

Lesson 17 I Samuel 1 – 10

STUDY QUESTIONS:

- 1 The men of Israel have special powers given them to do great deeds in the name of the Lord. They prophesy, judge, and do great battle. But consider the hidden role of woman. What is Ruth and Hannah's contribution to Salvation History and how significant is it in the overall view?*
- 2. Hannah's prayer is an important foreshadowing. Compare with Luke 1:45-55.*
- 3. Levi's house is destroyed for lack of fatherly discipline. Samuel's line, too, comes to nothing. What truth about family order is taught here?*
- 4. What is Samuel's opinion of kings? Why does God allow a king?*
- 5. Recall the story of Gibeah and the civil war against Benjamin. Judges 19,20 and 21 Where was Saul's grandmother probably from?*

Psalm 37 and prayer.

Samuel is conceived by a barren woman. In the first chapter of I Samuel we have the story of the conception of another great man of God. Hannah is a barren woman; barrenness we have seen is a special sign over a special woman. It means that her progeny will have an important leadership role among the people of God because God's action is evident in their conception. Hannah's character, like Ruth's, is one of obedience and dedication to the Lord. She begs God for conception, then dries her tears and goes away happy because she believes that God will answer her. That kind of faith and trust are essential to the character of the woman who will be the woman of God. Ruth lives in Bethlehem; Hannah lives in Ramah, not far away. Samuel is old enough to be David's grandfather when he anoints David King. Ruth is David's great-grand-mother. This means that Samuel's mother and David's great-grandmother are contemporaries. God was visiting them both with conception at about the same time. Two women then, one for biological reasons, and the other because she had made a higher choice, were childless. This story prefigures greater events to come.

Mary, like Ruth, chooses a higher kind of fruitfulness. Entrusting her life to the Lord, she trusts that in a greater sense than through a husband and children she will be fruitful for Him. If she is the fullness of the foreshadowing seen in Ruth; Elizabeth is the fulfillment of the foreshadowing seen in Hannah. It is Elizabeth's son, John the Baptist, who will anoint Mary's son, Jesus, by baptizing him in the Jordan. John's "anointing", used by the Holy Spirit, will send Jesus out to begin His ministry. Earlier as a mere shadow of the light to come, Hannah's son, Samuel, anoints Ruth's great-grandson, King David, to begin his reign. King Jesus, establishing a greater Kingdom, will be "King David's greater son." In these important ways the Old Testament, first in time, nevertheless holds the shadow of the light-bearing figure who will come later in time.

Samuel will have a true shepherd's heart. The weaned child Samuel when he is three years old is brought to Eli, the Chief Priest. He will be reared in the house of the Lord at Shiloh. At the point of sacrificing her young son to priesthood, Hannah rejoices in God. See Luke 1:46 and read through the Magnificat. Compare it to Hannah's song. Both Mary and Hannah have a lively belief that it is the lowly servants who God can use best in Salvation History. The high and mighty of the earth will be thrust down, the lowly will be raised up; so they sing. Both of them are among the lowly of the earth, and yet they are exalted as servants of God. It was this submissive spirit of lowliness that God uses. They are women of wholehearted response! They are God's servants to bring forth godly shepherds in Israel. All leadership in Israel and the Near East was called "shepherd"; whether prophet, priest, or king, all were shepherds or the people. Not like the west where sheep are driven from behind by the shepherd and his dogs, in these countries the sheep are led by the shepherd who walks ahead. The idea of willingly following rather than being driven is essential to understanding the godly leadership of the prophet. He leads by proclaiming God's word to the people. The priest leads by directing worship and sacrifice, and the King leads by righteous governance. There is no place in this picture of ideal leadership for high-handedness, prestigious displays, power plays or domination. This leadership is a service role, and the meek heart necessary for this role is best seen in the mothers who conceived with

trust, in total submission to God, spiritually passing on that obedient stance to their sons.

The reordering of God's family begins with the human family. The second chapter recounts the disobedience of Eli's sons as priests in the house of God. They were disrespectful of the laws of Moses governing sacrifice, they seduced women, they blasphemed God. Eli, their father, did not "restrain" them, "reprove" or "chastise" them - different words are used in different versions of the Bible. The Bible teaches that the father has a primary role in disciplining his sons, raising them in the fear and admonition of the Lord. The affliction of laxity spreads over the whole family which suffers for the sins of one. These sons needed their fathers attention and concern, but did not get it. The reordering of the people of God begins in the family. We have highlighted the mothers' important role; the father must also fulfill his. He assumes responsibility for discipline and order, of course, with a meek heart. Eli and Samuel are both expected to shepherd their families; they are not to renege on the exercise of headship over their sons.

