



Holy Old Testament Books Authored  
by Samuel: Judges, Ruth, I and II  
Samuel

*"Then Hannah prayed a vow to the Lord, 'O Lord, my God of Sabaoth, if You are looking, look with favor upon the lowly state of Your handmaiden and remember me. I pray You give Your handmaiden a seed of men, a son, and I will dedicate him before You as a gift until the day of his death. He will not drink wine nor intoxicating drink, and no razor come upon his head'" (I Samuel 1:11).*

Samuel the judge and prophet was dedicated to the Lord even before his birth. He was born into the Levite tribe of the Israelite nation. His father Elkanah had two wives Peninnah (meaning pearl) and Hannah (meaning grace). Elkanah and Peninnah and Hannah resided in Shiloh, the hill country north of Jerusalem.

Hannah was the favorite wife of Elkanah and she was granted double the time given to Peninnah. While Peninnah gave birth to many children, Hannah remained barren and with a great desire to have a child of her own. Humanly understandable, Hannah was jealous of the favoritism shown unto

Peninnah especially since she had born many children unto Elkanah.

Biblical scholars have speculated that Peninnah with her fertility and capability of giving birth to many children represented the Church of the Old Testament, the Prophets, and the Promise. On the other hand, Hannah's barrenness represents the Church of the New Testament that proceeded from the Gentiles, resentful yet not in malicious manner of the Jews mockery towards her.

Hannah reverently prayed for a son in secret before the Holy Altar in the House of the Lord, in Shiloh. She would come to symbolize the answering of quiet heartfelt prayers. Hannah portrayed meekness with Eli the priest, humility in prayer, and a strong fervent faith in God. While barren, Hannah did not enter into the day's affairs with a saddened face and cry out in her misery. Hannah did not make extreme demands of her husband nor accuse others for her misfortune. She did not declare herself depressed over her life situation.

Hannah promised that if God gave her a son, "*no razor shall come upon his head*" (I Samuel 1:11). God indeed answered Hannah's daily unceasing prayers for a child blessing her with a son; and to fulfill his mother's vow, Samuel was consecrated as a

Nazirite. Hannah kept Samuel for three short years until she weaned him after which, unhesitatingly, she offered him to the Lord as she had promised.

Eli the priest at the Temple was told,

*"And I lend him to the Lord all the days, which he lives to be fruitful to the Lord" (I Samuel 1:28).*

Hannah explained to Eli that this was the child the Lord sent in an answer to her prayer and Samuel was to be set apart for the service of God all the days of his earthly life. Following Hannah's fulfilling of her promise to God, she offered up a beloved prayer that has become one of the Holy Bible prayers most often admired.

## **Hannah's Prayer**

And Hannah prayed:

*"My heart is strengthened by the Lord; My horn is exalted in my God. I smile at my enemies; I rejoice in Your salvation. Because no one is holy like the Lord, No one is righteous like our God. No one is holy but You. Do not boast nor speak of high things; Let no arrogance come from your mouth, For the Lord is the God of knowledge; and God is preparing His actions. He weakened the bow of mighty men, and those who are weak are girded with strength. Those who were full of bread were made empty,*

*and the hungry have forsaken the land. The barren woman has borne seven, and she who has many children has become feeble. The Lord kills and makes alive; He brings down to Hades and rises up. The Lord makes poor and rich; He brings low and lifts up. He raises the poor from earth and lifts the needy from the dung heap. To set them among princely people and make them inherit a throne of glory. The One who gives a prayer to the one praying. He blesses with righteous years; for by strength no man can prevail. The Lord Makes His adversaries weak; The Lord is holy. Let not the man of learning boast in his understanding. Nor let the man of might boast in his might, nor let the man of riches boast in his riches. Only let the one who boasts boast in this: To understand and to know the Lord and to do justice and righteousness in the midst of the earth. The Lord went up into the Heaven and thundered. The Lord judges the ends of the earth. He gives strength to our leaders. And He will exalt the horn of His Christ" (I Samuel 2:1-10).*

A Nazirite vow of separating oneself to the Lord was not to be taken lightly; for it indeed entailed much...

