

# *1 Samuel*

*By Matthew Allen*

© 2016 Spiritbuilding Publishing  
All rights reserved. No part of this book may  
be reproduced in any form without the  
written permission of the publisher.

Published by  
*Spiritbuilding Publishers*  
9700 Ferry Rd.  
Waynesville, OH 45068

Printed in the United States of America

1 SAMUEL  
By Matthew Allen

**Spiritbuilding**  
P U B L I S H E R S

*Spiritual “equipment” for the contest of life*



# Table of Contents

## Lesson 1

*Introduction & Background* . . . . . 6

## Lesson 2

*Dedication of Samuel* . . . . . 9

## Lesson 3

*Destruction of the House of Eli* . . . . . 14

## Lesson 4

*Defeat of Israel and Showdown with Dagon* . . . . . 20

## Lesson 5

*Disaster at Beth-Shemesh* . . . . . 25

## Lesson 6

*Israel Demands for a King* . . . . . 31

## Lesson 7

*Israel Receives a King* . . . . . 36

## Lesson 8

*Saul Vindicated* . . . . . 42

## Lesson 9

*Samuel Steps off the National Stage* . . . . . 46

## Lesson 10

*The Impatience of Saul* . . . . . 50

## Lesson 11

*Victories and Mistakes of Saul* . . . . . 55

## Lesson 12

*Saul's Outright Rebellion* . . . . . 61

<b>Lesson 13</b>	
	<i>David Anointed King . . . . .</i> 68
<b>Lesson 14</b>	
	<i>Saul's Declining Leadership . . . . .</i> 73
<b>Lesson 15</b>	
	<i>David Serves in Saul's Court . . . . .</i> 80
<b>Lesson 16</b>	
	<i>Saul's Jealousy and David Forced to Flee . . . . .</i> 85
<b>Lesson 17</b>	
	<i>David and Jonathan . . . . .</i> 90
<b>Lesson 18</b>	
	<i>David, Ahimelech, Achish, and Escape to Moab . . . . .</i> 93
<b>Lesson 19</b>	
	<i>Massacre of Priests and Town of Nob . . . . .</i> 97
<b>Lesson 20</b>	
	<i>David's First and Second Escape . . . . .</i> 101
<b>Lesson 21</b>	
	<i>David's Third Escape; Nabal and Abigail . . . . .</i> 106
<b>Lesson 22</b>	
	<i>David Spares Saul Again and Flight to Philistia . . . . .</i> 112
<b>Lesson 23</b>	
	<i>Saul Consults a Medium at Endor . . . . .</i> 117
<b>Lesson 24</b>	
	<i>David's Troubles and Death of Saul . . . . .</i> 121

# Lesson 1

---

## Introduction & Background

Around 1200 B.C., the ancient Philistines began to settle in large numbers on the western coast of Palestine. Within a few generations, they began to push inland and clashed with the Israelites. The Philistines had a powerful army with advanced weaponry for the time. Over several centuries, they constantly harassed Israel and are the primary antagonist against God's people in 1 Samuel. The Philistines began their offensive during the time of the Judges.

Now the sons of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD, so that the LORD gave them into the hands of the Philistines forty years.

—*Judges 13:1*

In the period leading up to Samuel, Eli served as judge over Israel. His leadership was weak at best. During the latter part of Eli's judgeship, Samuel was growing up. His name has been associated with our book of study largely due to his prominence during the years leading up to Israel's international prominence as a nation. Samuel would be responsible for setting up the monarchy in Israel and played a large influence in the life of David.

The author of 1 & 2 Samuel is anonymous. Jewish tradition says that the author was a prophet. Because of the length of these books, no one person could have been a contemporary of all the events. (The books span over 140 years of time.) As 1 Chronicles is being concluded, we read:

Now the acts of King David, from first to last, are written in the chronicles of Samuel the seer, in the chronicles of Nathan the prophet and in the chronicles of Gad the seer...

