

General Church Education



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# Lesson 4:

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Level 4: The Lord Is the Hero

For ages 9-10

# Samuel, the Last Judge

## 1 Samuel 1, 2:1-11

### Teacher Background

Elkanah and Hannah were among the few in Israel who remembered the Lord and worshiped at the tabernacle in Shiloh. Hannah longed for a child. When she came to sacrifice at the tabernacle, she prayed that the Lord might grant her a son. She promised that if she had a son, she would dedicate him to the Lord. The birth of Samuel, the final judge in Israel, comes as a ray of hope after Israel's disobedience and idolatry. After Samuel was born, Hannah fulfilled her pledge and brought him to the tabernacle after his weaning, most likely by age six, to be raised by Eli, the high priest. After she had given Samuel to Eli, Hannah delivered a beautiful prayer of thanks. This offers a nice opportunity to reflect on prayer. Unlike previous judges, Samuel was not a hero warrior, but a priest and prophet. He judged the entire land of Israel, and not just one local area.

Every child who is born is really the Lord's, and in time all children must be returned to Him. Parents and teachers are charged with bringing children to the Lord by teaching them to know and serve their Heavenly Father from the time they are young. In this way children will be prepared to assume adult responsibility for their actions in the light of the Lord's commandments when they are ready. Samuel's mother brought him a new robe each year. Garments represent thoughts that clothe the affections of the heart. Children need new "clothing" each year in the form of deepening spiritual instruction.

### Key Ideas

- When we pray, the Lord can see exactly what we are thinking and feeling.
- Samuel was a priest and prophet.
- Hannah made new clothes for Samuel each year, as we need new truths to grow spiritually.

### From the Writings

From infancy to childhood, and sometimes into early youth, a person is absorbing forms of goodness and truth from parents and teachers, his state of innocence enabling this to happen. The truths that a person learns and believes when he is a young child but which later on he either endorses or refuses to accept, are these: There is God, and He is one; He created everything; He rewards those who do what is good and punishes those who do things that are bad; there is life after death, when the bad go to hell and the good go to heaven, and so there is a hell and a heaven; the life after death lasts for ever; also, people ought to pray every day and to do so in a humble way; they ought to keep the sabbath day holy, honor their parents, and not commit adultery, kill, or steal; and many other truths like these. Such truths are learned and absorbed by a person from earliest childhood; but if, when he starts to think for himself and to lead his own life, he endorses them, adding to them further truths of a more interior kind, and leads a life in conformity with them, all is well with him. But if he starts to disobey them, refusing to accept them, then even though outwardly he leads a life in conformity with them, because the law and society expect him to do so, he is governed by evil. See *Arcana Coelestia* 5135.2,3.

# Samuel, the Last Judge

## I Samuel 1, 2:1-11

### Vocabulary

**Nazirite**—someone dedicated to the Lord who could not drink wine or strong drink or cut his hair

**faithful**—always listening to and obeying the Lord

**linen**—fabric made from flax

### A Place of Worship

When the children of Israel settled in Canaan, they placed the Ten Commandments in the tabernacle in Shiloh, in the middle of the land. The tabernacle stayed there even though the children of Israel turned away from the Lord again and again. Many enemies passed through the land. These enemies worshiped idols. Most of the children of Israel forgot the Lord and worshiped these idols. Some of the people who turned away from the Lord were priests who served in the tabernacle.

This story takes place when the period of the judges was about to end. At that time Eli was high priest in the line of Aaron. Eli served in the tabernacle in Shiloh.

### Hannah Prays for a Son

A few faithful people still came to the tabernacle every year to keep the Passover, and to offer their sacrifices to the Lord. Hannah and her husband, Elkanah were among these people. Elkanah's name begins with "El". When you see "el" in a name in the Word you know it has something to do

with God because "el" means God in Hebrew, the language of the Word. Look for "el" in other names in this story.