*"Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 'Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When either a man or woman consecrates an offering to take the vow of a Nazirite, to separate himself to the LORD,*

*he shall separate himself from wine and similar drink; he shall drink neither vinegar made from wine nor vinegar made from similar drink; neither shall he drink any grape juice nor eat fresh grapes or raisins. All the days of his separation he shall eat nothing that is produced by the grapevine, from seed to skin. All the days of his vow of his separation no razor shall come upon his head; until the days are fulfilled for which he separated himself to the Lord, he shall be holy. Then he shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow. All the days that he separated himself to the Lord he shall not go near a dead body. He shall not make himself unclean for his father or his mother, for his brother or his sister, when they die, because of his separation to God is on his head. All the days of his separation he shall be holy to God. And if anyone dies very suddenly beside him, and he defiles his consecrated head, then he shall shave his head on the day of his cleansing on the seventh day he shall shave it.*

*Then on the eighth day he shall bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons to the priest to the door of the tabernacle of meeting; and the priest shall offer one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering, and make atonement for him, because he sinned in regard to the corpse; and he*

*shall sanctify his head that same day. He shall consecrate to the Lord the days of his separation, and bring a male lamb in its first year as a trespass offering; but the former days shall be lost, because his separation was defiled.*

*Now this is the law of the Nazirite: When the days of his separation are fulfilled, he shall be brought to the door of the tabernacle of meeting. And he shall present his offering to the Lord: one male lamb in its first year without blemish as a burnt offering, one ewe in its first year without blemish as a sin offering, one ram without blemish as a peace offering, a basket of unleavened bread, cakes of fine flour mixed with oil, unleavened wafers anointed with oil, and their grain offering with their drink offerings. Then the priest shall bring them before the Lord and offer his sin offering and his burnt offering; and he shall offer the ram as a sacrifice of peace offering to the Lord, with the basket of unleavened bread; the priest shall also offer its grain offering and its drink offering. Then the Nazirite shall shave his consecrated head at the door of the tabernacle of meeting and shall take the hair from his consecrated head and put it on the fire which is under the sacrifice of the peace offering. And the priest shall take the boiled shoulder of the ram, one unleavened cake from the basket, and one*



*unleavened wafer and put them upon the hands of the Nazirite after he has shaved his consecrated hair, and the priest shall wave them as a wave offering before the Lord; they are holy for the priest, together with the breast of the wave offering and the thigh of the heave offering. After that the Nazirite may drink wine. This is the law of the Nazirite who vows to the Lord the offering for his separation and besides that whatever else his hand is able to provide; according to the vow which he takes so must do according to the law of his separation. And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 'Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, 'This is the way you shall bless the children of Israel. Say to them: 'The LORD bless you and keep you;'' (Numbers 6:1-24).*

In addition to the Nazirite consecration, Hannah, Samuel's mother also promised to bring Samuel to reside at the Shiloh Shrine where he would be forever dedicated to the Lord.

When she came to worship at the Temple, Hannah provided her son, Samuel, with a new garment each year as a renewal of his family's love and care for him. A constant reminder of his family's strong and abiding faith in God, this garment might have served as a constant reminder to young Samuel of his need for discipline while surrounded by Eli the Temple

priest's sons' evil ways. It is said, "*...the sons of Eli were sons of scoundrels, not knowing the Lord*" (I Samuel 2:12).

As a young boy living at the Shiloh Shrine in dedication to the Lord, Samuel was blessed to have slept in the central room of the shrine where the Ark of the Covenant was located. Samuel assisted and served Eli, the priest at the Shiloh Shrine. It was through Eli's dedication to God that Samuel came to know, love and understand God's will in his life. Samuel resided in an era when "*the word of the Lord was rare*" (I Samuel 3:1).