Samuel knows God. In the third chapter the youth Samuel is personally called by God. He has lived in the house of God since he was three, but he does not yet "know" (yada) God. He has not had an intimate experience all his own. It is not enough that he wears the ephod and serves at the altar, or that he associates only with priests. He must hear God call his name. Probably when he is twelve or thirteen, the age when the Hebrew boy becomes a man, God calls Samuel. During the theophany he reveals that the house of Eli will fall. Samuel is granted the powers of a prophet from this encounter on. From this time, says the Bible, not a word of his falls to the ground - that is, not a word of his is ineffective or powerless. His words have the power to do the things they say. In this they are like God's own words.

The prophet is the mouth of God. The idea of a man empowered specially to speak God's words, therefore endowed to accomplish God's work is ancient. Moses was such a prophet. Yet, in a more focused sense, Samuel begins the tradition of the Old Testament prophet. In the

ninth chapter he is presented to be like a seer, an ancient soothsayer, or clairvoyant. He seems to have been thought of not unlike the Greek sibyls who told fortunes, could find lost things, and make prognostications of the future. He was paid for these services; at least Saul and his servant were prepared to pay him for information about the whereabouts of the lost asses. The prophet, however, is different from the seer in an important way. The seer works on the human level like the wizard Merlin in the realm of the natural psychic powers, perhaps even with demonic powers. The Old Testament warns about consulting such a person in Dt 18. The prophet, on the other hand, is motivated and attuned to the word of God. He may have all the psychic gifts, but his purpose and concentration is on presenting God's word to the people. He is not doing a human, horizontal thing, but works in the vertical dimension. This work of a prophet, seen in Samuel, was rooted in God.

Around Samuel was a band of prophets. God's word to him had another aspect which seems to moderns a strange archaic thing. Samuel surrounded himself with a band of prophets who were engaged in ecstatic behavior: trances, music, being "beside themselves." It was this kind of prophetic experience, a trance because of the nearness to God, and the strange behaviors brought with it, that Saul falls into almost against his will. Here he is, a farmer's son, who shortly after his first anointing by Samuel comes into proximity with this band of prophets. He gets unstrung, prophesying and exhibiting ecstatic behavior. The people who know him are surprised, "Is not this Saul?" Is he among the prophets? This strange overtaking in response to religious fervor happens to him several times.

The ark of the covenant is captured. By the end of the third chapter Samuel is known from Dan to Beersheba for his prophetic work. Then comes an interlude in which Samuel is not mentioned - the ark of the covenant becomes the centerpiece. The political situation is such that the people need deliverance from the Philistines who are ever more oppressive. Using the map, find Ramah, the home of Samuel; Shiloh, the home of the house of God and the ark; Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gaza, Gath and Ekron, the familiar Philistine cities; Beth-shemesh where the

two cows pulled the ark, and Kiriath-jearim where it rested for twenty years.

The prophetic word against Eli and his sons is played out. The ark brought from Shiloh to secure the victory is captured by the enemy. The High Priest Eli's sons accompanying it are slain, and the bad news coming to Eli is instrumental in his death. In the hands of the Philistines the ark is only trouble for them. Their god Dagon cannot stand up next to it. The Philistines are liberals; they are very glad to share their temples with any other god, even putting that god next to their own, but God Almighty is touchy, not the least bit pluralistic. He will not allow the ark of His Word to be placed on the same level with any idol. Dagon keeps tumbling over on his face; and further, the people are afflicted with bubonic plague whose tumors are in some versions called "hemorrhoids." Eventually the Philistines, after passing the ark from city to city, decide to send it home to Israel.

