

- There was a man named Elkahah from a town called Ramathaim-zophim which was in the hill country of Ephraim. (I Samuel 1:1) As we talked about last week, Ephraim was another name for Bethlehem and so he was from around that area. (Ruth 1:2)
- He had two wives. Polygamy was common in the day but explicitly forbidden under the new Covenant. (Matt 19:8-9) We can think of obscure situations that test this instruction, and we can only do our best if we find ourselves advising someone in those circumstances. Remember that we have been told all that we need to know and that the “secret things belong to God.” (Deuteronomy 29:29).
- The two wives names were Hannah and Penninah. Penninah had children, but Hannah had no children. (I Samuel 1:2)
- Elkanah would often go to the temple to worship and sacrifice. When he did, he would dole out portions of his offering to his family to also sacrifice. But he had special love for his wife Hannah, because the Lord had made it so that she couldn’t bear children, so he gave her a double portion. (I Samuel 1:3-6)
- Penninah was referred to as Hannah’s rival, so there was clearly some sort of tension between the two. Penninah used to tease Hannah so much she would cry and not eat. This is not the moral of the story, but it is interesting to note that polygamy isn’t working so hot in this case. (I Samuel 1:3-7)
- Elkanah cheers Hannah up by saying “I am better than ten sons to you, right?” So she finally takes some food with him. (I Samuel 1:8)
- Hannah stops outside the temple on the way home and is praying to God to give her a son, and if He does so, she says she will dedicate him to God and that no razor will come on his head. (I Samuel 1:9-11)
- This sounds a lot like the Nazarite vow that Samson’s parents took. It is described in detail in Numbers 6 and you will remember that it is no small thing. It involves a lot of ceremony in addition to some lifelong commitments – not to drink alcohol, not to shave or cut your hair, not to come near dead bodies. (Numbers 6)
- Hannah is praying silently but her lips are moving, so at first the priest in the temple (whose name is Eli) thinks she is drunk. But then he finds out she was just praying and tells her that God will grant her petition. So she was very happy and left. (I Samuel 1:9-11)
- Sure enough, Hannah has a son and she names him Samuel because she says she asked God and Samuel actually means “God has heard” in Hebrew. (I Samuel 1:12-20)
- Elkanah goes to worship in the temple but Hannah stays behind to finish nursing Samuel. She tells Elkahah about the deal she made with God and says she will dedicate him when he is no longer nursing. Elkahah agrees and that the vow is important that “the word of God may be established.” (I Samuel 1:21-23)
- Remember how important it is to keep a vow to God. It is better not to vow in the first place than not to keep a vow that we name to God. Ecclesiastes 5:4-5
- Hannah brings sacrifices to the Lord to the temple. The sacrifices include a three-year-old bull, an ephah (about 22 liters) of flour and a sack full of wine (they didn’t have bottles in those days). We find out that this temple was in a place called Shiloh. (I Samuel 1:21-24)
- The city of Shiloh was becoming a key religious town for the Israelites. The whole congregation of Israel began assembling there and built a place for assembly. (Joshua 18:1)

