

## Promised Land 1 Study and Discussion Questions

### Lesson Seven: *Samuel's Birth and Call* – 1 Samuel 1-3

#### Read 1 Samuel 1.

- 1) List the similarities between Ruth/Naomi's story and Hannah's story. **Both are stories about women who lived in the time of the Judges and were childless. Both stories open with an account of a journey. Naomi and Hannah were in deep distress. As a result of divine intervention, both Ruth and Hannah gave birth to sons who were important Bible characters.**
- 2) Research the subjects of marriage and polygamy in the following passages and record your findings: Genesis 2:22-25; 16:1-6; 29:26-32 with 30:1; 1 Samuel 1:1-7; 2 Samuel 3:1-5 with 13:1-2, 14, 20, 28-29; 1 Corinthians 7:1-4; Titus 1:6. **Genesis indicates that God intended *one* man and *one* woman to become one flesh in marriage. The New Testament also portrays marriage as being between one man and one woman. These two individuals belong exclusively to God and to one another. Although the Old Testament *records* the cultural practice of polygamy (by pagans and God's people alike), God never condoned it. In fact, almost every Biblical story involving polygamy indicates that family conflict and heartache resulted.**
- 3) 1 Samuel 1:18 says that Hannah's "face was no longer downcast."
  - a) Does the passage directly indicate that she knew God would give her a child? **No, the Bible does not say exactly what lifted Hannah's countenance. Perhaps the Lord gave Hannah a confident assurance that He would give her a son, either while she was praying or after Eli the priest blessed her ["May the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of Him"]. It is also possible that her outlook changed simply because her confidence in the Lord and in His plan (whatever that plan might be) was renewed.**
  - b) What foundational Biblical truths give perspective when we are awaiting an answer to prayer? Deuteronomy 7:9, Psalm 106:1, Proverbs 15:29, and Romans 8:26-28, 34. **God is good, loving, faithful, hears our prayers, and will answer them according to what He knows is best. The Holy Spirit interprets our prayers to the Father, according to His will, and Jesus is at God's right hand, interceding for us.**
  - c) With regard to which yet unanswered prayer do you need this Biblical perspective? **Personal sharing**

#### 1 Samuel 1

- 4) What do the following passages indicate about God's appraisal of women, compared with the view of the traditional, patriarchal, eastern culture: Judges 4:4; 4:9, 21; 9:53; Ruth 4:13-22; 1 Samuel 1:20, Matthew 1:1, 3, 5, 6? **God's word presents a high view of women and their social influence.**
- 5) How did Hannah intend to keep the vow she made in 1 Samuel 1:11, according to 1:22, 24-28? **Hannah vowed to give her son to the Lord all the days of his life and that no razor would ever be used on his head (1 Samuel 1:11, a Nazarite vow). According to 1:22, 24-28, Hannah brought Samuel to Eli in Shiloh to serve the Lord for his entire life.**
- 6) What reasons did Hannah have to trust or distrust Eli with the care of her precious little Samuel (see 1 Samuel 1 and 2:12, 22-23; 3:13)? How does her decision to leave Samuel impact your thinking about a struggle or decision you face? **It is possible that Hannah had great confidence in Eli, yet it seems unlikely. Eli was God's priest. He had blessed Hannah (1:17). However, Eli seems to have been a poor father. His sons had a reputation for being wicked (1 Samuel 2:22-23) and he failed to restrain them (3:13). Nevertheless, Hannah had made a vow to God that she intended to keep. Surely the God who had sustained her in childless state and miraculously opened her womb was also capable of delivering, sustaining, and mightily using Samuel. She may have had concerns about Eli, but she trusted God. Personal sharing**

