

## The Birth of Samuel (c. 1120 – c. 1117 BC)

1 Samuel 1:1–2:11

### Hannah and Peninnah—Rival Wives

1:1 There was a certain man from Ramathaim Zophim, from the hill country of Ephraim, whose name was Elkanah the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephraimite.  
 2 He had two wives; the name of the first *was* Hannah, and the name of the second *was* Peninnah. Now Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.  
 3 Now this man used to go up from his town year by year to worship and to sacrifice to Yahweh of hosts in Shiloh, where the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, *were* priests to Yahweh.  
 4 On the day Elkanah sacrificed, he would give portions to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and daughters.  
 5 But to Hannah he would give a double portion, because he loved Hannah, though Yahweh had closed her womb.  
 6 (Now her rival wife would provoke her severely in order to upset her because Yahweh had closed her womb.)  
 7 And so he used to do year after year; whenever she went up to the house of Yahweh, she would provoke her so that she would weep and would not eat.  
 8 So Elkanah her husband would say to her: “Hannah, why do you weep and why do you not eat? And why are you heartsick? Am I not better to you than ten sons?”

### Hannah’s Vow

9 Then Hannah got up after eating and drinking at Shiloh. (Now Eli the priest *was* sitting on his chair by the doorpost of the temple of Yahweh.)  
 10 She *was* deeply troubled, so she prayed to Yahweh and wept bitterly.  
 11 She made a vow and said: “O Yahweh of hosts, if you will look with compassion on the misery of your female servant, and will remember me, and not forget your female servant, and will give to your female servant a male child then I will give him to Yahweh all the days of his life, and a razor will never pass over his head.”  
 12 While she continued to pray before Yahweh, Eli was observing her mouth.  
 13 Now Hannah had been speaking in her heart; her lips *were* moving, but her voice could not be heard, so Eli considered her *to be* drunk.  
 14 Then Eli said to her, “How long will you behave like someone *who is* drunk? Put away your wine!”  
 15 But Hannah answered and said, “No, my lord. I am a woman deeply distressed, but I have not drunk wine *or* strong drink. *Rather*, I have poured out my soul before Yahweh.  
 16 Do not regard your female servant as worthless, but because of the extent of my worries and my provocation I have spoken all of this.”  
 17 Then Eli answered and said, “Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant your request that you have asked of him.”  
 18 And she said, “May your female slave find favor in your sight.” Then the woman went on her way and ate *something*, and her face did not look sad any longer.

### Samuel’s Birth and Dedication

19 Then they rose early in the morning and worshiped before Yahweh and returned to their house at Ramah. Then Elkanah had sexual relations with Hannah his wife, and Yahweh remembered her.  
 20 In due time, Hannah conceived and gave birth to a son. She called his name Samuel, for *she said*, “I requested him from Yahweh.”  
 21 So the man Elkanah went up with all his household to make the annual sacrifice to Yahweh and *to pay* his vow.  
 22 But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, “Once the boy *is* weaned, I will bring him, so that he may appear before Yahweh; and he will remain there forever.”  
 23 So her husband Elkanah said to her, “Do what seems right to you; stay until you wean him. Only may Yahweh fulfill his word.” So the woman remained and nursed her son until she weaned him.  
 24 Then she brought him up with her when she had weaned him, *along* with three bulls, one ephah of flour, and a skin of wine. She brought him to the house of Yahweh at Shiloh while the boy *was still* young.  
 25 They slaughtered the bull, and they brought the boy to Eli.  
 26 She said, “Excuse me, my lord. As you live, my lord, I *am* the woman who stood with you in this *place* to pray to Yahweh.  
 27 I prayed for this boy, and Yahweh has given me my request that I asked from him.  
 28 I in turn have lent him to Yahweh. As long as he lives he *is* lent to Yahweh.” Then they worshiped Yahweh there.