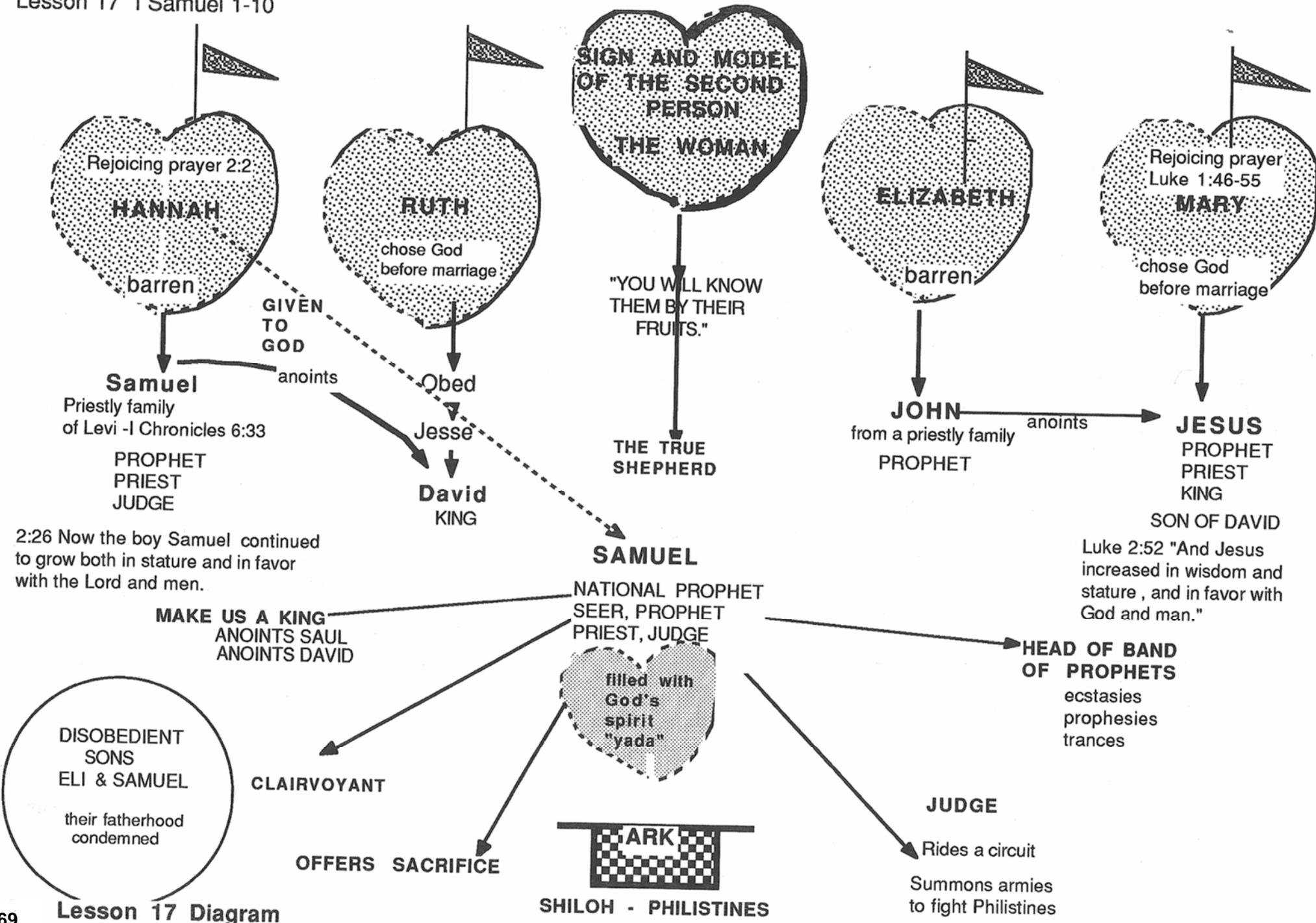
With the ark at home, Samuel leads some victories. If it is Yahweh who is causing this trouble, the Philistines wisely decide, then the ark will be guided back to the Israelites, even though the two milk cows who are to pull the cart have wailing calves tethered behind. Overcoming the instinct of the cows, Yahweh leads the cart back into the territory controlled by Israel. The Philistines have destroyed Shiloh in the war, so Shiloh will never again be home for the ark, the cult center for Israel. Samuel reenters the story assuming another role - the judge of Israel. He convenes the people at Mizpah, proclaims a fast, demands repentance of false gods, takes part in a sacrifice and a feast. After this assembly he leads some victories against the Philistines. Under the circumstances, these are not conclusive; the Philistines continue to have the upper hand.

The people demand a king. Samuel's sons are not good people. They are refused as judges by Israel. The people demand a king. The Bible records contrary ways of feeling about this. At first Samuel is against it, but then God speaks to him and tells him to listen to the people, so he puts his personal feelings aside. Perhaps there are two traditions woven

together here. He saw all the difficulties of kingship, but he will follow the Lord's instructions and anoint a king for Israel. A shepherd's heart is one thing, but too often arrogance comes with power, and he fears the domination of a king.

