

SAMUEL—PROPHET, PRIEST, JUDGE

- **HIS IMPORTANCE**

- “At his birth, the nation was at its lowest ebb, in the depths of national degradation spiritually and politically, with ‘everyone doing what was right in their own eyes.’
- When he died it was on the eve of the most splendid era in its history.
- Samuel is credited with establishing the schools of the prophets, which were in many ways of greater service to the nation than the ceremonial priesthood, since they fearlessly enforced the need for a religion of heart and life as opposed to mere outward ritual.”
- **Samuel is the connecting link between the period of the judges which he closed, and the prophetic order and monarchy, both of which he inaugurated.**

- **Samuel is one of the most intriguing Old Testament figures.**
- He's a star player in the story of David and Saul: the first two God-anointed kings of Israel.
- **We meet him as a baby. We see him as a national leader, intercessor, and even a ghost.**
- Here are a few interesting biblical facts about the prophet Samuel.
- **Samuel was a miracle child.**
- The Bible tells of only a handful of significant pregnancies involving Isaac, Ishmael, Jacob & Esau, Perez, Samson, John the Baptist, and Jesus are the others.
- We meet Samuel's parents before we meet him. His mother Hannah cannot have children, but God hears her prayers and opens her womb, blessing her with the child Samuel.

- **Samuel's approximate age when significant events occurred:**
- **5** when he was first brought to the temple and given back to God;
- **12** when the LORD first appeared to him and confirmed him as a prophet (3:19-21);
- **18** when the ark was taken and Eli and sons slain;
- **38** when the Philistines were subdued 20 years later (1Sam 7:2);
- **92** when he anointed David at age 17, after Saul had reigned 27 of his 40-year term. David became king 13 years later at age 30 when Saul died (2Sam 5:4, Acts 13:21);
- **98** when he died (25:1).

- **His birth and parents**

- **ELKANAH** a Levite, living in the hill country of Ephraim, the Arimathea of NT. Mt 27:57—A rich man from *Arimathea*, Joseph, who had become a disciple of Jesus
- **ELKANAH**—all that we know about him indicates his spiritual uprightness
- **1:1**—A certain man of *Ramathaim Zophim*, of the mountains of Ephraim, his name was Elkanah, son of Jeroham, Elihu, Tohu, *Zuph*, an Ephraimite [*a Levite living in Ephraim*].
- **1:2**—Elkanah had two wives: the name of one was Hannah, the other Peninnah; she had children, Hannah had none. Elkanah went up from his city yearly to worship and sacrifice to the LORD of hosts in Shiloh. When the day came that Elkanah sacrificed, he would give portions to Peninnah his wife and to all her sons and daughters; but to Hannah he would give a double portion, for he loved Hannah, but the LORD had closed her womb.
- **1Chr 6:33**—*Elkanah*, Jeroham, Eliel, Toah, *Zuph*...Korah, *Izhar*, Kohath, Levi.
- **1Chr 9:19**—The descendants of Korah were gatekeepers of the tabernacle.
- *Ramathaim-zophim*. This ancient town, now called Ramla, about 36 miles west of Jerusalem, 9 miles from Joppa, is built on a rising ground, on a rich plain. [*Treasury*]
- **1:19**—They rose early...and returned and came to their house at *Ramah*.
- **7:17**—Samuel always returned to *Ramah*, where his home was; there he judged Israel.
- **9:5**—When Saul came to *Zuph*, his servant said “there is in this city a man of God.”
- .
- **Dt 12:11**—The place the LORD chooses to make his name abide, you shall bring your burnt offerings, sacrifices, tithes, which you vow; rejoice before the LORD your God.
- *In face of extreme adversity, when present conditions look bleak, faithful maintain trust.*

- **Elkanah was a spiritual husband—he confirmed and acted upon her vow in faith.**
- **1:19**—Elkanah knew Hannah his wife, the LORD remembered her. She conceived and bore a son, and called his name Samuel, “Because I have *asked him of the LORD*” [*Heb. Shemuel: heard of El, given in answer to prayer*]. Elkanah and all his house went up to offer to the LORD the yearly sacrifice and his vow [*tithes, Dt 12:17*]. Hannah did not go up, “When the child is weaned; then I will take him, that he may appear before the LORD and remain there forever” [*olam: as long as he lives, v11,28*]. Elkanah: “Do what seems best to you; wait until you have weaned him. Only let the LORD establish his word.”
- **Num 30:10**—If her husband heard her vow and did not overrule her, it would stand.
- *Rather than disallow her vow, Elkanah prayed it might receive a complete fulfillment.*

