

The Story, chapter 10 (excerpts from 1 Samuel 1-15)

[Elkanah] had two wives; one was called Hannah and the other Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had none... ⁶ Because the Lord had closed Hannah's womb, her rival kept provoking her in order to irritate her. ⁷ This went on year after year. Whenever Hannah went up to the house of the Lord, her rival provoked her till she wept and would not eat. (1 Samuel 1:2,6-7)

Hannah prayed to God for a child, promising to give the baby to the Lord. Her prayer was answered, and she dedicated her son Samuel to serve in the Tabernacle of God.

¹¹ Then Elkanah went home to Ramah, but the boy ministered before the Lord under Eli the priest. ¹² Eli's sons were scoundrels; they had no regard for the Lord. (1 Samuel 2:11-12)

Because Eli's sons did evil in God's name and Eli did not reprove them, God rejected Eli and his sons. God spoke to young Samuel, who grew up to be a judge and prophet. Under Samuel's leadership the Israelites defeated the Philistines and once again had peace. When Samuel grew old, the Israelites demanded that he appoint a king to rule them.

...so [Samuel] prayed to the Lord. ⁷ And the Lord told him: "Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king."
(1 Samuel 8:7)

A young man named Saul is chosen king. Initially, God is with Saul and he has success. But when God commands the Israelites to destroy a sinful people, Saul spares the enemy king and allows his men to keep the fattest sheep and cattle. Elderly Samuel is sent by God to confront the disobedient king.

²⁴ Then Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned. I violated the Lord's command and your instructions. I was afraid of the men and so I gave in to them. ²⁵ Now I beg you, forgive my sin and come back with me, so that I may worship the Lord."

²⁷ As Samuel turned to leave, Saul caught hold of the hem of his robe, and it tore. ²⁸ Samuel said to him, "The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to one of your neighbors—to one better than you. (1 Samuel 15:24-28)