### Hannah’s Prayer of Praise

2:1 Then Hannah prayed and said,  
 “My heart exults in Yahweh, my strength *is* exalted in Yahweh;  
 I grin over my enemies, for I rejoice over your salvation.  
 2 There is no one holy like Yahweh, for there is no one besides you,  
 and there is no rock like our God.

- 3 Do not increase speaking very proud words!  
Let no arrogance go forth from your mouth,  
for Yahweh is a God of knowledge  
*whose* deeds are not weighed.
- 4 The bows of mighty warriors *are* shattered,  
but those who stumble gird *themselves with* strength.
- 5 Those who were full must hire themselves out for bread,  
but those who are hungry will become fat.  
As for the infertile, she will bear seven,  
but *she who has* many sons withers away.
- 6 Yahweh kills and restores alive,  
he brings down *to* Sheol and raises up.
- 7 Yahweh makes poor and makes rich;  
he brings low and also exalts.
- 8 He raises up the poor from *the* dust.  
From *the* ash heap he lifts up the needy,  
to cause them to sit with noble people  
and to cause them to inherit a seat of honor.  
For the pillars of the earth belong to Yahweh  
and he has set the inhabited world on them.
- 9 He will guard the feet of his faithful ones,  
but the wicked will be destroyed in the darkness,  
because a man will not prevail by *his* might.
- 10 Yahweh will shatter his adversaries;  
he will thunder against them in the heavens.  
Yahweh will judge the ends of the earth.  
He will give strength to his king  
and will exalt the might of his anointed one.

11 Then Elkanah went to Ramah, to his house. Now the boy was serving Yahweh in the presence of Eli the priest.

### Samuel's Early Years (c. 1120 – c. 1104 BC)

1 Samuel 2:12–4:1a

#### Eli's Wicked Sons

2:12 Now the sons of Eli *were* worthless scoundrels; they did not know Yahweh.

13 And the custom of the priests with the people *was this*: When any man brought a sacrifice, as the meat was boiling, the servant of the priest would take a three-pronged meat fork in his hand

14 and would thrust it into the pan or into the kettle or into the cauldron or into the cooking pot. All that the meat fork brought up the priest would take for himself. This *is* what they used to do to all of the Israelites who came there at Shiloh.

15 Also, before they offered up the fat as a burnt offering, the servant of the priest would come and say to the man who was sacrificing, "Give the priest meat for roasting, for he will not take boiled meat from you, but only raw."

16 And *if* the man said to him, "Let them burn the fat completely first, then take for yourself as you desire," then he would say to him, "No! Give it now! If not, I will take it by force!"

17 So the sin of the young men was very great in the sight of Yahweh, because the men treated the offering of Yahweh with contempt.

#### Samuel Ministers Before Yahweh / Hannah Continues to Give Birth to Children

18 Now Samuel *was* serving before Yahweh, as a boy wearing a linen ephod.

19 His mother used to make for him a small robe and take it to him year by year whenever she came up with her husband to offer the annual sacrifice.

20 And Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, and he said, "May Yahweh give you an offspring from this woman in place of the petitioned *one* that she requested from Yahweh." Then they went to their home.

21 Yahweh took note of Hannah, and she conceived and gave birth to three sons and two daughters, while the young man Samuel grew up with Yahweh.

#### Eli Rebukes His Sons but Does Not Remove Them From Service

22 Now Eli was very old, and he heard all that his sons were doing to all Israel and that they *were* having sexual relations with the women who *were* serving *at* the entrance of *the* tent of assembly.

23 And he asked them, “Why are you doing all these things that I am hearing, *namely*, your evil dealings with all these people?

24 No, my sons, the report *is* not good that I am hearing the people of Yahweh spreading.

25 If a man sins against a man, then God can intercede for him. But if a man sins against Yahweh, who can intercede for him?” But they did not obey their father, because Yahweh wanted to kill them.

