

BOB LENDERMAN

PROPHET SAMUEL

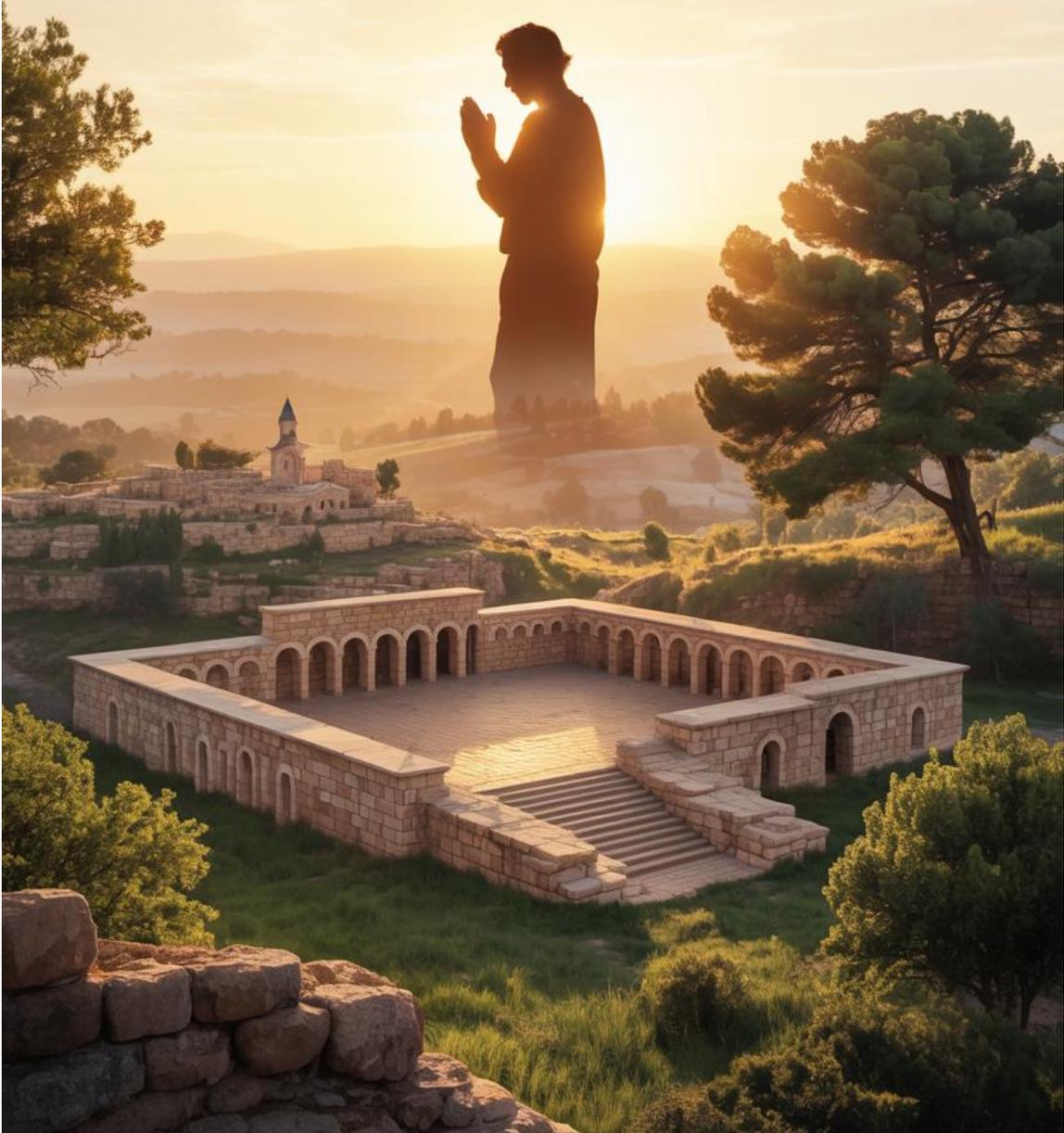


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CHAPTER 1: The Birth and Dedication of Samuel

In the quiet hills of ancient Israel, there lived a woman named Hannah. Her story is about faith and hope. Hannah wanted a child very much and prayed to God for one. Her prayers and promise to God changed her life and the future of Israel.