Saul is chosen. Through the providence of God, Saul follows lost asses and ends up meeting Samuel. Samuel has been forewarned that Saul, Israel's future king, is coming. They meet at a time of sacrifice. Samuel acts as a priest - his role since a lad; we can add this hat to his roles. He has not been mentioned as being of the tribe of Levi. Here we turn to the books of Chronicles. We will not be reading these books, but we will use them occasionally. In Chronicles we find a replay of the story told in the books of Samuel and Kings with more genealogies, and some bits of interesting information, but in general they simply retell the stories of the books of Samuel and Kings. We will use these two books as we do now, to supply little missing pieces of information. I Chronicles 6:33 supplies a list of the Kohathites, (Kohath was one of the sons of Levi), and Samuel is listed here as well as his father. So Scripture tells us Samuel had a somewhat dubious, but legal right to act as priest in this sequence. (Actually only the sons of Aaron were priests, though this law seems to have been scarcely observed during these times, and was not enforced until after the exile).

Samuel proceeds to anoint Saul king in secret. Saul goes home with changed character after his ecstatic prophetic experience. He is never the same man again, and later Samuel calls all the tribes to Mizpah where Saul is anointed publicly, and acclaimed king. This time he is chosen by sacred lot, confirming Samuel's previous direct word from God that he is indeed the chosen man. Saul, however, behaves peculiarly. He hides among the baggage. We sympathize. He is a farm lad who has never had close contact with high spiritual experience, and he has never even thought of being a king. It is enough to make anyone hide.



Lesson 17 Diagram

Lesson 17 I Samuel 1 - 10 Synopsis

1. Elkanah and Hannah go to Shiloh each year to worship and sacrifice of his two wives, Hannah is barren Eli is the chief priest
Hannah begs the Lord for a boy he will be a Nazarite from birth Eli chastises her for drunkenness not drunk, but praying with tears Eli asks God to grant her petition she goes in peace
The Lord remembered her
Samuel is conceived and born she takes the weaned Samuel with offerings to the Lord's house
Hannah "lends" Samuel to the Lord for as long as he lives
2. Hannah's song of praise to God extols His goodness to the weak
Samuel serves the Lord with Eli girded in a robe his mother made
Eli's sons are selfish and worthless they break the rules of sacrifice treating offerings to the Lord with contempt, laying with women
Hannah bears 3 sons, 2 daughters
Eli's sons won't heed their father
Samuel grows in favor with God a prophet says Eli's family cut off only one of his sons will be spared all the house of Eli (therefore Levi) will be replaced (by Zadok 's line)
3. Samuel has had no word or vision the Lord calls to Samuel in the night Samuel does not *know* the Lord at the third call Eli recognizes it is Yahweh calling Samuel

- "Speak Lord your servant hears"
God will fulfill His condemnation of Eli's house told by the prophet
Samuel tells Eli everything from then his words have power
Shiloh becomes a place of revelation because of Samuel
4. Israel defeated by the Philistines the ark is brought by the priests in the camp a shout goes up the Philistines fear the ark
fight harder to defeat Israel the ark is captured and priests slain a report is brought to 98 yr. old Eli he falls, breaks his neck and dies he had judged Israel forty years his daughter-in-law dies in childbirth
Ichabod is born, 'The glory has departed from Israel"
 5. the ark is taken to Philistine temple next to their god Dagon who falls, losing head and hands the bubonic plague breaks out first in Ashdod, ark is sent to Gath plague there, the ark sent to Ekron "send it back to its own place." bubonic plague breaks out in Ekron
 6. seven months in land of Philistines that is enough, send the ark home with a guilt offering, say the priests five golden tumors and golden mice offering for the five Philistine Lords a new cart is to carry the ark and two milch cows will pull it their calves are tethered behind will they go to Israel?
if so, the trouble is from Yahweh if not, the trouble is a coincidence
cart pulled right to Bethshemesh

