

**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 man from Ramathaim Zophim, from the hill country of Ephraim, whose name was Elkanah. He was 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 was childless.  
3 Year after year this man would go up from his city to worship and to sacrifice to the LORD of hosts at Shiloh. It was there that the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phineas, served as the LORD's priests.  
4 Whenever the day came for Elkanah to sacrifice, he used to give meat portions to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and daughters.  
5 But he would give a double portion to Hannah, because he especially loved her. Now the LORD had not enabled her to have children.  
6 Her rival wife used to upset her and make her worry, for the LORD had not enabled her to have children.  
7 Peninnah would behave this way year after year. Whenever Hannah went up to the LORD's house, Peninnah would upset her so that she would weep and refuse to eat.  
8 Finally her husband Elkanah said to her, "Hannah, why do you weep and not eat? Why are you so sad? Am I not better to you than ten sons?"

**Hannah's Vow**

9 On one occasion in Shiloh, after they had finished eating and drinking, Hannah got up. (Now at the time Eli the priest was sitting in his chair by the doorpost of the LORD's temple.)  
10 She was very upset as she prayed to the LORD, and she was weeping uncontrollably.  
11 She made a vow saying, "O LORD of hosts, if you will look with compassion on the suffering of your female servant, remembering me and not forgetting your servant, and give a male child to your servant, then I will dedicate him to the LORD all the days of his life. His hair will never be cut."  
12 As she continued praying to the LORD, Eli was watching her mouth.  
13 Now Hannah was speaking from her heart. Although her lips were moving, her voice was inaudible. Eli therefore thought she was drunk.  
14 So he said to her, "How often do you intend to get drunk? Put away your wine!"  
15 But Hannah replied, "That's not the way it is, my lord! I am under a great deal of stress. I have drunk neither wine nor beer. Rather, I have poured out my soul to the LORD.  
16 Don't consider your servant a wicked woman, for until now I have spoken from my deep pain and anguish."  
17 Eli replied, "Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant the request that you have asked of him."  
18 She said, "May I, your servant, find favor in your sight." So the woman went her way and got something to eat. Her face no longer looked sad.

**Samuel's Birth and Dedication**

19 They got up early the next morning and after worshiping the LORD, they returned to their home at Ramah. Elkanah had marital relations with his wife Hannah, and the LORD remembered her.  
20 After some time Hannah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel, thinking, "I asked the LORD for him."  
21 This man Elkanah went up with all his family to make the yearly sacrifice to the LORD and to keep his vow,  
22 but Hannah did not go up with them. Instead she told her husband, "Once the boy is weaned, I will bring him and appear before the LORD, and he will remain there from then on."  
23 So her husband Elkanah said to her, "Do what you think best. Stay until you have weaned him. May the LORD fulfill his promise."  
So the woman stayed and nursed her son until she had weaned him.  
24 Once she had weaned him, she took him up with her, along with three bulls, an ephah of flour, and a container of wine. She brought him to the LORD's house at Shiloh, even though he was young.  
25 Once the bull had been slaughtered, they brought the boy to Eli.  
26 She said, "Just as surely as you are alive, my lord, I am the woman who previously stood here with you in order to pray to the LORD.  
27 I prayed for this boy, and the LORD has given me the request that I asked of him.  
28 Now I dedicate him to the LORD. From this time on he is dedicated to the LORD." Then they worshiped the LORD there.

**Hannah's Prayer of Praise**

2:1 Hannah prayed,

"My heart rejoices in the LORD;  
my horn is exalted high because of the LORD.

- I loudly denounce my enemies,  
for I am happy that you delivered me.
- 2 No one is holy like the LORD!  
There is no one other than you!  
There is no rock like our God!
- 3 Don't keep speaking so arrogantly,  
letting proud talk come out of your mouth!  
For the LORD is a God who knows;  
he evaluates what people do.
- 4 The bows of warriors are shattered,  
but those who stumble find their strength reinforced.
- 5 Those who are well-fed hire themselves out to earn food,  
but the hungry no longer lack.  
Even the barren woman gives birth to seven,  
but the one with many children withers away.
- 6 The LORD both kills and gives life;  
he brings down to the grave and raises up.
- 7 The LORD impoverishes and makes wealthy;  
he humbles and he exalts.
- 8 He lifts the weak from the dust;  
he raises the poor from the ash heap  
to seat them with princes  
and to bestow on them an honored position.  
The foundations of the earth belong to the LORD,  
and he has placed the world on them.
- 9 He watches over his holy ones,  
but the wicked are made speechless in the darkness,  
for it is not by one's own strength that one prevails.
- 10 The LORD shatters his adversaries;  
he thunders against them from the heavens.  
The LORD executes judgment to the ends of the earth.  
He will strengthen his king  
and exalt the power of his anointed one."