Hannah was sad because she had no child. She was growing old. All the women of Israel longed to have sons. They knew the prophecy that the Lord would be born into the world. Each woman hoped to be chosen to become the mother of the Lord.

Read I Samuel 1:1-10.

Hannah prayed at the tabernacle for the Lord to bring her a son. She spoke her prayer in her heart but did not say any words aloud. Eli saw her lips move. He could not hear what she was asking. But the Lord knew. The Lord hears all prayers. Hannah promised that if the Lord would give her a son, she would give him to the service of the Lord. He would be a Nazirite, like Samson.



Read I Samuel 1:11-18.

Hannah went back to her home, and the Lord answered her prayer. Baby Samuel was born. The name Samuel means “God has heard”.

Samuel grew up to become the last judge in Israel. He was not a warrior, as most of the other judges were. He was a priest and prophet. Other judges defeated enemies in just one part of Israel, but Samuel judged the whole land and spoke for the Lord.

Read I Samuel 1:19-23.

### **Hannah Keeps Her Promise**

From the time Samuel was a baby, his parents taught him the commandments. He learned to obey the Lord. Like Samson, his strength was in his hair. Samuel served the Lord in the tabernacle, so his strength was a spiritual strength, not great physical strength like Samson’s.

Samuel lived with his parents until he was weaned and no longer needed to be fed mother’s milk. After Samuel was weaned, Hannah kept her promise to the Lord. She took him to the tabernacle and gave him to Eli, the high priest, to bring up in the service of the Lord.

Hannah had waited so long for a child, and wanted one so badly that she had promised to give him to the service of the Lord. Do you sometimes long for things? You do not always get them right away, do you? The Lord lets you wait until you are ready to use them well. He wants you to use His gifts, not just for yourself, but to do good and helpful things. That is using them for the service of the Lord.

Read I Samuel 1:24-28.

### **Eli Teaches Samuel to Serve the Lord**

From then on Samuel lived at the tabernacle. He dressed like a priest. He wore a linen ephod, a vest of plain white linen. Every year, when his mother came to the tabernacle to offer the sacrifice,

she brought a new robe she had made for him.

Eli taught Samuel to do all the things a boy could do to help him. There was much to be done in the tabernacle. Bread was put on the table of shewbread each day. Fragrant incense was burned morning and evening on the altar of incense. Water was put in the laver in the courtyard for the priests to wash their hands and feet before offering the sacrifice. Fire burning in the altar of burnt offering must never go out. Little dishes on top of the magnificent lampstand must be kept filled with olive oil, and the wicks of the lamps trimmed. Every evening the lamps were lit. Perhaps one of Samuel's duties was to open the curtain at the entrance to the tabernacle in the morning.



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Samuel grew up serving in the tabernacle. He served the Lord faithfully. The people loved him. Samuel's mother did not forget to say a prayer of thanks to the Lord for the precious gift He had given her. And after Hannah gave her son to the Lord, He blessed her with three more sons and two daughters.

If you like, read Hannah's prayer of thanks in I Samuel 2:1-11.

### Discussion Questions

- Aaron was the first high priest, and his sons became the high priests after him. Who was serving as high priest when Samuel was born?
- Why did Hannah and Elkanah go to the tabernacle at Shiloh?
- What did Eli think when he saw Hannah praying?
- What promise did Hannah make to the Lord if He granted her a child?
- How did Hannah fulfill her promise?
- What special qualities did Samuel have? Which other Judge had these qualities?
- In what ways was Samuel different from other judges in Israel?
- Do you think it was hard or easy to be a judge in Israel? Why?
- What qualities make a good judge?

# Activity Overview | Samuel, the Last Judge

## Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

Hear my cry, O God;  
Attend to my prayer.  
From the end of the earth I will cry to You,  
When my heart is overwhelmed;  
Lead me to the rock that is higher than I. Psalm 61:1,2

## Projects

Choose one or two activities.

