

# THE UNITED KINGDOM

Lesson 1  
October 9

Saul, David & Solomon

“Give Us a King”  
1 Samuel 1-8

Our journey through the era of Israel’s united kingdom begins with the birth of a baby boy named Samuel. **1 Samuel 1** introduces us to a man from the hill country of Ephraim named Elkanah and his two wives: Hannah and Peninnah.

And Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.

Now this man used to go up year by year from his city to worship and to sacrifice to the LORD of hosts at Shiloh, where the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests of the LORD. (1:2-3)

On one of those trips, Hannah was deeply distressed and she prayed to the LORD, vowing a vow:

“O LORD of hosts, if you will indeed look on the affliction of your servant and remember me and not forget your servant, but will give to your servant a son, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and no razor shall touch his head.” (1:11)

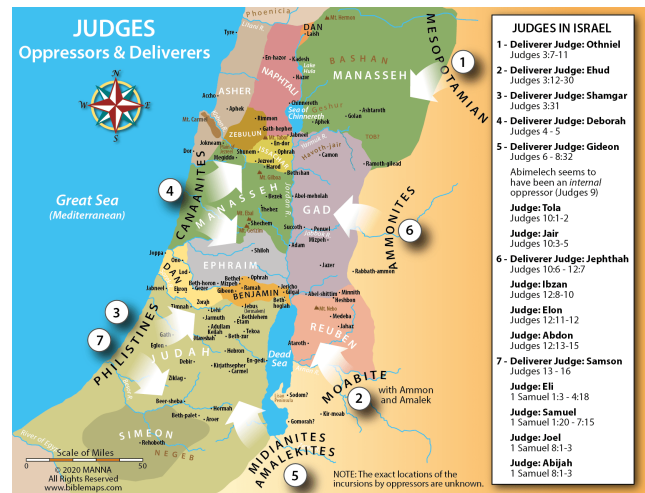
In due time, Hannah conceived and bore a son, calling his name Samuel (1:20). As he grew, the boy ministered to the LORD in the presence of Eli the priest.

Now the sons of Eli were worthless men. They did not know the LORD. (2:12)

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. (2:17)

**1 Samuel 3** tells us of a night when “the word of the LORD was rare” but Samuel began hearing a voice calling his name. When Eli encouraged him to say, “Speak, for your servant hears,” the LORD revealed difficult days to come for the house of Eli (3:10-14). In **1 Samuel 4**, Israel was defeated in battle by the Philistines, the two sons of Eli died, and the ark of the covenant was captured. When old Eli heard the terrible news, he fell over backward from his seat, broke his neck, and he died.

Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life (7:15). In **1 Samuel 7:3-4**, we hear him calling the people to return to the LORD with all their heart, to put away the foreign gods, and serve the LORD only. When Samuel was an old man, the elders of Israel called on him to “appoint for us a king to judge us like all the nations” (8:4-5). The thing displeased Samuel, but the LORD told him to obey the voice of the people, “for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them” (8:7). A new era in Israel was about to begin.



## For Class & Family Discussion:

- **1 Samuel** opens at the very end of the era of the “judges” in Israel. What do we need to know about that era? What was it like in Israel in those days?
- In **1 Samuel 1:1-7**, how did Peninnah treat Hannah? Deeply distressed and weeping bitterly, what did Hannah do? Is there anything we can learn from this difficult situation?
- We can read a prayer of Hannah in **1 Samuel 2:1-10**. What stands out to you from that prayer?
- What do you think our narrator means by describing the sons of Eli as “worthless” (**2:12**)?
- How does **1 Samuel 3:19-4:1** describe Samuel’s relationship with the LORD? How would you summarize their connection in your own words?
- **1 Samuel 4:1-4** describes the Philistines gathering for battle against Israel. Notice the plan of the elders of Israel. How would you describe their mindset? Was it right? According to **4:10-11**, what happened?
- In **1 Samuel 5**, what happened when the Philistines captured the ark and put it in the house of one of their idols? What was the lesson being taught?
- Surveying **1 Samuel 8**, what should we see and understand? What did Israel want, and why? What did the LORD mean in **8:7**? In your own words, what did he want them to understand about the kings they were asking for?
- What about us today? If God is really our king...