Hannah was married to Elkanah, who loved her. But Hannah was sad because she could not have children. In those times, having children was very important. Elkanah's other wife, Peninnah, had children and often teased Hannah about it. This made Hannah feel even more upset.

Every year, Hannah went to the temple at Shiloh to pray. One day, she prayed so hard that her lips moved, but no sound came out. She promised God that if He gave her a son, she would dedicate him to God's service forever.

Eli, the high priest, saw Hannah and thought she was upset. When she explained her prayer, Eli blessed her. He said, "Go in peace, and may God give you what you asked for." Hannah felt hopeful after this.

Soon, Hannah had a baby boy. She named him Samuel, which means "heard by God." She was very thankful because God had answered her prayer. When Samuel was old enough, Hannah took him to the temple to live and serve God, just as she promised.

Hannah's story shows us the power of prayer and keeping promises. Samuel grew up to be a great leader and prophet for Israel. He learned about God and helped guide the people. Hannah's faith and dedication to God changed not only her life but also the future of her nation.

CHAPTER 2: Growing Up in the Sanctuary

Samuel grew up in a special place called the sanctuary at Shiloh. This was where people came to worship God and offer sacrifices. It was a very important place for the people of Israel. Samuel learned about worship and helping the priests, which was different from the life of other children.

Eli was the high priest and took care of Samuel. He was old and had been serving God for a long time. Eli taught Samuel how to do the sacred duties and follow God's laws. Samuel saw Eli as a mentor and a father figure.

Every day, Samuel helped with the offerings and learned about the importance of these rituals. He understood that these acts were not just traditions but ways to connect with God. Samuel learned to be respectful and serious about his duties.

Eli's sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were not like Samuel. They did bad things and did not respect their roles as priests. They took the best parts of the sacrifices for themselves and behaved badly. This made Eli sad and caused problems for the sanctuary.

Even though Eli's sons were corrupt, Eli still tried to guide Samuel with kindness. He saw that Samuel was different and had a special connection with God. Eli taught Samuel to listen to God's voice, which was important for his future.

Samuel's life in the sanctuary was busy. He helped with offerings, kept the sacred space clean, and learned the rituals. These tasks helped him grow closer to God and understand His will.

People from all over Israel came to the sanctuary, and Samuel learned about their hopes and struggles. This helped him develop a caring heart and a sense of responsibility for the people.

As time went on, Samuel's faithfulness stood out. While Eli's sons continued to do wrong, Samuel remained devoted to God. The people of Israel noticed this and saw Samuel as a sign of hope.

Eli tried to correct his sons, but they did not listen. This was a hard lesson for Samuel about the importance of being a good leader and following God's ways.

Samuel's reputation grew because of his dedication and prayers. He became known as someone who could help the people connect with God. His life showed that being faithful and obedient to God could bring positive change.

The sanctuary at Shiloh was where Samuel's identity as a prophet was formed. He learned that serving God required courage and faithfulness. Eli's mentorship was important in shaping Samuel's early faith.

As Samuel grew, he became more aware of God's calling. The sanctuary was not just a place of rituals; it was where he learned to listen to God. This prepared him for his future role as a leader and prophet.

Samuel's early life shows how important it is to have good mentors and to be faithful in serving God. Even though Eli's family had problems, Eli's guidance helped Samuel grow in his faith.

Samuel's story reminds us that God can use anyone, even in difficult situations, to bring about His plans. His life was a testament to the power of obedience and the possibility of renewal.

CHAPTER 3: The Call of Samuel

In the quiet night at the sanctuary in Shiloh, young Samuel was sleeping. He didn't know that something amazing was about to happen. The sanctuary was a special place where people prayed and worshiped God. It was very quiet at night, and in this silence, God decided to speak to Samuel, a boy who loved and respected God.

Samuel had learned a lot from Eli, the high priest. Even though Samuel was young, he understood responsibility. Eli's sons were not good, and this made things hard for everyone. But God chose this time to speak to Samuel, starting a new chapter for Israel and for Samuel.

One night, Samuel heard someone call his name: "Samuel!" He thought it was Eli and went to him, but Eli hadn't called him. This happened three times. Finally, Eli realized it was God calling Samuel. He told Samuel to say, "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening," if he heard the voice again.

This was a very important moment. It was the start of Samuel's work as a prophet, someone who shares God's messages. Samuel was ready to listen and obey God, which was very important for his future.

