

SHARE THE BIBLE LESSON

WEEK 14

God gives Israel a prophet and judge

1 Samuel 1:1–7:17



DAY 1

God gave Hannah a son • 1 Samuel 1:1–2:10

READ

1 Samuel 1:1–2:10

EXPLAIN

The truth of 1 Samuel 1:1–2:10

Do you remember what happened in Judges? Israel had forsaken their God again and again. So Israel's only hope was for God to step in with undeserved grace. And He did. His grace to Israel began with His gift to a barren woman, to show that His grace is able to overcome human inability. In fact, Hannah's name means "grace." But first, God used trouble to drive Hannah to Himself (1 Sam 1:6–10). Trouble caused Hannah to cry out to God. When God answered (1:11–19), Hannah named her son Samuel, which means "one requested from God" (1:20). She knew Samuel was a gift from God, so she sang a beautiful prayer. In this song she praised God for His holiness and grace. Since He is holy, He does not tolerate the proud and the wicked. And since He is gracious, He rescues the humble. This is what He had done for Hannah by giving her children. And this is what He would do for Israel. He would use Samuel to lead Israel back to Himself and eventually to anoint a true king over Israel (2:10; 7:3–4; 16:13).

ASK

1. What was Hannah's problem?
She was barren. She could not have children, and Peninnah made fun of her because of this.
2. What did Hannah do?
She prayed to God.
3. How did God show grace to Hannah?
He gave her a son despite her own inability.
4. What did Hannah praise God for when He answered her prayer?
She praised God for His holiness, for opposing the proud but giving grace to the humble, and for being faithful to His anointed king.

DISCUSS

1. When trouble arises, do you run to God in prayer (Ps 10:17)? Can you describe a time when God used trouble to drive you to Himself?
2. What does God's gift to barren Hannah and to rebellious Israel show you about God's grace? Are you, like Hannah and Israel, powerless and empty apart from God's grace?

DAY 2

God gave Israel a prophet • 1 Samuel 2:11–4:1

READ

1 Samuel 2:11–4:1

EXPLAIN

The truth of 1 Samuel 2:11–4:1

What was it that Hannah praised God for? God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. That is good news for the humble, but bad news for the proud. So don't be like Eli's sons! As priests, they were to be holy, dedicated completely to God. But they took advantage of their position and lived for themselves instead of for God (1 Sam 2:12–17, 22). Eli was also guilty. Although he told his sons to stop (2:23–25), he did nothing to stop them. As a result, God would punish both Eli and his sons (2:30–34). Don't be like them. Instead, be like Samuel. Samuel served God (2:11) and was ready to obey as God's faithful servant (1 Sam 3:10–18). So God used him. Before, God's word had been rare in sinful Israel (3:1), but now God spoke through Samuel as His prophet. Samuel's words spread from the northern boundary at Dan to the southern boundary at Beersheba (3:20). God's words through Samuel were a precious gift to His people Israel. They were grace, an undeserved blessing.

ASK

1. How did Eli's sons despise God's holiness?
They took whatever meat they wanted from God's sacrifices and were immoral.
2. Did Eli do anything to stop his sons from sinning?
He told them to stop, but he didn't really mean it (he did nothing to stop them).
3. How would God punish Eli's sons?
Both would die on the same day.
4. How was Samuel different than Eli's sons?
He faithfully obeyed God.

DISCUSS

1. Children, do you want your parents to let you disobey, like Eli did? Parents, by not disciplining your children, are you setting up your children for destruction (Prov 13:24; 19:18; 23:13–14; Eph 6:4)?
2. What are some gifts God has given you? Like Eli's sons, do you use those gifts in a way that dishonors God? Or like Samuel, do you respond with grateful obedience?

DAY 3

God gave Israel a judge • 1 Samuel 4:2–7:17

READ

1 Samuel 4:1–11; 5:1–7; 7:7–17

EXPLAIN

The truth of 1 Samuel 4:1–11; 5:1–7; 7:7–17

Is God's holiness scary or comforting? Both. It is scary for those who do not treat Him as holy. He punished Israel for treating the ark, which represented His own presence, like a good-luck charm (1 Sam 4). So God allowed the Philistines to defeat Israel, kill 30,000 men, and capture the ark. But then the Philistines thought that they had won because their god, Dagon, was stronger than God (5:2)! This dishonored God, so

He humiliated Dagon and struck the Philistines with a terrible plague (5:3–6). Eventually, the Philistines returned the ark, admitting that they had sinned and were powerless before the holy God (6:1–12). Yet when the ark returned, Israel still failed to treat God as holy, and even more died than before (6:19)! Then, after 20 years of Samuel's faithful ministry, Israel finally began to seek God (7:2). Now God showed that His holiness comforts those who humble themselves before Him. When the Philistines attacked, God answered Samuel's prayer. He defended His people by confusing the Philistines with scary thunder, just as Hannah had predicted (7:10; 2:10).