11 Then Elkanah went back home to Ramah. But the boy was serving the LORD under the supervision 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 The sons of Eli were wicked men. They did not recognize the LORD's authority.

13 Now the priests would always treat the people in the following way: Whenever anyone was making a sacrifice, while the meat was boiling, the priest's attendant would come with a three-pronged fork in his hand.

14 He would jab it into the basin, kettle, caldron, or pot, and everything that the fork brought up the priest would take for himself. This is what they used to do to all the Israelites when they came there to Shiloh.

15 Even before they burned the fat, the priest's attendant would come and say to the person who was making the sacrifice, "Hand over some meat for the priest to roast! He won't take boiled meat from you, but only raw."

16 If the individual said to him, "First let the fat be burned away, and then take for yourself whatever you wish," he would say, "No! Hand it over right now! If you don't, I will take it forcibly!"

17 The sin of these young men was very great in the LORD's sight, for they treated the LORD's offering with contempt.

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

18 Now Samuel was ministering before the LORD. The boy was dressed in a linen ephod.

19 His mother used to make him a small robe and bring it up to him at regular intervals when she would go up with her husband to make the annual sacrifice.

20 Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife saying, "May the LORD raise up for you descendants from this woman to replace the one that she dedicated to the LORD." Then they would go to their home.

21 So the LORD graciously attended to Hannah, and she was able to conceive and gave birth to three sons and two daughters. The boy Samuel grew up at the LORD's sanctuary.

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

22 Now Eli was very old when he heard about everything that his sons used to do to all the people of Israel and how they used to have sex with the women who were stationed at the entrance to the tent of meeting.  
23 He said to them, “Why do you behave in this way? For I hear about these evil things from all these people.  
24 This ought not to be, my sons! For the report that I hear circulating among the LORD’s people is not good.  
25 If a man sins against a man, one may appeal to God on his behalf. But if a man sins against the LORD, who then will intercede for him?” But Eli’s sons would not listen to their father, for the LORD had decided to kill them.  
26 Now the boy Samuel was growing up and finding favor both with the LORD and with people.

**Eli’s House is Judged**

27 A man of God came to Eli and said to him, “This is what the LORD says: ‘Did I not plainly reveal myself to your ancestor’s house when they were in Egypt in the house of Pharaoh?  
28 I chose your ancestor from all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to offer sacrifice on my altar, to burn incense, and to bear the ephod before me. I gave to your ancestor’s house all the fire offerings made by the Israelites.  
29 Why are you scorning my sacrifice and my offering that I commanded for my dwelling place? You have honored your sons more than you have me by having made yourselves fat from the best parts of all the offerings of my people Israel.’  
30 Therefore the LORD, the God of Israel, says, ‘I really did say that your house and your ancestor’s house would serve me forever.’ But now the LORD says, ‘May it never be! For I will honor those who honor me, but those who despise me will be cursed!  
31 In fact, days are coming when I will remove your strength and the strength of your father’s house. There will not be an old man in your house!  
32 You will see trouble in my dwelling place! Israel will experience blessings, but there will not be an old man in your house for all time.  
33 Any one of you that I do not cut off from my altar, I will cause your eyes to fail and will cause you grief. All of those born to your family will die in the prime of life.  
34 This will be a confirming sign for you that will be fulfilled through your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas: in a single day they both will die!  
35 Then I will raise up for myself a faithful priest. He will do what is in my heart and soul. I will build for him a secure dynasty and he will serve my chosen one for all time.  
36 Everyone who remains in your house will come to bow before him for a little money and for a scrap of bread. Each will say, ‘Assign me to a priestly task so I can eat a scrap of bread.’”

