

SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

LESSON 1



THE BIRTH OF SAMUEL

Scripture Texts: 1 Samuel 1:1-28; 1 Samuel 2:1-11

In this series of lessons, we will study the transition of Israel from theocracy to monarchy. It was under Samuel that this change took place. It was through his wisdom, patience, and spiritual insight that Israel's ship of state was safely guided through the stormy waters of political transition. Samuel was second only to Moses himself as the shaper of Israel's history and destiny. It is important, therefore, to observe how God prepared this leader for this difficult task.

Consider Hannah's faith. In what ways was it shown? Of what quality? How was it rewarded? Did her attitude affect her faith? She was yielded and obedient to God's will, fully committed to the keeping of her vow. She expected the granting of her request. What affect does disobedience or self-will have on faith? Jesus asked if He would find faith on the earth when He came. His coming seems very near. How will He find your faith?

MEMORY VERSE: *Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?*

—*Luke 18:8b.*

Hannah's Prayer

1 Samuel 1:1-11 The Book of Samuel begins with the account of the family into which Samuel was born. Elkanah and his two wives, Hannah and Peninnah, lived in Ramah. The wives were unequal, one the favorite, the other having children. The resulting friction shows one evil of polygamy. Peninnah's jealous jabs found a tender spot in the fact that Hannah, the better loved, was barren. This was a condition that was a reproach among the Hebrews. While at Shiloh on their annual worship trip, Hannah, much grieved with fresh wounds in her heart, took her need to God. She asked for a child. This would remove her reproach. A son. One who could serve God in a special way. **Then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life.**

Consider the cost of this to a mother's heart, not in giving him to God's work, but in the separation it meant. **No razor...**He would be a lifelong Nazarite (**Numbers 6**). He was dedicated by his mother to God's service before he was born. Samuel was to become one of Israel's greatest religious leaders.

The Birth of Samuel

1 Samuel 1:12-23 While Hannah's lips were moving in prayer, Eli, the priest, unjustly accused her of being drunk and rebuked her for it. Hannah, accustomed to ridicule and misjudgment, calmly answered him, saying she was not drunk, but that she was pouring out her soul to God in agonizing prayer. Being set straight, he linked his faith and such authority as was given him as a priest with her faith and said, **The God of Israel grant thee thy petition.** Comforted by the words of the priest, and lightened of the burden which she had cast before the Lord in prayer, Hannah's faith counted it done. She entered once again into the activities of the feast with cheerful countenance and thankful heart. In due time, the son was born and named Samuel, meaning "heart of God," a symbol of her faith and God's faithfulness. Hannah believed as in **Mark 11:24.**

The manner in which Hannah met her irritations and frustrations is a worthy example. Eli's misunderstanding did not affect her faith. It did not cause her to be upset and turn her eyes from the goal. Failure is the line of least persistence.

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Hannah's Dedication

1 Samuel 1:24-28 And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her...unto the house of the Lord in Shiloh. She waited to go to the tabernacle at Shiloh until she could fulfill her vow in giving Samuel. Having vowed, Hannah stuck to it. She rejoiced in doing so (**1 Samuel 2:1**). No longer weeping and grief-stricken did she appear empty-handed before the Lord. But now, with joyful heart, she brought the son for whom she had poured out her soul in prayer. Elkanah was in full agreement with the activities of Hannah. They sacrificed and worshipped and turned Samuel over to the Lord in care of Eli. Hannah gave testimony to Eli as being the woman that stood by him praying for a child and that the Lord had given her the petition which she had asked of Him.

The vow which Hannah had made to the Lord was now fulfilled. She had given her most priceless gift to the Lord, and through that gift the whole history of Israel was to be changed. **And he worshipped the Lord there.** Samuel had been taught reverence for, as well as worship, of God. While very young, his feet had been set in the right path. In the house of God, Samuel was instructed in the Law and in the meaning and celebration of the various religious ceremonies that took place throughout the year. But that could never have taken place without the home training which Samuel had received from his parents in those early impressionable years.

Home and church must cooperate in the Christian education of youth; one cannot do without the other. Hannah and Elkanah could not dedicate Samuel in the true sense of the word; no one can dedicate another. They could not yield his heart, his will, or his love to God. The parents gave themselves to raise a child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. They released their claim upon him in favor of God's. They placed him in a good environment. They prayed for and encouraged him to do God's will. This did not give him standing with God or change his heart. It did not lessen to any degree the necessity of his own yielding of heart and life to God. These influences shaped Samuel's character as he entered the second phase of his life of faithful service to God.

Hannah's Praise

1 Samuel 2:1-11 Notice here Hannah's prayer that turned into a song of praise. Compare it to Mary's praise in **Luke 1:46-55**. **And the child did minister unto the Lord before Eli the priest.** How happy and proud Hannah must have been as she saw him ministering in the temple on her yearly visits, and most of all, as she saw him developing in favor with God and man.

JUST A THOUGHT

**Joy comes not from knowing
the will of God, but from *doing* it.**

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
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