

## Samuel Sermon Notes

A sermon outline based on 1 Samuel 3, written by Clare McBeath and Tim Presswood.



## Sermon Notes

### *1 Samuel 3*

We are focussing upon Samuel as a child. However, the story begins with his parents. The author depicts a dark, patriarchal time in which, "God's voice was rarely heard." Hannah is one of two named wives for Elkanah. The other, Peninah has status because she has many children.

Hannah is caught crying by her husband Elkanah. As we have seen in the previous story (in the order we have the Hebrew Scriptures) - Ruth and Boaz, it was only through the production of children that a woman had any security. Men's life was frequently cut short in battle. Hannah may be weeping because of the taunting she receives when she goes to temple, but she may also be fearing for her future security in a society built upon patriarchy.

In her desperation, Hannah promises to give the child to God if He grants her a child and in time this duly happens.

The Priest, Eli, whose own sons are already proving to be abusing their privileged position and completely out of control, gratefully receives the child and trains him as an apprentice.

You may, or may not, wish to speculate about whether God would really require a baby to be separated from its parents as repayment of a desperate woman's oath!

The picture painted is of a society on the verge of collapse with social mores being challenged, the rich and powerful abusing their position and the weak and vulnerable being left to fend for themselves. Eli, God's messenger, is weak and as a consequence does little to challenge the status quo. God's voice is rarely heard.

His inability to hear God is stressed by his sleeping. Three times, God calls to Samuel, but Eli fails to recognise God.

It is the child, Samuel, who hears God's voice and immediately responds, although, as a child, he does not have the experience to respond appropriately. He requires the guidance of an appropriate adult. Three times, Eli fails to provide that guidance.

Only on the third occasion does the penny drop. It is the persistent innocence of the child which reminds the weak adult of the call of God, unheard for so many years.

And it is the child Samuel who begins a prophetic ministry, confronting the declining society with its own evil.

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Baptist Union of Great Britain, Baptist House, PO Box 44, 129 Broadway, Didcot OX11 8RT  
Tel: 01235 517700 Email: [safeguarding@baptist.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@baptist.org.uk) Website: [www.baptist.org.uk](http://www.baptist.org.uk)

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