- the men of Israel rejoice to see it they offer offerings- cows and cart a stone commemorates this event
seventy men of Bethshemesh slain for their irreverent curiosity
men of Kiriath-jearim to take the ark they consecrated Eleazar it was in his house for twenty years
Samuel reenters with a message turn to the Lord with your heart put away idols and false gods gather at Mizpah to beseech God as a community fast for penance the Philistines are coming
Samuel intercedes with offering the Lord routs the Philistines a stone of remembrance at Ebenezer , "The Lord helped us" territories taken from the Philistines he judged Israel by riding a circuit he built an altar at his Ramah home
7. Samuel becomes old
his corrupt sons judge in his place the elders seek a king for Israel
Samuel is against it, but God says "listen to the people" but warn them
Samuel warns about the ways kings God may not hear their cries because of the king
but the people want a king in order to be like other nations
 8. Saul of Benjamin is introduced he is handsome and tall his father's asses wander away he and a servant are to find them they go to the Ephraim hill country servant suggests that they consult with a "man of God"
they need a payment for the seer

- Samuel is to sacrifice that day
God would point out a man from Benjamin who shall save them from the Philistines and rule
Samuel meets Saul has him come to eat with him he stays overnight
Samuel says don't worry the asses have been found
Samuel sends Saul on his way makes him know the plan of God
10. Samuel anoints Saul privately as prince over the people Israel tells clairvoyantly what will happen next he will meet two men then three men, a band of prophets then the spirit of the Lord will come on him for prophecy he will be turned into another man he is to go to Gilgal, waiting 7 days for Samuel to come there all the signs came to pass that day "Is Saul among the prophets?" Saul does not tell his family about the kingdom and kingship
Samuel gathers tribes at Mizpah says a king is a rejection of God yet draws a king by lot
Saul is chosen, he hides he is found among the baggage
"Long live the king"
Samuel gives the rights and duties of the king, writes it in a book sends the people home
Saul went home to farm at Gibeath some already oppose him but Saul holds his peace

Lesson 17 1 Samuel 1 - 10 Outline

I. Relationship of Hannah and Ruth

- A. Relationship in time
 - 1. Hannah and Ruth are the 1st generation
 - 2. Obad and Samuel are the 2nd generation
 - 3. Jesse is the third generation
 - 4. David is the fourth generation
 - 5. Samuel therefore, is a grandfather who anoints David as a youth
- B. Relationship in space
 - 1. Hannah lives in Ramah
 - 2. Ruth lives in Bethlehem, about twenty-five miles away
- C. Relationship of Hannah and Ruth to Elizabeth and Mary
 - 1. the first two are forerunners of the later two's relationship
 - 2. Hannah and Elizabeth
 - a. both are barren till later in life
 - b. both conceived in the natural way by the grace of God in answer to prayers
 - c. their sons are both prophets
 - d. Hannah's son anointed Ruth's great-grandson, King David
 - e. Elizabeth's son anointed Mary's son, the Son of David.
 - 3. for Mary and Ruth's parallels see outline on Ruth
 - 4. *believe* God and miracles happen
- D. Hannah's rejoicing prayer
 - 1. it compares with the Magnificat Lu 1:46-55
 - 2. Mary knew this song and identified with it
 - 3. the humble of the Lord (the anawim) will be exalted
 - 4. the proud will be brought low
- E. Their exceptional sons are among the shepherds of Israel
 - 1. they bear out in their leadership the spirit of humility of their mothers
 - 2. prophets, priests and kings are shepherds in Israel
 - 3. which are God's women? you will tell them by their fruits

II. Obedient and Disobedient Families

- A. Eli is condemned by God for allowing his sons to be disobedient
 - 1. he judged 40 years
 - 2. he dies upon news of the death of his sons 2:31
 - 3. doom is coming upon the entire house of Eli in the future
 - 4. a grandchild, Ichabod, is born during the turmoil 4:21

- a. his name means "the glory is departed from Israel"
 - b. his mother, Eli's daughter-in-law, dies in childbirth
5. God will raise up a faithful priest, he shall go in and out before *my anointed* forever - a prophecy in 2:35
- a. foretells the end of the house of Levi as priests
 - b. foretells the installation by King David of a line of priests from the lineage of Zadok

- B. Samuel's sons do not obey the Lord
 - 1. they did not walk in His ways
 - 2. they took bribes and perverted justice
 - 3. the elders do not want them to judge Israel
 - 4. therefore, they ask Samuel to make a king