—*1 Chronicles 29:29*

Most likely, the author of 1 & 2 Samuel consulted all three of these sources as he wrote the book we know.

The purpose of 1 & 2 Samuel was to “narrate the circumstances surrounding the founding of the monarchy in Israel” (Smith 1995). 1 Samuel covers the beginning of the reign of the Kings. 2 Samuel provides information on the years that Israel began to dominate as a world power. Ultimately, the purposes of these writings are to demonstrate the beginning of the house of David: the family through whom the Messiah would one day come.

“When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom.”

—2 Samuel 7:12

The opening event of 1 Samuel, i.e., the prophet’s birth, happened around the year 1110 B.C. The last event of 2 Samuel, the death of David, happened around 971 B.C. 1 Samuel covers about one hundred years, 2 Samuel covers around 40.

## *Brief Outline of 1 & 2 Samuel*

### **A. 1 Samuel 1-12 — Last Years of the Judges and Institution of a Monarchy.**

1. Eli deemed a failure in his religious responsibilities and in his response to the Philistine aggression.
2. Samuel begins his reign as judge — and Israel gains victory over the Philistines.
3. People desire a king, and demand it from God.
4. Saul was selected by God and anointed by Samuel.
5. God confirmed Saul’s reign militarily, and ultimately. Samuel resigns as judge.

### **B. 1 Samuel 13-31 — The Reign of Saul**

1. At first, Saul enjoyed strong public support and had the private consultation from Samuel.

2. After 1 Samuel 15, Saul sought to impede David's rise to national power and his ultimate rise as Saul's successor.

**C. 2 Samuel 1-20 — The Reign of David**

1. 1 Samuel 11 (David's sin with Bathsheba) is the great dividing line of this section. Before this, David enjoyed success. After this, the sword never left David's house.

**D. 2 Samuel 21-24 — Appendix to David's Narrative**

1. Chapters are intended to recap David's career from a spiritual perspective.

I am excited about our study together in 1 Samuel. Old Testament history is very interesting and the reading in 1 Samuel is some of the most captivating in all of Scripture. As you read and study through this book, see the working of God as He patiently moves things toward the ultimate goal: bringing Jesus to earth to die for our sin.

## *Questions*

1. Who was the primary antagonist in 1 Samuel?
2. Who was the judge of Israel in Samuel's youth?
3. How effective was his leadership?
4. Who wrote 1 Samuel?
5. How long is the time period of 1 Samuel? 2 Samuel?
6. What is the purpose of 1 Samuel?
7. What are some personal goals you have for this study?



## Lesson 2



### *Dedication of Samuel*

*(1 Samuel 1:1–2:11)*

#### *1:1–8 – Hannah’s Situation*

**E**lkanah lived in Ramah in the area of Ephraim. He had two wives. Hannah was most likely his first wife, but was unable to bear him children. In Middle Eastern culture, bearing of children was of absolute importance, so Elkanah married Peninnah in order to pass on his inheritance. Each year, Elkanah would gather his family and go to Shiloh to sacrifice and pay offerings to the Lord. Peninnah would always treat Hannah with contempt because of Hannah’s inability to have children. She tormented Hannah about this and the time of the yearly sacrifice became a dread for Hannah. The text does a good job letting us see her distress. She felt empty and useless because she could not produce an heir for her husband. Despite the best efforts of her husband, Hannah could not be consoled. Elkanah said,

“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?”

—1 Samuel 1:8

#### *1:9-19a – Hannah Takes the Matter to God*

When it came time for Hannah to present her offering, she entered the sanctuary weeping and knelt down to entreat the Lord. She approached God humbly, referring to herself as God’s “maidservant.” In her prayer, she vows that if God would give her a son, she would dedicate him to the Lord and give him over for service to God all the days of his life.