DAY 3 CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

ASK ?

1. What happened when Israel tried to use the ark like a good-luck charm?
God caused them to be defeated and the ark to be captured.
2. What happened when the Philistines brought the ark into Dagon's temple?
God knocked Dagon down, cut him in pieces, and struck the Philistines with a plague.
3. What did the Israelites do when the Philistines prepared to attack again?
They asked Samuel to pray on their behalf.
4. How did Israel defeat the Philistines?
God thundered and confused the Philistines.

DISCUSS

1. How did Israel try to manipulate God? Do you try to manipulate God in order to get what you want? How does that turn out?
2. God's holiness is a blessing to those who love Him most (Matt 6:33). Is God first in your life and in your family?

DAY 4*Perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect • Matthew 5:48***READ**

Matthew 5:48

EXPLAIN **The truth of Matthew 5:48**

Your sin might not be as obvious as the sins of Hophni and Phinehas. But does that mean that you are good enough? Have you really treated God as holy? Are you safe from getting punished like they were, when they were killed on the same day (2:34)? In the middle of the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5:1–7:29), Jesus said that you “must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (5:48). Have you been perfect? You have not perfectly kept God's Law (Jas 2:10), which means you are like Hophni and Phinehas. You have failed to treat God as holy. As Jesus' sermon teaches, a major purpose of the Law is to show you that you are guilty before God; and not only guilty, but completely unable of doing anything to earn God's favor and forgiveness (Rom 3:19–20). Jesus shows that the true requirements of the Law go much deeper than most people think—the law's requirements reach all the way to your heart (Matt 5:28). So is there any hope for you? Yes. The same hope Hannah found: God's grace (Eph 2:8–9).

ASK ?

1. How were Hophni and Phinehas punished for their failure to treat God as holy?
They were killed on the same day.
2. What have all men failed to do?
To treat God as holy.
3. What a major purpose of the Law?
To show that all men are guilty sinners before God and that there is nothing they can do to please Him.
4. What is your only hope to be saved?
To trust God's grace to wipe away your sins.

DISCUSS

1. How do you fail to treat God as holy? What are some laws of God that you have broken (Exod 20)?
2. Why is God's grace so important and so good (Rom 3:19–24)?

DAY 5

For he will be great before the Lord • Luke 1:5–25

READ

Luke 1:5–25

EXPLAIN

The truth of Luke 1:5–25

Samuel was gracious gift born to a barren woman, and he prepared the way for a coming king. Can you think of someone else like that? Yes, John the Baptist. Like Hannah, John's mother Elizabeth was barren (Luke 1:7). Like Hannah, Elizabeth rejoiced that God had taken away her disgrace (1 Sam 2:1; 1:25). Also, even though we don't have a song from Elizabeth, later in the chapter Mary's song echoes Hannah's: God scatters the proud but lifts up the lowly (1 Sam 2:1–10; Luke 1:51–52). So like Samuel, John was a gift of God's grace. John even means "God is gracious." As Samuel prepared the way for King David, John prepared the way for a greater king, the Son of David (Luke 1:15, 17; cf. Isa 40:3–5). Like Samuel, John would do this by speaking the truth even when people did not want to hear it (1 Sam 3:18; Luke 3:7–9, 19). Like Samuel, John would call Israel to return to their God (1 Sam 7:3; Luke 1:16). So God has not changed. He saves by grace. Will you receive His grace by humbly repenting?

ASK

1. How was Elizabeth like Hannah?
She was barren (unable to have children) and prayed for a son.
2. How was Mary's prayer like Hannah's?
Both rejoiced that God crushes the proud but lifts up the lowly.
3. How was John the Baptist's mission like Samuel's?
Both called Israel to repent. Both introduced a king to Israel.
4. What does John's name mean?
John means God is gracious. It comes from "Yahweh" and "Hannah".

DISCUSS

1. Would people who know you describe you as humble? Do you brag or think you are good enough? Are you the kind of person God crushes or shows grace to?
2. What grace did John announce? What grace can you have through Jesus?

NEXT WEEK

Israel rejects God as King

1 Samuel 8:1–12:25