Eli slept in a room adjoining to Samuel's. As the familiar story goes, when Samuel was twelve years old he began to have awakening auditory visions hearing a voice that called out his name. Thinking that Eli the priest had called out to him; young Samuel promptly went to Eli to respond to his alleged summons. Eli assured Samuel that he had not called for him at all. The same scenario was repeated twice more; and Eli's response was the same as to the previous times.

Realizing that Samuel's experience was more than a recurrent awakening dream; Eli, the priest, instructed Samuel to reply: "*Speak, LORD, for Your servant hears*" (I Samuel 3:9) at the next summon of



his name. God revealed to young Samuel that the priestly lineage of Eli would forever be destroyed. Samuel then shared this message with Eli who accepted it as God's will and made the announcement that Samuel was certainly a prophet of God. This proved to be a pivotal point in Samuel's life. It was Samuel and Samuel alone who had heard the most precious voice of God.

Eli's sons were known to follow their earthly desires rather than the will of God. By taking the best meats which should have been offered unto the Lord as sacrifices by worshippers, they had directly sinned against the Lord thus abusing their inherited office. In spite of Eli instructions to his sons that no intercession could be obtained from violators of sacred offices who abused their privileges, nevertheless, his sons continued in their earthly destructive pursuits and had gone into battle without regard for sanctifying themselves nor praying unto God. Consequently, both sons were killed in that battle with the Philistines. When Eli heard the devastating news of his sons' deaths he fell backward from his chair, broke his neck and died.

Samuel witnessed the priestly dynasty of Eli destroyed, his sons killed in battle and Eli, hearing the news fell back in his chair in shock, broke his neck and died. During this same battle, the

Philistines captured the Ark of the Covenant. Perhaps the grief related to the Ark's capture and his sons' deaths were too much for Eli to bear.

With the death of Eli and his sons, exactly as Samuel had foretold, God determined "*to raise up for Myself a faithful priest, who shall do according to what is in My heart and My mind*" (I Samuel 2:35). Thus, a new priestly clan emerged and served in place of Eli's family; as Eli's priestly lineage had now ended.

The example of Samuel and Eli abiding in the temple in dedication, gives us an insight into what is called Saving Grace. Samuel and Eli were in constant prayer and study of the Word of God. Their lives were routinely in those spiritual exercises that made them strong fighters against the worldly.

Our beloved Coptic Church teaches and provides us with exercises to live a life similar to Eli's and Samuel's; both inside and outside our homes and churches. If we pray the Agepya Prayers, read our Holy Bibles, and review the Synaxarium reading day by day, are we not in fact setting our homes as a stage for practicing constant spiritual exercises?

Samuel became a prophet and a leader accepted by the Israelites. During Samuel's leadership the Ark of the Covenant was returned. Samuel became a judge who obeyed and carried out God's will. Samuel

traveled each year to different cities to offer sacrifices to God and to govern the people.

Samuel authored three Old Testament Books:

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Judges	Israel's' forsaking God and God forsaking Israel. A Holy Book of compromise and anarchy. Named for the thirteen judges of Israel.
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I Samuel	Obedience to God, punishment for disobedience. Israel is moving from judges to kings.
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II Samuel	David as King. Saul is replaced due to disobedience and refusal to obey God.
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Samuel was the last of Israel's judges. Biblical accounts record that although Samuel witnessed the tragic outcomes of Eli's evil sons, Samuel's own sons walked the same path and acted as corruptedly as Eli's sons. At this point in history, the elders of Israel called upon Samuel to appoint a king to eliminate the need for further future judges; using Samuel's sons as a reason for this request.