God's call to Samuel showed that He hadn't forgotten His people, even though Eli's sons were doing wrong. Through Samuel, God would guide the people back to faithfulness. Samuel's call was a sign of hope.

Eli played an important role by helping Samuel understand God's call. Even though Eli's family had problems, he showed wisdom by guiding Samuel. This shows how important it is to help others grow in their faith.

Samuel's response to God—"Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening"—shows how he was ready to hear and follow God's instructions. This attitude is important for anyone who wants to serve God.

After this, God continued to speak to Samuel, giving him messages for Israel. These messages were serious and often about the consequences of not

following God. Samuel was trusted to deliver these messages, showing that God can use anyone who is willing to listen and obey.

The people of Israel soon saw Samuel as a true prophet. Unlike the corrupt priests, Samuel spoke with God's authority, calling the nation to change and follow God. His words brought hope and guidance.

Samuel's experience teaches us that God can speak to anyone who is humble and ready to listen. Even though Samuel was young, he was chosen because of his willingness to serve. This story reminds us that God can use anyone to do great things.

As Samuel grew, he continued to listen to God and share His messages with the people. His journey began that night in Shiloh when he first heard God's call. This shaped his life and mission, showing the power of listening to God.

Samuel's story shows that God's call is personal and relational. God calls people by name, inviting them to serve. Samuel's experience encourages us to be open to God's voice in our own lives.

The call of Samuel is a powerful example of how God works through ordinary people in extraordinary ways. Samuel, a boy in a troubled time, became a faithful servant who helped restore his people. This story challenges us to listen and respond to God's call with faith and obedience.

CHAPTER 4: Israel in Trouble

The nation of Israel was once strong and united, but now it faced a big problem. The leaders, Eli's sons, were not good, and this made things worse for everyone. The Philistines, who were enemies of Israel, took the Ark of the Covenant, a very important symbol of God's presence.

The Ark was more than just a religious object. It reminded the people that God was with them. They believed it would help them win battles. But the Israelites were confused. They thought the Ark would automatically protect them, even if they didn't follow God's rules.

The Philistines attacked, and Israel lost the battle. Many soldiers died, including Eli's sons. This was a sad time for Israel. The Ark was taken away, and the people felt like God had left them.

Eli, the high priest, was very sad when he heard the news. He died from the shock. Samuel, a young prophet, was also upset but turned to prayer. He wanted the people to return to God and follow His ways.

The Philistines soon realized that taking the Ark brought them trouble. They faced plagues and problems, showing that God was powerful. Samuel called the people to gather at Mizpah to pray and ask for God's help. They fasted and admitted their mistakes, hoping for forgiveness.

This gathering was important. It showed that Israel needed to trust in God, not just in symbols like the Ark. Samuel's leadership helped the people focus on what really mattered—being faithful to God.

The story of Israel's crisis teaches us that true strength comes from following God and being united in faith. Samuel's guidance helped Israel find hope and a new beginning.

CHAPTER 5: Samuel: The Last Judge

After a big win at Mizpah, the Israelites promised to follow God again. Samuel became an important leader for them. He was not just a prophet but also a judge. This was a key time in Israel's history because Samuel was the last judge before kings ruled.

Samuel traveled around Israel to help people with their problems. He didn't stay in one place like a king would. By moving around, he kept the tribes united. People respected him because he was fair and followed God's laws.

When Samuel visited towns, people came to him for help with disputes and to learn about God's laws. He was known for being honest and fair. Samuel taught that true justice comes from following God's rules.

Samuel also helped with religious matters. He reminded people that justice and worship go together. He taught them to live in a way that pleased God. This helped bring the people closer to God and each other.

Samuel's travels were not just about solving problems. He also taught people about God's laws and encouraged them to stay faithful. This helped strengthen their identity as God's chosen people.

Even though there were challenges, like rivalries and threats from enemies, Samuel's leadership kept the nation together. He showed that leadership was about serving God and the people, not about gaining power.

Samuel's work prepared Israel for having kings. He showed what good leadership looked like—being righteous, obeying God, and caring for the people. His example helped set the stage for future leaders like Saul and David.

Samuel's dedication to God was clear. He prayed and sought God's guidance in all things. His leadership brought stability and hope to Israel, showing the power of leading with integrity and faith.