- **The LORD had closed Hannah’s womb, as he had with other mothers in Israel.**
- **1:6**—Her rival would provoke her bitterly to irritate her, because the LORD had closed her womb. It happened year after year, as often as she went up to the house of the LORD, she would provoke her; so she wept and would not eat. Then Elkanah her husband said to her, “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?”
- **2:3**—Talk no more so very proudly; let no arrogance come from your mouth, for the Lord is the God of knowledge; by him actions are weighed.
- ***God uses our adversities to bring us to higher levels of service/devotion to him.***
- *Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, Manoah’s wife, Elizabeth, all were barren for long years.*
- **Eli was sitting on a throne seat by the door of the temple.**

- **HIS NAME**
- Samuel's name means **“name of God.”**
- The translation of Samuel literally means “name of God,” or “God has heard.”
- Samuel was a Nazarite.
- Like the mighty Samson, Samuel is dedicated to the Lord as a child. This dedication was for life, and so he never cuts his hair ([1 Sa 1:11](#), [Nu 6:1–21](#)).

PRIEST

- Samuel is from the tribe of Levi.
- Not only was Samuel from the tribe of Levi, but he may have had Ephraimite blood, too ([1 Ch 6:33–38](#), [1 Sa 1:1](#)).
- This qualified him to serve in the temple
- Samuel was a priest.
- He begins his ministry serving the chief priest in the tabernacle ([1 Sa 3:1](#)). Samuel makes sacrifices on behalf of the people, and offers intercessory prayers to God for them ([1 Sa 7:9](#).)
- But Samuel was much more than a priest (see below).

- **Hannah prayed for a son, a Nazirite, who would turn the nation back to their God.**
- **1:10**—Hannah, in bitterness of soul, prayed to the LORD and wept in anguish. She made a vow, “O **LORD of hosts** [*sabaot:armies*], if you will indeed look on the affliction [*lowly state*] of your maidservant and give your maidservant a **male child** [*seed of men*], I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, no razor shall come upon his head.”
- **Lk 1:48**—[*Mary*] He has regarded the lowly state of his maidservant...
- **Rom 9:29**—As Isaiah said: “Unless the **Lord of Sabaoth** had left us a **seed**, we would have become like Sodom, and we would have been made like Gomorrah.”
- Hannah was the first to use the title Yahweh of hosts—she understood God’s purpose to manifest his glory in a faithful host who would be victorious over all his enemies

- **Eli assumed Hannah was intoxicated, an indication he often saw this at tabernacle.**
- **1:12**—As she prayed before the LORD, Eli watched her mouth. Hannah spoke in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard. Eli thought she was drunk. “How long will you be drunk? Put your wine away from you!” Hannah said, “No, my lord, I am a woman of sorrowful spirit. I have drunk neither wine or intoxicating drink, but have poured out my soul before the LORD. Do not consider your maidservant a worthless woman, I have spoken out of my complaint and grief [*meditation and provocation*].”
- **Pro 15:1**—A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.
- **Ps 62:8**—Trust in him at all times; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us.
- Another hint that Hannah was concerned for the future of the nation, not just herself. **Eli assumed Hannah was intoxicated, an indication he often saw this at tabernacle.**
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- **Eli was moved by Hannah's gentle response and her evident grief of heart.**
- **1:17**—Eli answered, “Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant your petition which you have asked of him.” Hannah said, “Let your maidservant find favor in your sight.” The woman went her way and ate, and her face was no longer sad. They rose early in the morning and worshiped before the LORD, and returned to their house at Ramah.
- **Lk 1:38**—Mary said, “Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.” ... “Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord.”
- *Hannah and Mary faithfully did their part to fulfill God's purpose with their sons.*
- Elkanah was a spiritual husband—he confirmed and acted upon her vow