The first king of the Israelites anointed by Samuel was King Saul from the tribe of Benjamin. After two hundred years of being ruled by sixteen judges, Israel had its first king. For a time King Saul was a good leader who protected his people. However, King Saul eventually became preoccupied with position and power causing His trust and love for God to wane. Due to King Saul's increasing misdeeds and disobedience, Samuel would cut a prisoner into "pieces" with his own sword. King Saul proved to become one troubled by an evil temper, impatience. Samuel, though not an ordained priest, dared to offer a sacrifice thus defying God and attributing God's omnipotence to himself.

Samuel died before King Saul. Scholars believe there were 115 years from the birth of Judge Samuel to the death of King Saul. Samuel died of old age; yet he was mentioned mysteriously again in the Holy Bible. Before his death, Samuel again anointed another king, King David. David was too young and in certain danger had he been proclaimed king before the approaching death of King Saul.

King Saul, in desperation, corruptibly went to the medium at Endor prior to battling the Philistines at Gilboa to conjure up for him the dead prophet's (Samuel) spirit.

*"Then Saul said to his servants, 'Find me a woman who is a medium, that I may go to her and inquire of her.' And his servants said to him, 'In fact, there is a woman who is a medium at En Dor.' So Saul disguised himself and put on other clothes, and he went, and two men with him; and they came to the woman by night. And he said, 'Please conduct a séance for me, and bring up for me the one I shall name to you.' Then the woman said to him, 'Look, you know what Saul has done, how he has cut off the mediums and the spiritists from the land. Why then do you lay a snare for my life, to cause me to die?' And Saul swore to her by the LORD, saying, 'As the LORD lives, no punishment shall come upon you for this thing.' Then the woman said, 'Whom shall I bring up for you?' And he said, 'Bring up Samuel for me.' When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out with a loud voice. And the woman spoke to Saul, saying, 'Why have you deceived me? For you are Saul!' And the king said to her, 'Do not be afraid. What did you see?' And the woman said to Saul, 'I saw a spirit ascending out of the earth.' So he said to her, 'What is his form?' And she said, 'An old man is coming up, and he is covered with a mantle.' And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground and bowed down. Now Samuel said to Saul, 'Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?' And Saul*

*answered, 'I am deeply distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God has departed from me and does not answer me anymore, neither by prophets nor by dreams. Therefore I have called you, that you may reveal to me what I should do.'*" (I Samuel 28:7-15).

In response to the ill fated action taken in finding a medium; Samuel said to King Saul, "*And tomorrow you and your sons will be with me. The LORD will also deliver the army of Israel into the hand of the Philistines*" (I Samuel 28:19). The king and his sons were killed in battle the following day and Samuel was allowed to rest in peace.

Justin Martyr (c. 160) states, "That souls survive, I have shown to you from the fact that the soul of Samuel was called up by the witch as Saul demanded. And it appears also, that all the souls of similar righteous men and prophets fell under the domination of such powers. This indeed can be inferred from the very facts in the case of that witch."

Hippolytus (c. 205) explains this act... "The question is raised whether Samuel rose by the hand of the sorceress or not. Now, if, indeed, we were to say that he did rise, we would be propounding what is false. For how could a demon call back the soul—I say not only of a righteous man, but of anyone whomever—



when it had gone and was tarrying, one knew not where? It would have been no difficult matter for the demon to conjure up the form of Samuel, for Samuel's form was known to him. How then, he says, did he foretell the calamities that were to befall Saul and Jonathan at the same time? He actually did foretell the end of the war and how Saul would be overcome, drawing that as an inference from the wrath of God against Saul."

Another revelation that God had delivered from the medium of Endor was that souls do survive.

Today we have our own battles "against the Philistines". These are disbelief in God, rebellion against the will of God, pride and self reliance, to mention a few. Eli and Samuel were examples of those who did not lose their life to sin because they dedicated themselves to doing God's will and obeying His commandments. It is my prayer that commencing at a very young age we all learn from Samuel's example how to conduct our lives making dedication to prayer, study, and spiritual exercises a daily routine and essential part of life.

*"He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty"*  
(Psalm 91:1).

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