

Survey of the Bible part 9

Samuel was a prophet of God during the last part of the time of the judges. In fact he was one of the last judges of Israel, aside from his sons. He was also a man of prayer. His life is seen in the pages of 1Samuel and it transpires around 1052 BC and covers a period of about a hundred years.

The life of Samuel actually starts off in a response to a prayer which is answered miraculously by God. But to put that prayer into perspective we need to read much of the first chapter of 1Samuel.

1 Samuel 1:1-20 ^{NAU} 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?" 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*. 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."

And of course after the child Samuel is weaned Hannah's promise to God comes to fruition.

1 Samuel 1:24-28 ²⁴ Now when she had weaned him, ^ashe 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 ^bthe house of the LORD in Shiloh, although the child was young. ²⁵ Then ^athey slaughtered the bull, and ^bbrought the boy to Eli. ²⁶ She said, "Oh, my lord! ^aAs your soul lives, my lord, I am the woman who stood here beside you, praying to the LORD. ²⁷ ^a"For this boy I prayed, and the LORD has given me my petition which I asked of Him. ²⁸ ^aSo I have also ¹dedicated him to the LORD; as long as he lives he is ¹dedicated to the LORD." And ^bhe worshiped the LORD there.

In all likelihood Samuel didn't live at the temple with the priests, but was trained at the temple from an early age with the help of the women in the tabernacle.

But there is an amazing praise that Hannah gives to God at the beginning of chapter 2 that should be noted.

1 Samuel 2:1-10 ^{AU} **1 Samuel 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."

What is the main theme of this praise from Hannah?

The sovereignty of God. God is the one who kills and God is the one who makes alive. God is the one who makes poor and rich, but He can and does raise the poor from the dust and causes them to sit with nobles.

God and God alone puts every individual on a path. It is His choice and it is His will as to how He will situate each person. But it is the individual who then must glorify God on whatever path he finds himself.

What's interesting about Samuel is that he is a type of Christ. As we'll see his life is one of prophet, priest and king, and we know that all of Scripture speaks to Jesus Christ, and Samuel is one of the characters chosen by God to work out a life that magnifies the king of kings.

Notice the similarities with his early life to that of Jesus.

1 Samuel 2:26 ²⁶ Now the boy ^aSamuel ¹was growing in stature and in favor both with the LORD and with men.

Luke 2:52 ⁵² And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and ¹stature, and in ^afavor with God and men.

It was during this time in history that Samuel was called upon by God to confront Israel who had grown in degeneracy. As a result the surrounding people's, the Philistines, kept Israel in subjection.

This led to the people of Israel becoming frustrated with their plight and they challenged Samuel to do something drastic.

1 Samuel 8:1-5 And it came about when Samuel was old that he appointed his sons judges over Israel. ² Now the name of his

firstborn was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; *they* were judging in Beersheba. ³ His sons, however, did not walk in his ways, but turned aside after dishonest gain and took bribes and perverted justice. ⁴ Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah; ⁵ and they said to him, "Behold, you have grown old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint a king for us to judge us like all the nations." Of course Samuel was disappointed that they requested this, not merely because it was a slap in his face, but because it was a slap in God's face, that the Almighty could not be trusted to lead His people through his appointed leaders.

And so, Samuel goes to God and God gave him an answer.

1 Samuel 10:17-19 ¹⁷ Thereafter Samuel called the people together to the LORD at Mizpah; ¹⁸ and he said to the sons of Israel, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'I brought Israel up from Egypt, and I delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the power of all the kingdoms that were oppressing you.' ¹⁹ "But you have today rejected your God, who delivers you from all your calamities and your distresses; yet you have said, 'No, but set a king over us!' Now therefore, present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes and by your clans."

Why does Samuel go back to the early history of Israel coming out of Egypt?

To demonstrate that it was God, and not a leader or king of Israel, who accomplished what only God could. And the nation was to find out who their new king would be.