III. Samuel, Judge, Priest and Prophet of Israel

- A. He is dedicated to God from conception 1:11 - a Nazarite? Nu 6
- B. He is taken to Eli and the service of God at three years of age 1:24
- C. His theophany begins a "Knowing of God" 3:2-18
 - 1. he has had all this priestly contact, but no "yada"
 - 2. now he has an *experience* of God, essential for *knowing*
 - 3. empowered by this experience for his shepherding of Israel
- D. His words are now powerful, not one falls to the ground unfulfilled 3:19
- E. His prophetic gift is recognized from Dan to Beersheba 3:20
- F. As prophet he has many gifts
 - 1. he is a seer with mystical powers, clairvoyance, and other psychic powers
 - a. Saul would pay him like other seers for information about lost asses
 - b. he foresaw the immediate future of Saul when he left Ramah
 - 2. but he was not the ordinary sooth-sayer, but a man of God
 - 3. he organized a band of prophets
 - a. an ecstatic group - prophesying, music, trances,
 - b. their influence on Saul was beyond his control or understanding
- G. As a Judge he judged Israel
 - 1. he had national authority to convene the elders
 - 2. he was a war leader as well
 - 3. he rode a circuit in judging Israel
- H. He assumed the authority of a priest
 - 1. he had no credentials mentioned for priesthood
 - 2. I Chronicles 6:33 supplies a missing genealogy
 - a. he was of the house of Levi in the lineage of Kohath
 - b. but Levites were not all priests, who were in Aaron's lineage

IV. Pressure of the Philistines

- A. Israel is beaten at Aphek
- B. The ark is taken from Shiloh's Tent of Meeting into battle
- C. The Philistines capture the ark
 - 1. they take the ark to Ashdod, then Gath, then Ekron
 - 2. they place it in the house of Dagon their god
 - a. Dagon cannot stand upright
 - b. affliction of the people with swellings indicates Bubonic plague
 - c. the ark is seven months with the Philistines
 - 3. then it is sent back
 - a. with a guilt offering of five gold tumors and five gold mice
 - b. conveyed in a new cart pulled by milk cows
 - c. it goes off, despite calves, over the fields to Beth-shemesh
- D. The Israelites receive it gladly
 - 1. they make an impromptu offering - cart and cows
 - 2. the curious who overlook the ark's holiness are slain
 - 3. then it is taken to Kiriath-jearim where it stayed 20 years

V. Samuel's later life

- A. He gathers all Israel at Mizpah 7:5
 - 1. there they fast and repent
 - 2. they make sacrifice with Samuel presiding as priest
- B. The Israelites taste victory against Philistines 7:10
- C. He acts as a circuit judge 7:15
- D. He appoints his sons judges, but they are corrupt
- E. The people demand a king
 - 1. Samuel is unhappy
 - 2. God speaks, "listen to the people"
 - 3. Samuel warns about the ways of a king
 - a. people will be absorbed into his service
 - b. provisions will be absorbed to provide for his house and government
 - c. the insatiable needs of a king are outlined
 - d. but this does not deter their desire for a king

VI. Enter Saul, anointed the first king of Israel A.

Occasion of his meeting with Samuel 9:1 ff 1.
the family has lost asses

- 2. Saul and servant wander into Samuel's territory seeking them
- 3. they go to the seer for information
 - a. it is a day of sacrifice
 - b. the Lord had revealed to Samuel that Saul was coming
 - c. Samuel knows him when they meet
- 4. Saul is given a head place at the feast
- 5. Saul sleeps overnight at Samuel's
- 6. Samuel reveals God's plan to Saul 9:27
- B. Samuel anoints Saul privately 10:1
 - 1. tells him the immediate future and each detail is correct
 - 2. he meets the band of prophets 10:10
 - 3. Saul falls into ecstasy and he prophesies 10:11
- C. Saul keeps the secret 10:16
- D. Samuel reassembles the people at Mizpah
 - 1. he retells Israel's story
 - a. God was their king
 - b. but now they are rejecting God for a human king
 - 2. he casts lots
 - a. by tribe - Benjamin is taken
 - b. by family - Matrites are taken
 - c. by man - Saul, the son of Kish is taken
 - d. the lots confirmed the choice of Samuel previously
 - e. now Saul is to be re-anointed in public
 - 3. Saul is terrified at the idea
 - a. he hides in the baggage
 - b. the people shout, "Long live the king!"
- E. Saul goes home to Gibeah
 - 1. men of valor go with him
 - 2. but some already despise him
 - 3. he ignores these enemies for now