While Hannah was praying, the high priest, Eli, sat on a chair observing her actions. As she prayed she did so with her lips moving but no sound

came out of her voice. Eli spoke up and accused her of being drunk. It is tragic that this religious leader would automatically assume the worst of her. Hannah politely replies that she was not drunk, but that she was “pouring out her heart to the Lord.” To this Eli replies,

“Go in peace; and may the God of Israel grant your petition that you have asked of Him.”

—1 Samuel 1:17

After praying, she returned to her family and continued her meal. The Scripture says that her entire demeanor changed as “her face was no longer sad.” After their visit to Shiloh Elkanah and his family returned home.

### *1:19b-28 – Hannah’s Prayer Answered*

Soon afterward, Hannah conceived and gave birth to a son. The child was named Samuel, “name of God.” The arrival of Samuel was a direct answer to the prayer Hannah prayed in the sanctuary at Shiloh. The next year Elkanah returned to the tabernacle to worship and pay his vow. Hannah did not accompany him, as she stayed at home until Samuel was weaned. Under Mosaic Law, women were not obligated to attend annual festivals. Smith has written, “Unless repudiated by her husband, the vow of a wife became an obligation upon her husband.” What she had vowed concerning Samuel was now the responsibility of Elkanah.

Eastern women typically weaned their kids at the age of three years. After the weaning process, Hannah took a large offering and her son to the sanctuary at Shiloh. The family offered their sacrifice and brought the boy to Eli. She reminded Eli of her prayer that day three years earlier in the sanctuary. Samuel was the result of that prayer and she would now give him to God for lifelong service. In response, Eli bows down in worship to the Lord.

## 2:1-11 – Hannah’s Prayer

The first eleven verses of chapter two contain a prayer of Hannah. In her prayer, God is the focus as she identifies four sources of great joy in her life. First, she rejoiced for God answering her prayer in delivering her from the misery of being unable to bear children, 2:1. Next, she rejoiced in who God is. God is holy and possesses all strength and knowledge, 2:2-3. Then, she rejoiced in the reign and power of God. She expressed that over time, all things tend to work themselves out. God will make all things right, 2:4-8. Finally, she rejoiced in her hope. She says that the righteous are always taken care of by God and the wicked are ultimately rejected. There is a Messianic prophecy in 2:10. The phrases, “strength to his king” and “exalt the horn of his anointed” refer to Jesus. After presenting Samuel to Eli, Hannah and the rest of Elkanah’s family leave and return to Ramah. Samuel remained at Shiloh ministering to God under the supervision and training of Eli.

### *For New Testament Christians*

**Effective prayer calms the soul.** Hannah carried a heavy burden each day knowing that she could not provide a child for her husband. The yearly trip to Shiloh and constant harassing by Peninnah only made matters worse. Things got so bad for Hannah that she could not eat. She decides to take the matter to God in prayer. Chapter 1:11 teaches that she completely opened her heart to God. She held nothing back. After Eli realized Hannah was praying and not drunk, he encouraged her by verbalizing his desire for God to grant her petition, 1:17. Once Hannah opened her heart to God, she left the matter at His feet and trusted completely in Him. This is seen in how she returned to her family after prayer and was able to eat a meal. Now she was calm and resolute, knowing that the matter was in the hands of God. Prayer certainly brings peace. This is one of the greatest blessings of being a child of God. Paul wrote:

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

—*Philippians 4:6-7*

The result of Hannah's prayer? God heard and answered her prayer in a positive manner.

**Don't let discouragement conquer you.** Hannah had a number of things that could have contributed to her being down and having low self-esteem. She was unable to bear children. Her husband was in a relationship with another woman who constantly treated her with contempt. In human terms, her situation could not be changed. Elkanah was powerless to change her inability to bear children. After Hannah decided to take the matter to God, the high priest accused her of being drunk. She could have given up at that point. She did not. Instead she continued on and turned the matter over to God.