1 Samuel 10:20-27 ²⁰ Thus Samuel brought all the tribes of Israel near, and the tribe of Benjamin was taken by lot. ²¹ Then he brought the tribe of Benjamin near by its families, and the Matrite family was taken. And Saul the son of Kish was taken; but when they looked for him, he could not be found. ²² Therefore they inquired further of the LORD, "Has the man come here yet?" So the LORD said, "Behold, he is hiding himself by the baggage." ²³ So they ran and took him from there, and when he stood among the people, he was taller than any of the people from his shoulders upward. ²⁴ Samuel said to all the people, "Do you see him whom the LORD has chosen? Surely there is no one like him among all the people." So all the people shouted and said, "*Long* live the king!" ²⁵ Then Samuel told the people the ordinances of the kingdom, and wrote *them* in the book and placed *it* before the LORD. And Samuel sent all the people away, each one to his

house. ²⁶ Saul also went to his house at Gibeah; and the valiant *men* whose hearts God had touched went with him. ²⁷ But certain worthless men said, "How can this one deliver us?" And they despised him and did not bring him any present. But he kept silent.

And so, Saul begins a campaign to defeat the enemies of Israel and he starts with the Ammonites. What's interesting is that he had no intention of going after the Ammonites until the king of the Ammonites threatened to invade a portion of the Israelites.

1 Samuel 11:1-3 ^{NAU} Now Nahash the Ammonite came up and besieged Jabesh-gilead; and all the men of Jabesh said to Nahash, "Make a covenant with us and we will serve you." ² But Nahash the Ammonite said to them, "I will make *it* with you on this condition, that I will gouge out the right eye of every one of you, thus I will make it a reproach on all Israel." ³ The elders of Jabesh said to him, "Let us alone for seven days, that we may send messengers throughout the territory of Israel. Then, if there is no one to deliver us, we will come out to you."

What is the first mistake made by the Jews in Jabesh-gilead?

They were willing to submit themselves to the Ammonites, essentially as their slaves. But Nahash was satisfied with making them slaves. He wanted to humiliate them. Well, the Jews aren't sure they like that deal and so they ask for 7 days to ponder this arrangement. Well in that 7 days word reaches Saul.

1 Samuel 11:4-6 ⁴ Then the messengers came to Gibeah of Saul and spoke these words in the hearing of the people, and all the people lifted up their voices and wept. ⁵ Now behold, Saul was coming from the field behind the oxen, and he said, "What is *the matter* with the people that they weep?" So they related to him the words of the men of Jabesh. ⁶ Then the Spirit of God came upon Saul mightily when he heard these words, and he became very angry.

And then Saul does something very interesting.

1 Samuel 11:7-8 ⁷ He took a yoke of oxen and cut them in pieces, and sent *them* throughout the territory of Israel by the hand of messengers, saying, "Whoever does not come out after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done to his oxen." Then the dread of the LORD fell on the people, and they came out as one man. ⁸ He numbered them in Bezek; and the sons of Israel were 300,000, and the men of Judah 30,000.

Why do you suppose Saul does this?

There seems to be only one thing that motivates the Jews. Fear. Either fear of having their eyes gouged out by Nahash, or fear of Saul and Samuel destroying them. In any case, the latter fear of Saul and Samuel trumps Nahash and the result is clear. An army is raised in Israel to go after the Ammonites.

The rest of 1 Samuel deals with a lot of the history of Israel in the midst of their enemies. But more important are the people in leadership who are chosen by God to rule over Israel and what happens in their lives.

And so, Samuel decides at the command of God to take a back seat to Saul and he essentially retires from public life. But before he goes he again gives a history lesson to Israel.

1 Samuel 12:6-16 ⁶ Then Samuel said to the people, "It is the LORD who appointed Moses and Aaron and who brought your fathers up from the land of Egypt. ⁷ "So now, take your stand, that I may plead with you before the LORD concerning all the righteous acts of the LORD which He did for you and your fathers. ⁸ "When Jacob went into Egypt and your fathers cried out to the LORD, then the LORD sent Moses and Aaron who brought your fathers out of Egypt and settled them in this place. ⁹ "But they forgot the LORD their God, so He sold them into the hand of Sisera, captain of the army of Hazor, and into the hand of the Philistines and into the hand of the king of Moab, and they fought against them. ¹⁰ "They cried out to the LORD and said, 'We have sinned because we have forsaken the LORD and have served the Baals and the Ashtaroth; but now deliver us from the hands of our enemies, and we will serve You.' ¹¹ "Then the LORD sent Jerubbaal and Bedan and Jephthah and Samuel, and delivered you from the hands of your enemies all around, so that you lived in security. ¹² "When you saw that Nahash the king of the sons of Ammon came against you, you said to me, 'No, but a king shall reign over us,' although the LORD your God *was* your king. ¹³ "Now therefore, here is the king whom you have chosen, whom you have asked for, and behold, the LORD has set a king over you. ¹⁴ "If you will fear the LORD and serve Him, and listen to His voice and not rebel against the command of the LORD, then both you and also the king who reigns over you will follow the LORD your God. ¹⁵ "If you will not listen to the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the command of the LORD, then the hand of the LORD will be against you, *as it was* against your fathers. ¹⁶ "Even

now, take your stand and see this great thing which the LORD will do before your eyes.

