

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

1 Samuel 1:1–2:11

Hannah and Peninnah—Rival Wives

1:1 Now there was a certain man from Ramathaim-zophim from the hill country of Ephraim, and his 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 one was Hannah and the name of the other Peninnah; and Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.
 3 Now this man would go up from his city yearly to worship and to sacrifice to the LORD of hosts in Shiloh. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests to the LORD there.
 4 When the day came that Elkanah sacrificed, he would give portions to Peninnah his wife and to all her sons and her daughters;
 5 but to Hannah he would give a double portion, for he loved Hannah, but the LORD had closed her womb.
 6 Her rival, however, would provoke her bitterly to irritate her, because the LORD had closed her womb.
 7 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.
 8 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?”

Hannah’s Vow

9 Then Hannah rose after eating and drinking in Shiloh. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat by the doorpost of the temple of the LORD.
 10 She, greatly distressed, prayed to the LORD and wept bitterly.
 11 She made a vow and said, “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 all the days of his life, and a razor shall never come on his head.”
 12 Now it came about, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli was watching her mouth.
 13 As for Hannah, she was speaking in her heart, only her lips were moving, but her voice was not heard. So Eli thought she was drunk.
 14 Then Eli said to her, “How long will you make yourself drunk? Put away your wine from you.”
 15 But Hannah replied, “No, my lord, I am a woman oppressed in spirit; I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have poured out my soul before the LORD.
 16 Do not consider your maidservant as a worthless woman, for I have spoken until now out of my great concern and provocation.”
 17 Then Eli answered and said, “Go in peace; and may the God of Israel grant your petition that you have asked of Him.”
 18 She said, “Let your maidservant find favor in your sight.” So the woman went her way and ate, and her face was no longer sad.

Samuel’s Birth and Dedication

19 Then they arose early in the morning and worshiped before the LORD, and returned again to their house in Ramah. And Elkanah had relations with Hannah his wife, and the LORD remembered her.
 20 It came about in due time, after Hannah had conceived, that she gave birth to a son; and she named him Samuel, *saying*, “Because I have asked him of the LORD.”
 21 Then the man Elkanah went up with all his household to offer to the LORD the yearly sacrifice and *pay* his vow.
 22 But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, “*I will not go up* until the child is weaned; then I will bring him, that he may appear before the LORD and stay there forever.”
 23 Elkanah her husband said to her, “Do what seems best to you. Remain until you have weaned him; only may the LORD confirm His word.” So the woman remained and nursed her son until she weaned him.
 24 Now when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with a three-year-old bull 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.
 25 Then they slaughtered the bull, and brought the boy to Eli.
 26 She said, “Oh, my lord! As your soul lives, my lord, I am the woman who stood here beside you, praying to the LORD.
 27 For this boy I prayed, and the LORD has given me my petition which I asked of Him.
 28 So I have also dedicated him to the LORD; as long as he lives he is dedicated to the LORD.” And he worshiped the LORD there.

Hannah’s Prayer of Praise

2:1 Then Hannah prayed and said,

“My heart exults in the LORD;
 My horn is exalted in the LORD,
 My mouth speaks boldly against my enemies,
 Because I rejoice in Your salvation.

- 2 “There is no one holy like the LORD,
Indeed, there is no one besides You,
Nor is there any rock like our God.
- 3 “Boast no more so very proudly,
Do not let arrogance come out of your mouth;
For the LORD is a God of knowledge,
And with Him actions are weighed.
- 4 “The bows of the mighty are shattered,
But the feeble gird on strength.
- 5 “Those who were full hire themselves out for bread,
But those who were hungry cease *to hunger*.
Even the barren gives birth to seven,
But she who has many children languishes.
- 6 “The LORD kills and makes alive;
He brings down to Sheol and raises up.
- 7 “The LORD makes poor and rich;
He brings low, He also exalts.
- 8 “He raises the poor from the dust,
He lifts the needy from the ash heap
To make them sit with nobles,
And inherit a seat of honor;
For the pillars of the earth are the LORD’S,
And He set the world on them.
- 9 “He keeps the feet of His godly ones,
But the wicked ones are silenced in darkness;
For not by might shall a man prevail.
- 10 “Those who contend with the LORD will be shattered;
Against them He will thunder in the heavens,
The LORD will judge the ends of the earth;
And He will give strength to His king,
And will exalt the horn of His anointed.”