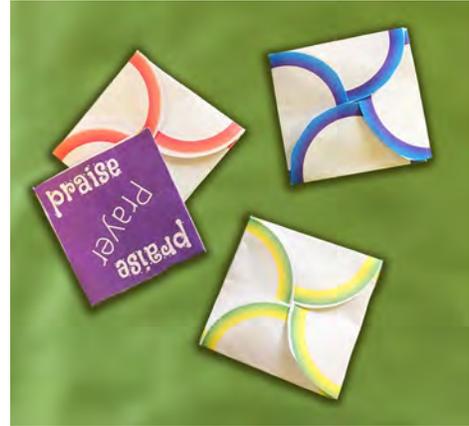
- Prayer Pocket
- Judges Trading Card
- Picture to Color—Hannah Brings Samuel to the Temple (I Samuel 1)

## Additional Activity Ideas

- For a variety of activities for this story, go to <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/file/family-lesson-the-birth-of-samuel-1-samuel01.pdf>.
- Color a quotation from the Word about the story of Samuel. This activity is online at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/file/activity-i-will-raise-up-a-faithful-priest-quotation-to-color-1-Samuel02.pdf>.
- Use a word bank to answer review questions about the story of Samuel's birth. This activity is online at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/file/activity-samuel-is-born-review-questions-1-samuel-1-2.pdf>.
- Review the judges of Israel by completing a chart. This activity is online at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/file/activity-chart-of-the-judges-review.pdf>.

## Activity 1 | Prayer Pocket

Hannah longed for a baby. When she went to the tabernacle she prayed for a son. She promised that if she had a son, she would give him to the Lord. In time, the Lord gave her a son, and she again prayed to the Lord. This prayer was one of rejoicing and thanks for all the Lord had done. Like Hannah we can turn to the Lord in prayer in sadness and in joy. We can ask for His help, and thank Him for His many blessings.



### Materials Needed

copies of *Pocket Prayers*

a copy of *Pocket full of Prayers*

scissors

pencil or pen

stapler

### Directions

1. Use scissors to cut around the edges of the *Pocket Prayers*.
2. Using a pencil or pen, write a prayer on the plain side of the pocket prayer.
3. Fold the curved edges of the *Pocket Prayer* along the straight lines to form a square. The colored side should show on the outside, with the prayer on the inside. Tuck the curved edges into each other so they stay shut (see picture above).
4. Create the *Pocket full of Prayers*. Cut off the white edges. Fold the page in half with the colored sides together. Then bend the writing down and fold again. Staple at each end to create a pocket (see picture below.)
5. Place the folded *Pocket Prayers* in the pocket or put them in your own pocket and take them with you to remind you that the Lord will always hear our prayers.



Pocket Prayers







Take what you need  
Pocket full of Prayers

## Activity 2 | Judges Trading Cards

### Samuel

Learn about the Judges by making a trading card for each one. Collect the trading cards and use them to review or sequence the stories of the judges. This activity is repeated in future stories.

Do the following on the front of each card:

1. Write the name of the judge in the space at the top of the card.
2. Write the number of years of peace Israel had after this judge conquered Israel's enemy.
3. Draw a picture of the judge.

Fill in any of the following details given in the story on the back of each card:

1. Write the name of the region(s) or city in Israel being attacked.
2. Write the name of the judge's tribe.
3. Write the name of the enemy attacking Israel.
4. Write the kind of weapon used to fight the enemy.
5. Fill in the "other" box with any details from the story that interest you, e.g. how a judge escaped, the number of years he or she judged Israel, other things he or she did.

When you have completed the card, cut it out. Fold the card in half and tape the edges together.

## Activity 2 | Judges Trading Card: Samuel

<b>JUDGES</b> FROM THE WORD		YEARS OF PEACE <input type="text"/>		
OTHER <input type="text"/>	WEAPON <input type="text"/>	ENEMY <input type="text"/>	TRIBE <input type="text"/>	PLACE OR CITY <input type="text"/>