### Read 1 Samuel 2.

- 7) Compare Hannah's prayer (1 Samuel 2:1-10) with Mary's "song" (Luke 1:46-55). What subjects do both women address? **Rejoicing in the Lord is the common theme. Hannah addressed the subjects of deliverance from an enemy (most likely Peninnah [2:1]), the Lord's salvation (2:2), humble confidence in the Lord versus arrogant boasting (2:3), fulfillment of desires (2:5), and justice (2:3-10). Mary's song also addresses some of these subjects (humility [Luke 1:48], justice [Luke 1:51-52], and fulfillment of desires [Luke 1:51]), but also speaks of God's goodness and mercy (Luke 1:49, 54-55).**
- 8) What example of Eli's sons' disregard for the Lord is recorded in 1 Samuel 2:12-17? (See Leviticus 3:16, 7:29-31.) **God gave His priests the privilege of eating portions of the Israelites' sacrifices. Apparently, the general custom involved plunging a fork into the boiling meat and retaining whatever portion came up (1 Samuel 2:13-14). According to the Mosaic Law (Leviticus 3, 7), other parts of the sacrifice (including the fat) were to be burned. Eli's sons wanted the entire offering (including the fat) and took it by force. They were disobeying the Lord, disrespecting worshippers, and making a mockery of the system of sacrifices.**
- 9) Compare 1 Samuel 2:5, 20-21 with Joel 2:25a and Romans 11:35-36. Even though God owes us nothing, can you think of a time when He graciously extended special blessing on you after a season of difficulty or suffering? If so, write out your own words of praise to Him. **Personal sharing**

### 1 Samuel 2

- 10) In 1 Samuel 2:12-36, the author clearly intended to sharply contrast the characters. Describe the contrasts (include verse numbers). **The chapter clearly contrasts Eli's sons and Samuel, the wicked and the righteous. 1 Samuel 2:12-17 describes Eli's sons' wickedness in making a mockery of the Lord's sacrifices. The very next verse (2:18) describes Samuel's faithful ministry before the Lord. 2:22-25 says that Eli's sons were sleeping with the women who served at the Tabernacle and ignored their father's rebuke. The following verse (2:26) describes Samuel, who continued "to grow in stature and in favor with the Lord and with men." 2:27-34 records a prophecy that Eli's family would be dishonored and cursed. 2:35-36 contrast Eli's family line with that of a faithful priest (God would raise up a faithful priest who would do what was in God's heart and mind and whose house He would firmly establish). Some think prophecy was fulfilled in Zadok's replacement of Abiathar as priest in Solomon's day (1 Kings 2:27, 35).**
- 11) Of what did the Lord accuse Eli (1 Samuel 2:27-36) and what consequences would he suffer? **In 2:28-29, the Lord accused Eli of taking the great privilege of high priesthood too lightly, ignoring and scorning God's prescribed use of the sacrifices by fattening themselves on what belonged to the Lord, and honoring his sons over the Lord. The Lord said that as a result, Eli's descendants would meet early deaths (Hophni and Phinehas would die on the same day) and so weaken in the priestly line that they would eventually beg to simply make a living within the priesthood.**
- 12) What promise and warning do you find in 1 Samuel 2:30, Psalm 18:25-27, and Proverbs 3:34? Name some *specific* ways you will plan to honor the Lord in your life this week. **The Lord promises to show honor, faithfulness and grace to those who show honor, humility, and faithfulness in their relationship with Him. He warns that He will treat those who despise Him, are prideful, or crooked with disdain, mockery, and shrewdness. Personal sharing**

### Read 1 Samuel 3.

- 13) Compare 1 Samuel 3:1 with Judges 21:25 and recall the spiritually dark period in which these events took place. **The days of the Judges of Israel in which Samuel lived were dark spiritually. 1 Samuel 3:1 says, "In those days the word of the Lord was rare; there were not many visions." Judges 21:25 says, "...Everyone did as they saw fit."**

- 14) What was located in Shiloh (the town to which Elkanah and his family traveled annually for worship, the location at which Hannah left Samuel to serve the Lord, and the place where Samuel was ministering when the Lord spoke to him)? See Exodus 40:1-17, Joshua 18:1, Judges 18:31, 1 Samuel 1:3, 24 and 3:21. **The Tabernacle with the Ark of the Covenant (the place where God's presence symbolically dwelt) was set up in Shiloh under Joshua's leadership (the period of Israel's conquest) and remained there until later in the life of Samuel (when it was captured by the Philistines and returned via Beth Shemesh to Kiriath Jearim [1 Samuel 6-7]).**
- 15) According to 1 Samuel 3:9-10, Samuel took Eli's advice, remained where he was lying, and said, "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening." What might be keeping you from hearing the Lord's voice today? **Personal sharing could include busy-ness, conviction of unconfessed sin, unwillingness to obey the Lord's past instructions, etc.**