- **Hannah prayed in the spirit of prophecy—a future King reigning in righteousness.**
- **2:10**—The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken in pieces; from heaven he will thunder against them. The LORD will judge the ends of the earth. He will give strength to his **king**, and exalt the horn [*power*] of his **anointed** [*Heb: mashiah*].
- **Ps 2:2**—Rulers take counsel against the LORD and his **anointed**... “I have set my king on my holy hill of Zion...you are my Son...I will give nations for your inheritance...you shall break them with a rod of iron; dash them to pieces like a potter’s vessel.”
- **Dan 9:25**—From the command...until **Messiah** the Prince...then **Messiah** cut off.
- **Hannah prayed for God’s Kingdom to come, his will to be done on earth, when the bows of the mighty men are broken, and the poor inherit the throne of glory.**

- **Samuel was still young when they brought him to the House of the LORD at Shiloh.**
- **1:24**—When she had weaned him [*about 3*], she took him up with her, with a 3-year-old bull [*or, 3 bulls*] and one ephah of flour and a jug of wine, and brought him to the house of the LORD in Shiloh, although the ***child was young***. Then ***they*** [*Hannah and Elkanah*] slaughtered the bull, and brought the boy to Eli.
- **2:18**—He ministered to the LORD as a ***child*** [*youth*]...his mother brought him a ***little*** coat, year by year when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice.
- *In keeping her vow, she recognized that God, who had given her this young son, would now take responsibility to instruct him in his ways and to use him in his purpose.*

- **Hannah was not entrusting her son to Eli, but to God, who answered her prayer.**
- **1:26**—She said, “As your soul lives [*an oath*], my lord, I am the woman who stood here beside you, praying to the LORD for this boy, and the LORD has given me my *petition* (7596) which I *asked* (7592) of him [*v17*]. I have also *dedicated* (7592) him to the LORD; as long as he lives he is *dedicated* to the LORD.” And they worshiped the LORD there.
- ***“Hannah knew what many parents only learn thru bitter, painful experience, often too late to apply—that the primary objective for Godly parents is to lead their children to him, to teach them his ways, so that they too will love his commandments.”***

- **Samuel was God's remedy for the evil the priests were inciting within the nation.**
- **2:11**—Samuel ministered to the LORD before Eli the priest...the sons of Eli were corrupt; they did not know the LORD.
- **2:17**—The sin of the young men was very great before the LORD...but Samuel ministered before the LORD, even as a child, wearing a linen ephod.
- **2:22**—Eli was very old; and he heard of the evil his sons did to all Israel...and the child Samuel grew in stature, and in favor both with the LORD and men.
- *The faithfulness of young Samuel is set against the wickedness of the priests.*
- *Children, at early ages, can be instructed in the ways of God for their eternal good.*

- **Hophni and Phinehas were there—the two wicked sons of Eli the High Priest.**
- **1:3**—There the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests to the LORD.
- **2:12**—The sons of Eli were corrupt; they did not know the LORD.
- **2:17**—The sin of the young men was very great before the LORD.
- **2:23**—I hear of your evil dealings...you make the LORD's people transgress.
- **2:34**—This shall be a sign to you: Hophni and Phinehas will both die in one day.
- **3:13**—I have told Eli that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knows, because his sons made themselves vile, and he did not restrain them.
- ***A long period of extreme wickedness precipitated a 40-yr period of Philistine oppression***

- **Eli was sitting on a throne seat by the door of the temple.**
- **1:9**—Hannah arose after they had finished eating and drinking. Eli the priest was sitting on the *[throne]* seat by the door post *[side of the gate, 4:18]* of the **temple** (heykal).
- **3:3**—Before the lamp of God went out in the **temple** of the Lord where the ark was.
- **2:22**—The women who assembled at the door of the **tabernacle** (ohel) of meeting.
- **3:15**—Samuel, in the morning, opened the doors of the **house** (bayith) of the LORD.
- **Ps 78:60**—He forsook the **tabernacle** (mishkan) of Shiloh, the **tent** (ohel) he had placed.
- *By this time the tabernacle can be described as a temple, with doors and posts.*
Heb. heykal is rendered temple or palace 80x; only twice applied to the tabernacle.