26 But the boy Samuel continued to grow in stature and in favor with Yahweh and with the people.

### **Eli’s House is Judged**

27 Now a man of God came to Eli and said to him: “Thus says Yahweh: ‘Did I not clearly reveal myself to the house of your ancestor when they were in Egypt under the house of Pharaoh?’

28 And I chose him from all the tribes of Israel to be a priest to me, to go up to my altar, to burn incense, and to bear an ephod before me. I gave to the house of your ancestor all the offerings made by fire by the Israelites.

29 Why do you despise my sacrifice and my offering which I commanded *for my* dwelling place, while you honored your sons more than me by making yourselves fat from the best of all the offerings of my people Israel?

30 Therefore,’ declares Yahweh the God of Israel, ‘though I solemnly said that your house and the house of your ancestor would walk before me forever, but now,’ declares Yahweh, ‘far be it from me, for those who honor me I will honor, but those who despise me, I will treat with contempt!

31 Look, days *are* coming when I will cut off your strength and the strength of the house of your ancestor so that no one in your house will live to old age.

32 You will look at the distress of my dwelling place, *despite* all the good caused for Israel, but there will never be an old *man* in your household forever!

33 The only one I will not cut off from my altar *is you*. *Rather*, to cause your eyes to fail and to cause your soul to grieve, all the members of your household will die *as* men.

34 This *is* the sign for you that will come regarding your two sons Hophni and Phinehas: they will both die on the same day!

35 But I will raise up for myself a reliable priest; he will do just according to what *is* in my heart and in my soul. I will build for him a lasting house and he will walk continually before my anointed one forever.

36 All the remainder of your household will come to bow down before him for a bit of silver or a loaf of bread and will say, “Please assign me to one of the priestly offices so that I can eat a morsel of bread.” ”

### **God Calls Samuel**

3:1 Now the boy Samuel was serving Yahweh in the presence of Eli. The word of Yahweh was rare in those days; visions were not widespread.

2 And then one day when Eli was lying in his place (now his eyes had begun *to grow* weak so that he was not able to see)

3 and the lamp of God had not yet gone out, Samuel was lying in the temple of Yahweh where the ark of God *was*.

4 Then Yahweh called out to Samuel and he said, “Here I am!”

5 And he ran to Eli and said, “Here I am, because you called me.” But he said, “I did not call *you*. Go back and lie down.” So he went and lay down.

6 And Yahweh called Samuel again, so Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, “Here I am, because you called me.” And he said, “I did not call you, my son. Go back *and* lie down.”

7 Now Samuel did not yet know Yahweh, and the word of Yahweh had not yet been revealed to him.

8 Again Yahweh called Samuel a third time, so he got up and went to Eli and said, “Here I am, because you called me.” Then Eli realized that Yahweh was calling the boy.

9 So Eli said to Samuel “Go lie down. If he calls to you, then you must say, ‘Speak Yahweh, because your servant *is* listening.’” So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

10 Then Yahweh came and stood *there* and called out as before, “Samuel! Samuel!” And Samuel said, “Speak, because your servant *is* listening.”

11 So Yahweh said to Samuel, “Look, I am doing something in Israel which will cause the two ears of everyone who hears it to tingle.

12 On that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken against his household, from beginning to end.

13 I will make him know that I am about to judge his household forever because of the iniquity that he knew, for his sons *were* bringing curses on themselves, but he did not rebuke them.

14 Therefore I swore to the house of Eli *that* the iniquity of the house of Eli would not be atoned for by sacrifice or by offering forever.”

15 So Samuel lay down until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of Yahweh, but Samuel was afraid of telling the vision to Eli.

16 Then Eli called Samuel and said, “Samuel, my son!” And he said, “Here I am.”

17 And he said, “What *is* the message that he spoke to you? Please do not conceal *it* from me. May God punish you severely if you conceal anything from me of all the words that he told you.”

18 So Samuel told him all the words and did not conceal *anything* from him. And he said, “He *is* Yahweh, he will do what is good in his sight.”