CHAPTER 6: The Demand for a King

During Samuel's time as a leader, Israel was stable and spiritually renewed. However, the people faced challenges and wanted a king to lead them like other nations. The tribal system, led by judges and prophets, was struggling with threats and problems. The memory of past defeats by the Philistines made the desire for strong leadership grow.

The elders of Israel asked Samuel for a king. They wanted someone to unite the tribes, provide military strength, and create a central authority. This request was not just about power; it was about security and identity. The elders believed a king could bring the strength and unity that judges could not.

Samuel was troubled by this request. He had served faithfully as a judge and prophet, guiding Israel under God's leadership. The request for a king meant moving away from God's direct rule. The tribal system was a special arrangement where God was the true king, guiding through leaders like Samuel.

The elders told Samuel, "You are old, and your sons do not follow your ways. Appoint a king to lead us like other nations." This was also a criticism of Samuel's sons, who were not respected. The elders wanted a new kind of leadership to restore honor and stability.

Samuel prayed to God, seeking guidance. God told Samuel to listen to the people, saying, "They have not rejected you, but they have rejected me as their king." God explained that the demand for a king was a refusal to accept His rule. However, God would still work through this new system to fulfill His plans.

Samuel warned the people about the consequences of having a king. A king would take their sons for the army, their daughters for service, and their fields and vineyards. Despite these warnings, the elders insisted on having a king, wanting the security and prestige it promised.

Samuel obeyed God's instructions and prepared to anoint a king. This marked a new chapter in Israel's history. Samuel's role was crucial, guiding the nation through this change while ensuring that God's will was followed. The demand for a king was a turning point, shaping Israel's future and its relationship with God.

CHAPTER 7: Saul Becomes King

Saul became king with both hope and worry from the people. The tribes of Israel, used to having judges, now had one king to lead them. They hoped he would protect them from enemies like the Philistines. Saul's early actions as king made people feel confident. He seemed like a strong leader who could unite the nation.

Saul was tall and looked like a king. People respected him. Even though Samuel, the prophet, warned them to look beyond appearances, Saul's presence made him seem like the right choice. He was chosen by God and had the support of the prophet, which helped him gain authority.

Soon, Saul faced a big challenge. The Philistines, who were strong and well-armed, wanted to fight Israel. Saul called the tribes to join him in battle. This was important because it showed Israel could work together as one nation. Saul's leadership helped bring the tribes together.

Saul's first battles were successful. He surprised the Philistines and won. These victories made the people proud and hopeful. They believed God was helping Saul lead them.

However, being king was not just about winning battles. Saul also had to be fair, encourage worship, and follow God's rules. Samuel, the prophet, continued to guide Saul, reminding him that his power came from God.

Some people were still unsure about having a king. They worried about losing their tribal independence. Saul had to balance these concerns while keeping the nation united.

At Gilgal, Saul gathered the people to renew their commitment to God before another battle. This showed the importance of faith and unity in Israel.

Saul's victories strengthened his position as king, but he faced challenges. He needed to balance God's expectations, the people's needs, and his own desires. Samuel warned Saul that obeying God was more important than anything else.

Saul's early reign brought peace and stability. The Philistine threat was reduced, allowing Israel to grow stronger. But Saul's journey as king was just beginning, and he would face many tests of his character and leadership.

CHAPTER 8: Anointing David and Samuel's Legacy

When Saul was no longer king, Israel needed a new leader. This was not just about choosing a new king; it was about finding someone who would follow God's ways. Samuel, a prophet, was given the important job of finding this new king.

Samuel went to Bethlehem, a small town, to find the new king. God wanted someone who was not just strong or popular, but someone with a good heart. Samuel met Jesse and asked to see his sons. Each son came forward, but God told Samuel not to choose them based on looks or height. God said, "People look at the outside, but I look at the heart."

Finally, Jesse mentioned his youngest son, David, who was taking care of sheep. David was not at the meeting because he was busy working. When David came, God told Samuel that David was the chosen one. Samuel anointed David with oil, and God's Spirit came upon him, marking him as the future king.

David's anointing was a special moment. It showed that God chooses leaders based on their hearts, not their appearance. Even though David was young and not yet a king, he would grow to be a great leader who followed God.

Samuel's role was important. He listened to God and helped guide Israel. His actions showed that true leadership comes from being faithful and humble. Samuel's legacy continued to influence Israel, reminding everyone that God's choices are often different from what people expect.