11 Then Elkanah went to his home at Ramah. But the boy ministered to the LORD before 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 men; they did not know the LORD

13 and the custom of the priests with the people. When any man was offering a sacrifice, the priest’s servant would come while the meat was boiling, with a three-pronged fork in his hand.

14 Then he would thrust it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; all that the fork brought up the priest would take for himself. Thus they did in Shiloh to all the Israelites who came there.

15 Also, before they burned the fat, the priest’s servant would come and say to the man who was sacrificing, “Give the priest meat for roasting, as he will not take boiled meat from you, only raw.”

16 If the man said to him, “They must surely burn the fat first, and then take as much as you desire,” then he would say, “No, but you shall give *it to me* now; and if not, I will take it by force.”

17 Thus the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD, for the men despised the offering of the LORD.

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

18 Now Samuel was ministering before the LORD, *as a boy wearing a linen ephod*.

19 And his mother would make him a little robe and bring it to him from year to year when she would come up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice.

20 Then Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife and say, “May the LORD give you children from this woman in place of the one she dedicated to the LORD.” And they went to their own home.

21 The LORD visited Hannah; and she conceived and gave birth to three sons and two daughters. And the boy Samuel grew before the LORD.

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 how they lay with the women who served at the doorway of the tent of meeting.

23 He said to them, “Why do you do such things, the evil things that I hear from all these people?”

24 No, my sons; for the report is not good which I hear the LORD’s people circulating.

25 If one man sins against another, God will mediate for him; but if a man sins against the LORD, who can intercede for him?” But they would not listen to the voice of their father, for the LORD desired to put them to death.

26 Now the boy Samuel was growing in stature and in favor both with the LORD and with men.

Eli’s House is Judged

27 Then a man of God came to Eli and said to him, “Thus says the LORD, ‘Did I *not* indeed reveal Myself to the house of your father when they were in Egypt *in bondage* to Pharaoh’s house?’

28 Did I *not* choose them from all the tribes of Israel to be My priests, to go up to My altar, to burn incense, to carry an ephod before Me; and did I *not* give to the house of your father all the fire *offerings* of the sons of Israel?’

29 Why do you kick at My sacrifice and at My offering which I have commanded *in My dwelling*, and honor your sons above Me, by making yourselves fat with the choicest of every offering of My people Israel?’

30 “Therefore the LORD God of Israel declares, ‘I did indeed say that your house and the house of your father should walk before Me forever’; but now the LORD declares, ‘Far be it from Me—for those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me will be lightly esteemed.’

31 Behold, 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.

32 You will see the distress of *My dwelling*, in *spite of* all the good that I do for Israel; and an old man will not be in your house forever.

33 Yet I will not cut off every man of yours from My altar so that your eyes will fail *from weeping* and your soul grieve, and all the increase of your house will die in the prime of life.

34 This will be the sign to you which will come concerning your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas: on the same day both of them will die.

35 But I will raise up for Myself a faithful priest who will do according to what is in My heart and in My soul; and I will build him an enduring house, and he will walk before My anointed always.

36 Everyone who is left in your house will come and bow down to him for a piece of silver or a loaf of bread and say, “Please assign me to one of the priest’s offices so that I may eat a piece of bread.””

God Calls Samuel

3:1 Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD before Eli. And word from the LORD was rare in those days, visions were infrequent.

2 It happened at that time as Eli was lying down in his place (now his eyesight had begun to grow dim *and* he could not see *well*),

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

4 that the LORD called Samuel; and he said, “Here I am.”

5 Then he ran to Eli and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” But he said, “I did not call, lie down again.” So he went and lay down.

6 The LORD called yet again, “Samuel!” So Samuel arose and went to Eli and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” But he answered, “I did not call, my son, lie down again.”

7 Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, nor had the word of the LORD yet been revealed to him.

8 So the LORD called Samuel again for the third time. And he arose and went to Eli and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” Then Eli discerned that the LORD was calling the boy.