**God Calls Samuel**

3:1 Now the boy Samuel continued serving the LORD under Eli’s supervision. Word from the LORD was rare in those days; revelatory visions were infrequent.  
2 Eli’s eyes had begun to fail, so that he was unable to see well. At that time he was lying down in his place,  
3 and the lamp of God had not yet been extinguished. Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD as well; the ark of God was also there.  
4 The LORD called to Samuel, and he replied, “Here I am!”  
5 Then he ran to Eli and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” But Eli said, “I didn’t call you. Go back and lie down.” So he went back and lay down.  
6 The LORD again called, “Samuel!” So Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” But Eli said, “I didn’t call you, my son. Go back and lie down.”  
7 Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD; the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him.  
8 Then the LORD called Samuel a third time. So he got up and went to Eli and said, “Here I am, for you called me!” Eli then realized that it was the LORD who was calling the boy.  
9 So Eli said to Samuel, “Go back and lie down. When he calls you, say, ‘Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.’” So Samuel went back and lay down in his place.  
10 Then the LORD came and stood nearby, calling as he had previously done, “Samuel! Samuel!” Samuel replied, “Speak, for your servant is listening!”  
11 The LORD said to Samuel, “Look! I am about to do something in Israel; when anyone hears about it, both of his ears will tingle.  
12 On that day I will carry out against Eli everything that I spoke about his house—from start to finish!  
13 You should tell him that I am about to judge his house forever because of the sin that he knew about. For his sons were cursing God, and he did not rebuke them.  
14 Therefore I swore an oath to the house of Eli, ‘The sin of the house of Eli can never be forgiven by sacrifice or by grain offering.’”  
15 So Samuel lay down until morning. Then he opened the doors of the LORD’s house. But Samuel was afraid to tell Eli about the vision.  
16 However, Eli called Samuel and said, “Samuel, my son!” He replied, “Here I am.”  
17 Eli said, “What message did he speak to you? Don’t conceal it from me. God will judge you severely if you conceal from me anything that he said to you!”

18 So Samuel told him everything. He did not hold back anything from him. Eli said, “The LORD will do what he pleases.”

### **Samuel the Prophet**

19 Samuel continued to grow, and the LORD was with him. None of his prophecies fell to the ground unfulfilled.

20 All Israel from Dan to Beer Sheba realized that Samuel was confirmed as a prophet of the LORD.

21 Then the LORD again appeared in Shiloh, for it was in Shiloh that the LORD had revealed himself to Samuel through the word of the LORD.

4:1a Samuel revealed the word of the LORD 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 Then the Israelites went out to fight the Philistines. They camped at Ebenezer, and the Philistines camped at Aphek.

2 The Philistines arranged their forces to fight Israel. As the battle spread out, Israel was defeated by the Philistines, who killed about four thousand men in the battle line in the field.

3 When the army came back to the camp, the elders of Israel said, “Why did the LORD let us be defeated today by the Philistines? Let’s take with us the ark of the covenant of the LORD from Shiloh. When it is with us, it will save us from the hand of our enemies.

4 So the army sent to Shiloh, and they took from there the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts who sits between the cherubim. Now the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phineas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God.

5 When the ark of the covenant of the LORD arrived at the camp, all Israel shouted so loudly that the ground shook.

6 When the Philistines heard the sound of the shout, they said, “What is this loud shout in the camp of the Hebrews?” Then they realized that the ark of the LORD had arrived at the camp.

7 The Philistines were scared because they thought that gods had come to the camp. They said, “Too bad for us! We’ve never seen anything like this!

8 Too bad for us! Who can deliver us from the hand of these mighty gods? These are the gods who struck the Egyptians with all sorts of plagues in the desert!

9 Be strong and act like men, you Philistines, or else you will wind up serving the Hebrews the way they have served you! Act like men and fight!”

10 So the Philistines fought. Israel was defeated; they all ran home. The slaughter was very great; thirty thousand foot soldiers fell in battle.

11 The ark of God was taken, and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phineas, were killed.

### **Eli's Death**

12 On that day a Benjaminite ran from the battle lines and came to Shiloh. His clothes were torn and dirt was on his head.

13 When he arrived in Shiloh, Eli was sitting in his chair watching by the side of the road, for he was very worried about the ark of God. As the man entered the city to give his report, the whole city cried out.

14 When Eli heard the outcry, he said, “What is this commotion?” The man quickly came and told Eli.

15 Now Eli was ninety-eight years old and his eyes looked straight ahead; he was unable to see.

16 The man said to Eli, “I am the one who came from the battle lines! Just today I fled from the battle lines!” Eli asked, “How did things go, my son?”

17 The messenger replied, “Israel has fled from the Philistines! The army has suffered a great defeat! Your two sons, Hophni and Phineas, are dead! The ark of God has been captured!”

18 When he mentioned the ark of God, Eli fell backward from his chair beside the gate. He broke his neck and died, for he was old and heavy. He had judged Israel for forty years.

### **The Birth of Ichabod**

19 His daughter-in-law, the wife of Phineas, was pregnant and close to giving birth. When she heard that the ark of God was captured and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she doubled over and gave birth. But her labor pains were too much for her.

20 As she was dying, the women who were there with her said, “Don’t be afraid! You have given birth to a son!” But she did not reply or pay any attention.

21 She named the boy Ichabod, saying, “The glory has departed from Israel,” referring to the capture of the ark of God and the deaths of her father-in-law and her husband.

22 She said, “The glory has departed from Israel, because the ark of God has been captured.”