- **Hophni and Phinehas had brought disgrace upon the temple service.**
- **2:12**—The sons of Eli were worthless/corrupt men; they did not know the LORD. When any man offered a sacrifice, the priest came while the meat was boiling, thrust a fork into the pan, took all it brought up for himself. Before burning the fat, he took raw meat for roasting. If the offerer said they must burn the fat first, he insisted they give it, or he took it by force. Their sin was great before the LORD: men despised the offering of the LORD.
- **Lev 7:31**—Burn the fat [*best*] on the altar; give priests breast or thigh of peace offerings.
- **Lev 21:6**—Priests shall be holy to their God, for they offer the bread of their God.
- ***These worthless priests took more than their share, before the best was offered to God.***
- **Young Samuel's progress is contrasted with the evil ways of Hophni and Phinehas**

- **Young Samuel's progress is contrasted with the evil ways of Hophni and Phinehas.**
- **2:18**—Samuel ministered [*served*] before the LORD [*5X*], as a boy wearing a linen ***ephod***. His mother made him a little ***robe*** [*both priestly garments, Ex 28:31*], brought it to him when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice.
- Eli blessed Elkanah and his wife: “May the LORD give you children from this woman in place of the one she dedicated to the LORD.” The LORD visited Hannah, she gave birth to 3 sons, 2 daughters.
- **Num 3:6**—Levites served the needs of the priests and congregation for tabernacle work.
- *Like Hannah, Mary had several sons and daughters after Jesus' birth [Mk 6:3].*

- **Eli was old, his sons were in charge, and he willfully indulged their evil ways.**
- **2:22**—Eli was very old; he *heard* all that his sons were doing to all Israel, how they lay with the women who served at the doorway of the tent of meeting [Ex 38:8]. “Why do you do the evil things that I *hear* from all these people? No, my sons; the report is not good which I *hear*. If one man sins against another, God [elohim:judges] will mediate for him; but if a man sins against the LORD, who can intercede for him?” They would not listen to the voice of their father, for the LORD desired to put them to death.
- **Rom 9:18**—He has mercy on whom he wills, and whom he wills he hardens.
- *They were obstinate in wickedness, and the Lord hardened them in their evil ways.*

- **Samuel and Jesus grew up in similar ways—both were instructed directly by God.**
- **2:26**—The boy Samuel was growing in stature and favor with the LORD and with men.
- **Lk 2:52**—Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.
- **3:19**—Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him and let none of his words fail.
- **Lk 2:40**—The child grew, strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; grace of God upon him.
- **3:21**—The LORD revealed himself to Samuel by the word of the LORD.
- **Is 50:4**—The Lord GOD has given me the tongue of disciples, that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word. He awakens me morning by morning, He awakens my ear to listen as a disciple and I was not disobedient, nor did I turn back.
- *Samson is the only other recorded: “the child grew and the LORD blessed him”.*

- **Prosperity caused Eli to become complacent towards sin—that danger exists today.**
- **2:27**—A man of God came to Eli: Thus says the LORD, “Did I not reveal myself to the house of your father when in Egypt in bondage ? Did I not choose them from all the tribes to be my priests, to go up to my altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me; and give them all the offerings of Israel? Why do you kick at [*treat with contempt*] my sacrifice, and honor your sons above me, becoming fat with the best of every offering?”
- **Dt 32:15**—Jeshurun grew fat and kicked; you grew fat, you grew thick, you are obese!
- Then he forsook God who made him, and scornfully esteemed the Rock of his salvation.
- *Eli rebuked his sons, but took no action; he had responsibility for what his sons did, but was not willing to give up privileges of the priesthood, putting self before God’s honor!*

- **Despite Eli's failure, God would provide a faithful priest and ruler.**
- **2:30**—"Those who honor me I will honor, those despising me will be lightly esteemed. I will break your strength...you will see an enemy [*rival, 1:6*] in the tabernacle...all your house will die in the prime of life. This will be the sign: your two sons will die the same day. I will raise up a faithful priest who will do what is in my heart; I will build him an enduring house; he will walk before my anointed always."
- **22:11,18**—Doeg killed Ahimelech [*Eli's descendant, 14:3*] and 85 priests of his house.
- **1K 2:27**—Zadok [*Eleazar, 1C 24:3,6*] replaced Abiathar [*Ithamar, 1S 22:20; 14:3*].
- *Hannah's prayer would be realized in Zadok, but more fully in David's greater son.*

JUDGE

- **Samuel is the last judge.**
- You can read about most of the judges in the book of—you guessed it!—[Judges](#). After [Joshua](#) dies, the nation of Israel enters the “days of the judges,” ([Ru 1:1](#)) when there was no centralized government.
- During this time, God would raise up individuals to deliverer Israel from her enemies ([Jdg 2:16](#)). The book of Judges tells us about 12 judges, and First Samuel introduces two more: Eli and Samuel.
- Why is Samuel the last? Because after Samuel, Israel is led by kings ([Ac 13:20](#)).