9 And Eli said to Samuel, “Go lie down, and it shall be if He calls you, that you shall say, ‘Speak, LORD, for Your servant is listening.’” So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

10 Then the LORD came and stood and called as at other times, “Samuel! Samuel!” And Samuel said, “Speak, for Your servant is listening.”

11 The LORD said to Samuel, “Behold, I am about to do a thing in Israel at which both ears of everyone who hears it will tingle.

12 In that day I will carry out against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end.

13 For I have told him that I am about to judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knew, because his sons brought a curse on themselves and he did not rebuke them.

14 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.”

15 So Samuel lay down until morning. Then he opened the doors of the house of the LORD. But Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli.

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

17 He said, “What is the word that He spoke to you? Please do not hide it from me. May God do so to you, and more also, if you hide anything from me of all the words that He spoke to you.”

18 So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. And he said, “It is the LORD; let Him do what seems good to Him.”

Samuel the Prophet

19 Thus Samuel grew and the LORD was with him and let none of his words fail.

20 All Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was confirmed as a prophet of the LORD.

21 And the LORD appeared again at Shiloh, because the LORD revealed Himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the word of the LORD.

4:1a Thus 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

1b Now Israel went out to meet the Philistines in battle and camped beside Ebenezer while the Philistines camped in Aphek.

2 The Philistines drew up in battle array to meet Israel. When the battle spread, Israel was defeated before the Philistines who killed about four thousand men on the battlefield.

3 When the people came into the camp, the elders of Israel said, “Why has the LORD defeated us today before the Philistines? Let us take to ourselves from Shiloh the ark of the covenant of the LORD, that it may come among us and deliver us from the power of our enemies.”

4 So the people sent to Shiloh, and from there they carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts who sits *above* the cherubim; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, *were* there with the ark of the covenant of God.

5 As the ark of the covenant of the LORD came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth resounded.

6 When the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, “What *does* the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews *mean*?” Then they understood that the ark of the LORD had come into the camp.

7 The Philistines were afraid, for they said, “God has come into the camp.” And they said, “Woe to us! For nothing like this has happened before.

8 Woe to us! Who shall deliver us from the hand of these mighty gods? These are the gods who smote the Egyptians with all *kinds* of plagues in the wilderness.

9 Take courage and be men, O Philistines, or you will become slaves to the Hebrews, as they have been slaves to you; therefore, be men and fight.”

10 So the Philistines fought and Israel was defeated, and every man fled to his tent; and the slaughter was very great, for there fell of Israel thirty thousand foot soldiers.

11 And the ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, died.

Eli’s Death

12 Now a man of Benjamin ran from the battle line and came to Shiloh the same day with his clothes torn and dust on his head.

13 When he came, behold, Eli was sitting on *his* seat by the road eagerly watching, because his heart was trembling for the ark of God. So the man came to tell *it* in the city, and all the city cried out.

14 When Eli heard the noise of the outcry, he said, “What *does* the noise of this commotion *mean*?” Then the man came hurriedly and told Eli.

15 Now Eli was ninety-eight years old, and his eyes were set so that he could not see.

16 The man said to Eli, “I am the one who came from the battle line. Indeed, I escaped from the battle line today.” And he said, “How did things go, my son?”

17 Then the one who brought the news replied, “Israel has fled before the Philistines and there has also been a great slaughter among the people, and your two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God has been taken.”

18 When he mentioned the ark of God, Eli fell off the seat backward beside the gate, and his neck was broken and he died, for he was old and heavy. Thus he judged Israel forty years.

The Birth of Ichabod

19 Now his daughter-in-law, Phinehas’s wife, was pregnant and about to give birth; and when she heard the news that the ark of God was taken and that her father-in-law and her husband had died, she knelt down and gave birth, for her pains came upon her.

20 And about the time of her death the women who stood by her said to her, “Do not be afraid, for you have given birth to a son.” But she did not answer or pay attention.

21 And she called the boy Ichabod, saying, “The glory has departed from Israel,” because the ark of God was taken and because of her father-in-law and her husband.

22 She said, “The glory has departed from Israel, for the ark of God was taken.”