**Samuel the Prophet**

19 And Samuel grew up, and Yahweh was with him. He did not allow any of his prophecies to go unfulfilled.

20 All Israel from Dan to Beersheba realized that Samuel was faithful as a prophet to Yahweh.

21 And Yahweh appeared again in Shiloh, for Yahweh revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh through the word of Yahweh.

4:1a And the word of Samuel came to all Israel.

**Defeat at Aphek / The Death of Eli (c. 1104 BC)**

1 Samuel 4:1b–22

**The Philistines Kill Eli's Sons and Capture the Ark**

4:1b Now Israel went out to meet *the* Philistines for battle, and they encamped at Ebenezer, and *the* Philistines encamped at Aphek.  
2 *The* Philistines lined up for the battle to meet Israel, and the battle was prolonged until Israel was defeated before *the* Philistines, who killed about four thousand men on the battlefield.

3 When the army came *back* to the camp, the elders of Israel asked, "Why has Yahweh defeated us today before *the* Philistines? Let us bring the ark of the covenant of Yahweh to us from Shiloh so that it may come into our midst and deliver us from the hand of our enemies."

4 So the army sent to Shiloh and brought from there the ark of the covenant of Yahweh of hosts who sits *between* the cherubim. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, *were* there with the ark of the covenant of God.

5 Now when the ark of the covenant of Yahweh arrived at the camp, all Israel let out a loud shout so that the earth shook.

6 When *the* Philistines heard the noise of the shouting, they said, "What *is* the noise of this loud shouting in the camp of the Hebrews?" Then they learned that the ark of Yahweh had come into the camp.

7 So *the* Philistines were afraid, for they said, "God has come to the camp." And they said, "Woe to us, for this has never happened before!

8 Woe to us! Who can deliver us from the hand of these mighty gods? These *are* the *same* gods who struck the Egyptians with all *sorts of* plagues in the desert.

9 Take courage and be men, *you* Philistines, lest you end up serving the Hebrews just like they have served you. Be men and fight!"

10 So *the* Philistines fought and Israel was defeated and each man fled to his tent, for the slaughter was very great. Thirty thousand foot soldiers from Israel fell.

11 Furthermore, the ark of God was captured, and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, died.

**Eli's Death**

12 A man of Benjamin ran from the battle line and came *to* Shiloh that same day, and his clothes *were* torn and earth *was* on his head.

13 When he came, there was Eli sitting on his chair by the side of the road watching, because his heart was anxious about the ark of God. Now the man had come to give his report in the city, and all the city cried out.

14 When Eli heard the noise of the outcry, he said, "What *is* the noise of this commotion?" Then the man came quickly and told Eli.

15 Now Eli *was* ninety-eight years old and his eyes stayed fixed ahead and he was not able to see.

16 And the man said to Eli, "I am the *one* who has come from the battle line! I have fled today from the battle line!" And he said, "What exactly happened, my son?"

17 Then the messenger answered and said, "Israel has fled before *the* Philistines. There has been a great defeat among the troops. Also, your two sons have died, Hophni and Phinehas, and the ark of God has been captured."

18 Just as he mentioned the ark of God, he fell from his chair backwards against the side of the gate. He broke his neck and died, because the man was old and heavy. He had judged Israel forty years.

**The Birth of Ichabod**

19 Now his daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, *was* pregnant and *about* to give birth. When she heard the news concerning the capture of the ark of God and that her father-in-law and her husband had died, she went into labor and gave birth, because her labor pains came upon her.

20 Just before the time of her death, those attending her said, "Do not fear, for you have given birth to a son." But she did not answer, or pay any attention.

21 She called the boy Ichabod, saying, "The glory has departed from Israel," referring to the capture of the ark of God and concerning her father-in-law and husband.

22 And she said, "The glory has departed from Israel, because the ark of God was captured."