In all of this what is Samuel's message to the people?

That God and God alone is their deliverer.

From chapter 13 on we revisit the day Saul was chosen to be king over Israel and his military campaigns. But we also see that his rule was not as righteous as it should have been and that a second king was to be chosen by God.

What precipitated that was an order that was given to Saul to utterly destroy the Amalekites and their king. Saul's partial obedience was still seen as disobedience and it had dire consequences for Saul's future.

1 Samuel 15:16-26 ¹⁶ Then Samuel said to Saul, "Wait, and let me tell you what the LORD said to me last night." And he said to him, "Speak!" ¹⁷ Samuel said, "Is it not true, though you were little in your own eyes, you were *made* the head of the tribes of Israel? And the LORD anointed you king over Israel, ¹⁸ and the LORD sent you on a mission, and said, 'Go and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are exterminated.'¹⁹ "Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD, but rushed upon the spoil and did what was evil in the sight of the LORD?" ²⁰ Then Saul said to Samuel, "I did obey the voice of the LORD, and went on the mission on which the LORD sent me, and have brought back Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. ²¹ "But the people took *some* of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the choicest of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the LORD your God at Gilgal." ²² Samuel said, "Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, *And* to heed than the fat of rams. ²³ "For rebellion is as the sin of divination, And insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He has also rejected you from *being* king." ²⁴ Then Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned; I have indeed transgressed the command of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people and listened to their voice. ²⁵ "Now therefore, please pardon my sin and return with me, that I may worship the LORD." ²⁶ But Samuel said to Saul, "I will not return with you; for you have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel."

So, God will choose another to be king over Israel.

1 Samuel 16:1-7 ^{NAU} Now the LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul, since I have rejected him from being king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and go; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have selected a king for Myself among his sons." ² But Samuel said, "How can I go? When Saul hears *of it*, he will kill me." And the LORD said, "Take a heifer with you and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.'" ³ "You shall invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; and you shall anoint for Me the one whom I designate to you." ⁴ So Samuel did what the LORD said, and came to Bethlehem. And the elders of the city came trembling to meet him and said, "Do you come in peace?" ⁵ He said, "In peace; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Consecrate yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice." He also consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice. ⁶ When they entered, he looked at Eliab and thought, "Surely the LORD'S anointed is before Him." ⁷ But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God *sees* not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

Then Samuel calls for Jesse to bring his sons into the presence of the prophet. It will be one of the sons of Jesse who will be the next king.

By the way, remember last time we were in the book of Ruth, it was Boaz who married Ruth. Boaz was from Bethlehem and had a son to Ruth by the name of Obed, who had a son by what name?

Jesse. This is the same Jesse we're now addressing who was commanded to bring his sons before Samuel.

1 Samuel 16:8-15 ⁸ Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, "The LORD has not chosen this one either." ⁹ Next Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, "The LORD has not chosen this one either." ¹⁰ Thus Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. But Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen these." ¹¹ And Samuel said to Jesse, "Are these all the children?" And he said, "There remains yet the youngest, and behold, he is tending the sheep." Then Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here." ¹² So he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, with beautiful eyes and a handsome appearance. And the LORD

said, "Arise, anoint him; for this is he." ¹³ Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward. And Samuel arose and went to Ramah. ¹⁴ Now the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD terrorized him. ¹⁵ Saul's servants then said to him, "Behold now, an evil spirit from God is terrorizing you.

Again, in the grand scheme of things who is directing the future of Israel and the One who will be chosen to be the Redeemer of His people?

God is doing all the directing. Next time we're going to see how God will use David in the life of Saul. Keep in mind that simply because God has chosen and anointed David to be the next king, it will not happen immediately. There will be a delay until God is ready to put David into place as the next king of Israel.