- **Samuel anoints the first two kings of Israel: Saul and David.**
- When the people demand a national king, God directs Samuel to anoint Saul, a tall man from the tribe of Benjamin.
- Saul doesn't turn out so well, and so God has Samuel anoint a young shepherd named David as the future king: not the king Israel needs, but the king they deserve..
- Samuel is qualified to do this because of another office he holds . . .

- **Links between Samson and Samuel.**
- Samson was born shortly after **40**-year Philistine oppression began (Jud 13:1).
- He judged Israel **20** years during last half of **40**-yr Philistine oppression (Jud 15:20).
- He was a ***Nazirite*** from birth; he ***began to deliver*** Israel from the Philistines (Jud 13:5).
- Ark was taken by Philistines after Eli judged Israel **40**-years, with **20**-yrs still remaining in **40**-yr Philistine oppression (1Sam 4:11,18; 7:2)
- Ark at Kirjath Jearim **20** years, near Mahaneh Dan, Samson's home (Jud 13:25;18:12)
- ***Samuel completed the deliverance to end the 40-yr oppression (1Sam 7:13).***

PROPHET

- **Samuel is the first of the prophets.**
- In the [book of Acts](#), Peter also considers Samuel to be the first of the prophets—after Moses, that is ([Ac 3:24](#)).
- A prophet is someone who speaks on behalf of God.
- Samuel isn't the first person to be called a prophet in the Bible (Moses is both earlier and greater), but as far as we can tell, Samuel lead an order of prophets in Israel ([1 Sa 19:20](#)).
- **Samuel's prophetic ministry is significant because it begins at a time when words from the Lord are rare and infrequent ([1 Sa 3:1](#)).**
- But after Samuel, Israel's history comes alive with prophetic revelation: much of which is recorded in the [prophetic books of the Bible](#).

- **SAMUEL: greatest since Moses, Nazirite from birth, last of judges, first of prophets.**
- **Jer 15:1**—If **Moses** and **Samuel** stood before me my mind would not be favorable toward this people [*both interceded for Israel and the LORD had heeded their plea*].
- **Ps 99:6**—**Moses** and **Aaron** were among his priests, and **Samuel** was among those who called upon his name; they called upon the LORD, and he answered them. He spoke to them in the cloudy pillar; they kept his testimonies and the ordinance he gave them.
- **1Sam 7:15**—**Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life.**
- **Acts 13:20**—**He gave them judges about 450 years, until Samuel the prophet.**
- **Heb 11:32**—**Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, also David, Samuel and the prophets.**

- **Samuel is the only ghost we meet in the Bible.**
- After Samuel dies, Saul meets with an Ewok—er, a witch of En-dor ([1 Sa 28:7](#)). The medium conjures up the spirit of Samuel, who isn't too happy about what Saul has done. You can read the whole story in First Samuel chapter 28.
- **Samuel led the greatest Passovers.**
- Hundreds of years after Samuel's death, a king named Josiah celebrates the Passover. It's such an affair, the author says it's the greatest Passover ever—well, ever since Samuel's day ([2 Ch 35:18](#)).

- **Samuel is remembered for his prayers.**
- The psalmist who penned Psalm 99 ranks him with Moses and Aaron as one who called upon the Lord's name (Ps 99:6).
- **God calls Samuel by name—twice**
- Samuel is one of 8 people in the Bible that God calls by name ... twice. The others are Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Martha, Simon, "My God," and Saul.

- Two books of the Bible are named after Samuel, but he only shows up in one.
- Yes, we have the books of First and Second Samuel, but Samuel is never mentioned in Second Samuel!
- This is because both books were originally one document.