**Don't be too quick to judge.** Eli assumed Hannah was drunk when he saw Hannah praying. Instead of inquiring as to why Hannah was so emotional, Eli made a quick judgment and assumed the worst. Since we do not know what is in someone else's heart, we must guard against the danger of judging their heart and motives. Before we assume anything, we need to communicate and listen to them. The Bible says,

“God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”

—*1 Samuel 16:7*

**Follow through on your vows.** When Hannah petitioned God, she made a deal with Him. She was not required to do so, but did so anyway. When God answered her prayer, she followed through. How tough it must have been to leave her child with Eli in the sanctuary when the time came. When we make a vow to God, we must pay it.

## *Questions*

1. Who were Elkanah and his two wives?
2. Why did Peninnah constantly torment Hannah?
3. Do you think Elkanah did a good job in comforting his wife? (1:8)
4. What did Hannah do at the tabernacle in order to resolve her problem?
5. What was Eli's reaction to Hannah's prayer?
6. What are your thoughts to the way Eli reacted?
7. How did God answer Hannah's prayer?
8. What was the vow Hannah made? Was Hannah required to follow through?
9. What stands out most to you as you read Hannah's prayer in 2:1-10?
10. How does this lesson testify to the effectiveness of prayer?
11. This lesson helped my spiritual life by:

## Lesson 3



### *Destruction of the House of Eli*

*(1 Samuel 2:12 – 4:1a)*

#### *2:12-17 – Worthless Men*

Eli's sons were described as "worthless men." Although they were priests, their relationship with God was completely superficial. To back up the claim of them being "worthless," the writer describes two instances in this chapter of the practices of Phinehas and Hophni, which violated the law. When people would come offering sacrifices, a servant was dispatched to retrieve boiling meat from the pot of the priests' portion. This was done before the Lord received His portion. If someone challenged the servant as he took meat for the priests, they were threatened with violence, 2:16. Their sin was great before the Lord:

Thus the sin of the young men was very great in the sight of the LORD, for the men treated the offering of the LORD with contempt.

—1 Samuel 2:17

#### *2:18-21 – The Contrast between Phinehas/Hophni & Samuel*

In the middle of the description of Eli's sons, the writer interjects a small section on Samuel. It presents a stark contrast. He was clothed in a linen ephod and ministered before the Lord. Hannah visited Samuel each year and would bring him a robe when coming to the tabernacle to offer sacrifices. Hannah was blessed with five children. This section of contrast closes with the following nugget of information on Samuel:

And the young man Samuel grew in the presence of the LORD.

—1 Samuel 2:21b

## *2:22-26 – Sexual Sin*

When Eli learned of the sexual sin of his sons, he tried to warn them. They were committing sexual immorality with the women who served at the tabernacle. He warned them that sinning against God was far more serious than sinning against men, 2:25. Phinehas and Hophni would not listen. Because of their continual rebellion against God, God determined to put them to death. At the end of this section, we again see Samuel, presented in great contrast:

Now the young man Samuel continued to grow both in stature and in favor with the LORD and also with man.

—1 Samuel 2:26

## *2:27-36 – Doom of the Priests Foretold*

A “man of God” came to Eli with a devastating message. Both of his sons would die before they were old. This unnamed “man of God” reminded Eli of the great privilege he had by serving as high priest. Because of his refusal to deal with his sons, God was greatly displeased. Eli had honored his sons above God. There was a great deal of dishonor and evil going on at the tabernacle in Shiloh. As high priest, Eli was responsible for the activities conducted there. He failed in handling the situation properly.

In verses 30-34, the punishment is communicated in detail. Eli’s sons would die before they got old, both on the same day, 2:31, 34. Eli would live to see the destruction of the tabernacle, 2:32. Aaron’s family would be removed from the priestly office, 2:33.

