiah will come from the lineage of Judah and will be called the King of Kings. Chapter 2:26 gives us another messianic connection as it records that young Samuel, *“was growing in stature and in favor with both the LORD and with men”*. How can we read this and not connect it to Luke 2:52 as it speaks of the growth and development of Jesus as a young boy.