- Hannah brings Samuel to Eli and he stays and worships there. ([I Samuel 1:25-28](#))
- Hannah prays to the Lord a very beautiful and famous prayer. The words of this prayer are quoted often in scripture, especially in the Psalms of David. ([I Samuel 2:1-10](#)).
- There are quite a few foreshadowings of Christ in here. For example, compare verse 10 with [Hebrews 1:3](#). Paul is writing to Jewish brethren about Christ and he know they will understand this language because they have heard it before when they are reading it.
- It is also remarkably similar in language and structure to the prayer Mary gave to God in [Luke 1:46-55](#)
- Samuel begins his service to Eli the priest. ([I Samuel 2:11](#)).
- Eli the priest had two sons named Hophni and Phineas. They were having to carry on the priestly line, but they didn't really know why - in fact they didn't know God all. You could tell this early on – the custom at the time was for the priests to take a little meat from the sacrifices that people brought. Hophni and Phineas were insisting on the best of the meat for themselves. The real crime was that they were disrespecting the offering to God. ([I Samuel 2:12-17](#))
- Samuel keeps ministering to Eli in his old age. Meanwhile Samuel's mom is bringing him a new coat each year when they come to Shiloh to the temple to worship. Eli then tells Elkanah and Hannah that they will have more children and they do – three sons and two daughters. ([I Samuel 2:18-21](#))
- Eli tells his sons that they are not only doing the wrong things but they are also leading the people in the wrong ways. They don't change. ([I Samuel 2:21-25](#))
- Samuel grows up and is a very righteous man. Both God and men like him. ([I Samuel 2:26](#))
- The exact same language is used to describe the way Christ grew up. [Luke 2:52](#)
- A messenger from God appears to Eli. He tells Eli that God said that because Eli is allowing bad things to go on with worship and the temple, several things will happen. First, everyone in Eli's house will die young, forever. Second, as evidence of this fact, Eli's two sons will both die in one day. Third, the priesthood will be taken away from the house of Eli. Fourth, the descendants of Eli will one day ask the new priests to feed them. ([I Samuel 2:27-36](#))
- The third prophecy will be fulfilled later on. ([I Kings 2:27](#))
- In those days Eli was getting on in age and his sons didn't know God and so there was a lack of open knowledge of God in the land. ([I Samuel 3:1](#))
- Samuel is living in the temple. One night, God calls Samuel three time and he goes into Eli and says "okay here I am." The first two times Eli says "I didn't call you - go back to sleep." The third time it happens, Eli realizes its actually God waking Samuel up and so Eli tells Samuel that the next time he should stay put and ask God to instruct him. ([I Samuel 3:2-9](#))
- The fourth time God tells Samuel that He is about to take corrective action against the house of Eli. ([I Samuel 3:10-14](#))
- Eli asks Samuel what God said to him, Samuel is afraid to tell him at first, then he tells him everything and Eli says "it's God so it is good for him to do what He wants." ([I Samuel 3:15-18](#))
- At this point it becomes obvious that God has chosen Samuel to lead the people. His words are powerful and all the tribes of Israel come to know of him and that he is speaking with God directly. ([I Samuel 3:19-21](#))
- Like Christ, Samuel was not of the priestly tribe of Levi. Like Christ, Samuel was most likely from the tribe of Judah. Therefore, we can infer that his rise to the priesthood is probably in the

same way as Christ. Paul tells the Hebrews that Christ's priesthood was after the order of a man named Melchisedec ([Hebrews 7:14-17](#)). We don't know a lot about that person, but we know he was a very big deal because even Abraham came to be led in worship by him, long before the tribe of Levi even existed. ([Genesis 7:18-20](#))

Questions

1. Who was Elkanah?
2. Where was Elkanah from?
3. Who were Elkanah's two wives?
4. Which of Elkanah's wife had no children?
5. Why did one of Elkanah's wives have no children?
6. Did Elkanah give his two wives equal portions when he went to sacrifice? Why or why not?
7. Why did one of Elkanah's wives make the other cry?
8. How does Elkanah cheer Hannah up?
9. What does Hannah say she will do if the Lord allows her to have a son?
10. Who is Eli?
11. What does Eli think at first when he sees Hannah praying silently? Why would he think that?
12. Who are Samuel's parents?
13. What does the name Samuel mean?
14. What is the significance of the fact that the temple was located at Shiloh?
15. Why is Hannah's prayer meaningful?
16. What were Eli's sons' names?
17. What were Eli's sons' first real crime against God?
18. What does Samuel's mom bring him each year?
19. What does Eli tell his sons?
20. Do Eli's sons listen to him?
21. What is the importance of the way Samuel grew up?
22. What four things does the messenger from God tell Eli is going to happen?
23. Why does the messenger say that all these things will happen to Eli?
24. What happens the first two times God calls Samuel at night?
25. What does Eli tell Samuel to do the third time God calls him?
26. What tribe do Samuel and Jesus come from?
27. Who was Melchisedec and who are priests after his order?