Who is the faithful priest of 2:35? At first glance, we might think of it being Samuel. However, Samuel’s house was not lasting. This is seen in 22:11-23 where Saul slaughtered all the priests at Nob. So who is the faithful priest? Could 2:35-36 be pointing to Christ? From Jesus, God would build an enduring house that would last forever. Christians are part of a royal

priesthood, 1 Peter 2:9. James E. Smith<sup>1</sup> points out that “Members of the old Aaronic priesthood would have to bow before God’s anointed, Messiah, if they would occupy a place of priestly service (2:35-36). When many of the Aaronic priests became obedient to the faith (Acts 6:7), this passage finds ultimate fulfillment.”

### *3:1-18 – Samuel’s Prophetic Call*

During this time, prophetic revelations were rare. Eli, who is old and blind, has retired to bed. Samuel is not far behind when the Lord called out to Samuel. Samuel did not recognize the Lord’s call and thought that Eli was calling for him. After the third time, Eli instructed Samuel to respond to God if He called again, 3:7. On the fourth time, the Lord “came and stood” and called as at other times, “Samuel! Samuel,” to which he replied, “Speak Lord, for your servant hears,” 3:9.

God reveals to Samuel that the house of Eli was about to be destroyed. News of this event would have an impact on all of Israel, so much that the ears of those who heard it would have their ears tingle, 3:11. The house of Eli would fall because Eli failed to rebuke his sons. There was no offering or sacrifice that could be offered to atone for their sin.

After receiving word from the Lord, Samuel went back to sleep. The next morning Samuel went through his chores and tried to avoid a conversation with Eli. He was afraid of Eli’s reaction to the bad news. Eli compelled Samuel to tell him what the Lord revealed. Samuel did so, to which Eli responded:

“It is the LORD. Let him do what seems good to him.”

—1 Samuel 3:18

---

<sup>1</sup> Smith, J. (1995), *The Books of History*, Joplin, Missouri: College Press, (252).



### *3:19-21 – Samuel's Fame*

From here, the attention turns back to Samuel and gives us a summary of his life. God was with him and none of his words or prophecies went unfulfilled. The people began to recognize that he was the prophet of the Lord. Knowledge of Samuel went from the farthest points north to the farthest points south in Israel. Here we see a great contrast between Samuel (who was with the Lord) and the house of Eli, who was void of any relationship with God.

### *For New Testament Christians*

**Serious issues call for serious consequences.** Eli's sons were described as worthless men. They took advantage of their position to advance their power, possessions, and wishes over the people. They were puffed up and arrogant. Eli knew his sons were evil. He did very little (passive at best) to stop them. The sins of Hophni and Phinehas were punishable by death, Numbers 15:22-31. Eli chose not to punish them in this way. By ignoring their sin, Eli not only ruined the lives of his sons, but his entire family. When we face serious problems in our lives, those situations need to be dealt with in a serious and decisive manner. Deliberate sin will be punished. Eli's sons knew full well what they were doing. They were living in complete rebellion to God. Because of their stubborn and unrepentant hearts, God determined to kill them.

**We must not neglect our family.** Eli had spent a lifetime in service to God, but his sons turned out "worthless." Why? Certainly we do not have all the answers. Did he neglect his family while being busy with his priestly duties? We must not let distractions keep us away from our spiritual connection with our family. If we do, great and permanent damage can be done.

## *Questions*

1. The author lists two examples of the wickedness of Phinehas and Hophni. What are they? See 2:13-17 and 2:22-26.
2. How is Samuel contrasted against Phinehas and Hophni?
3. Describe Eli's reaction to Phinehas & Hophni's sexual immorality. Would you describe it as passive? What was the penalty for their behavior under the law?
4. How many children did Hannah have after she gave Samuel to the Lord?
5. What were the four consequences listed by the "man of God" for the disobedience of Eli's sons?
6. Who is the faithful priest of 2:35?
7. Why do you think "the word of the Lord was rare" in those days?
8. What news did the Lord impart to Samuel?

9. What do you think of Eli's reaction to the Lord's revelation? See 3:18.
  
10. How did it become known that Samuel was the prophet of the Lord?
  
11. This lesson helped my spiritual life by: