We Need the True King

The last verse in the Book of Judges—a book that chronicles the downward spiral of disobedience of those who were called to be radically different as the people of God—is one of the most depressing verses in the Bible: “In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did whatever seemed right to him” (Judg. 21:25).

Is this not a fitting definition of sin? In this one verse, we see the prideful root of self-lordship, self-exaltation, and self-determination at the core of all our rebellion. We are, in our own minds, the gods of our own universe. And as such, we have the right to choose whatever is right and wrong for ourselves, and anything that imposes some authority over us other than our own autonomous minds, hearts, and desires is a constraint that must be thrown off.

As sinners, we are like the Israelites of old, convinced of our own truth, our own ideas, and our own wisdom. Our sin has blinded us to what is truly good and right, and it’s precisely because of this blindness that we need a true king. We need a king who tells us the truth, guides us with justice, and leads us in righteousness. And we need a king who can open our eyes to all these things and more. But because we are enslaved by our own desires, the true king we need must not only be our ruler but also our rescuer.

In Jesus, we find this King—the One before whom every knee will bow and whose greatness every tongue will eventually confess. In Jesus, the true King has come. He is the King of love as well as the King of power. In Jesus, and in Him alone, will we finally find all our desires for peace, security, and wholeness met.

What is left for us, then, is to acknowledge that every other king we seek to enthrone is only a substitute for Jesus. Far better is for us to trust in Him not only as our rescuer but also as our ruler and to acknowledge that all authority has been given to Him.
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Unit 11: God Provides a Godly King (1–2 Samuel; Psalms)

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Cover Art Explanation

1. The ark of the covenant (Unit 10, Session 2)
2. Dagon’s hand broken as his idol statue fell before the ark of the Lord (Unit 10, Session 2; 1 Sam. 5:1-4)
3. David’s sling used to defeat Goliath for the glory of the Lord (Unit 11, Session 1)
4. The sun: Solomon’s reflections in the Book of Ecclesiastes include the earthly perspective that there is nothing new “under the sun” (Unit 12, Session 2)
5. The temple built by Solomon according to God’s promise to David (Unit 12, Session 3)
6. The cloud: At the dedication ceremony for the temple, a cloud representing the Lord’s presence and glory filled the temple (Unit 12, Session 3)
In this volume of The Gospel Project, we cover the roughly one hundred and twenty years of Israel’s heyday: the united monarchy. After decades of the devastating cycle of sin and deliverance and being ruled by a series of judges, the Israelites called on Samuel to appoint a king for them—one like those of the nations around them. God warned His people that what they were requesting would lead to heartache and trouble, but they insisted. So God, in His kindness, gave them what they wanted in order to teach them to trust Him.

What followed was a series of three kings: Saul, David, and Solomon, each ruling for about forty years. In some ways, these kings provide us with examples to follow: the fierce determination of David not to stand for anyone impugning God’s character; the mercy and kindness David showed to a foe and his family; the wisdom of Solomon. But we also discover that each of these three men fell woefully short of being the king God’s people wanted and needed, each one proving God’s warnings true. Bookending God’s people crying out as one for a king at the start of this volume, by the time we finish, we encounter God’s people being divided into two kingdoms.

Our takeaway is clear: The hope of humanity does not rest in any human king or leader but is fixed solely and securely in the King of kings, Jesus Christ. But at the same time, we see that God delights in using His people despite their failings. God would fulfill His covenant with David, even though he committed adultery and murder. This reaffirmed the promises God had made to Abraham generations before. And though Solomon would succumb to polygamy and idolatry, God used him to build the temple, a place for God’s people to worship and be in relationship with God.

So consider as you study: What might God do through us?
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God Calls a Prophet

Summary and Goal
In this session, we encounter Hannah, a woman in a difficult position with no hope in sight. When she came to her breaking point, she chose to go to the only One who could help her in the midst of her pain. The Lord responded and blessed her with a son who would one day become a great prophet for the Lord. He was cause for worshiping God, and he was called to share God’s word in a ministry that pointed forward to the great Prophet to come—Jesus Christ.

Session Outline
1. A son is dedicated for God’s service (1 Sam. 1:20,24-28).
2. A son is reason for joy and worship (1 Sam. 2:1-2,6-8).
3. A son is called by God to share His words (1 Sam. 3:15-21).

Session in a Sentence
God communicates His words through faithful servants who are dedicated to Him.

Christ Connection
Samuel was the long-awaited son whom Hannah dedicated to God for His service. God was with Samuel and he became a prophet who spoke the words God gave him to the people. John 1:1 says that Jesus is the Word, the long-awaited Son of God sent to show the world what God is like.

Missional Application
Because we have experienced the power of the Word of God leading to our salvation, we listen carefully to what God says to us in His Word and share His truth to those around us.
Group Time

Introduction

PACK ITEM 2: STORYLINE RECAP: Cut apart the numbered sections of this handout, which provide a high-altitude recap of the storyline of Scripture hitting on the struggles of faith God’s people have. As group members arrive, ask them to move about the room and read the posts in order.

EXPLAIN: Use the paragraph on page 11 in the Daily Discipleship Guide (DDG) to highlight humanity’s tendency to doubt God’s sovereignty and goodness. Refer to the posts from Pack Item 2: Storyline Recap as needed to flesh out how people have struggled in the areas of pregnancy, protection, and provision.

Nothing is impossible for the Lord, but we sure are prone to think some things might even be beyond God’s reach. Whether it is pregnancy, protection, or provision, the things out of our own hands often feel out of God’s hands too. But nothing is beyond God. He is sovereign. He is omnipotent. He is omniscient. He is omnipresent. And what’s more, He is omnibenevolent, meaning He is all good and He works all things together for the good of those who love Him, who are called according to His purpose (Rom. 8:28).

INTERACT: Ask group members the following question.

What, or whom, does the world run to when life feels beyond their control? (to God; to other world religions; to despair; to escape through entertainment or substance abuse; to family and friends; just run away)

EXPLAIN: Put the group’s answers to the previous question in the context of a biblical worldview.

• Unless the people of the world repent of their sin and turn to Jesus, no matter where they go or to whom they run, they will still be living lost and wandering in a world beyond their control. For that matter, Christians also live in a world beyond our control, but we know the One who is in control, and that should make all the difference in the world for how we live and respond to our circumstances.

SUMMARIZE: In this session, we encounter Hannah, a woman in a difficult position with no hope in sight. When she came to her breaking point, she chose to go to the only One who could help her in the midst of her pain. The Lord responded and blessed her with a son who would one day become a great prophet for the Lord. He was cause for worship to God and he was called to share God’s word. Furthermore, his ministry pointed forward to the great Prophet to come—Jesus Christ, the Word of God made man.

For session-by-session training videos, please visit MinistryGrid.com/GospelProject.
For additional teaching options and other resources, please visit GospelProject.com/additional-resources.
**Point 1: A son is dedicated for God’s service (1 Sam. 1:20,24-28).**

**EXPLAIN:** Use the following paragraph in the DDG (p. 12) and the additional leader content to set up the story of Hannah praying to the Lord for a son.

In the waning period of the judges, an Israelite named Elkanah had two wives: Hannah, who was barren, and Peninnah, who provoked Hannah because of it. This family worshiped yearly at the sanctuary in Shiloh, and on one occasion, Hannah reached her breaking point. Did she try to run away from her affliction? Did she lash out against her rival? No. She took her anguish and resentment to the Lord in prayer, asking Him to take notice of her affliction and to bless her with a son (1:9-11,16). And the Lord listened.

- Peninnah had children, yet she saw barren Hannah as her rival and took opportunities to provoke Hannah over her barrenness, most likely jealous of Elkanah’s love for Hannah. On their yearly journeys to worship in Shiloh, Elkanah would give portions of meat from their fellowship offering to Peninnah and their children, but he would give a double portion to Hannah because he loved her, even though she was childless (1:4-7).

**READ** 1 Samuel 1:20 (DDG p. 12).

20 After some time, Hannah conceived and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel, because she said, “I requested him from the LORD.”

**INTERACT:** Ask group members the following question.

What must Hannah have believed about God to pray to Him under these circumstances? (God hears prayers; God responds to prayers; God is not annoyed by the cries of our hearts; God is sovereign over the womb; God cares for those who are afflicted)

**EXPLAIN:** Emphasize that Hannah was an ordinary woman, yet her prayer was powerful, honest, and answered (see Jas. 5:16-18). Apply Hannah’s example of prayer to the lives of your group members with the following truth.

- Although the Lord may not answer all of our prayers in the ways that we hope and expect, Hannah’s example is a picture of humility and desperation for the Lord that we should follow. We all share in the privilege of being able to approach the Lord in prayer (Phil 4:6-7; Heb. 4:14-16).

**SAY:** As a part of praying to the Lord for a son, Hannah vowed that she would give that son to the Lord for His service. So when the time was right, Hannah brought Samuel to Eli, the high priest at the Lord’s sanctuary.
READ 1 Samuel 1:24-28 (DDG p. 12).

24 When she had weaned him, she took him with her to Shiloh, as well as a three-year-old bull, half a bushel of flour, and a clay jar of wine. Though the boy was still young, she took him to the LORD’s house at Shiloh. 25 Then they slaughtered the bull and brought the boy to Eli.

26 “Please, my lord,” she said, “as surely as you live, my lord, I am the woman who stood here beside you praying to the LORD. 27 I prayed for this boy, and since the LORD gave me what I asked him for, 28 I now give the boy to the LORD. For as long as he lives, he is given to the LORD.” Then he worshiped the LORD there.

EXPLAIN: Provide the back story on Hannah’s previous interaction with Eli in the temple. Then use the second paragraph in the DDG (p. 12) to highlight Hannah’s fulfillment of her vow to give her son to the Lord for His service.

- When Hannah prayed years before in the sanctuary, Eli, the priest, saw her lips moving but heard no words. He mistook this as a sign of drunkenness and rebuked her for it (1:12-14). She earnestly and humbly explained to him, however, that she was crying out to God because of her deep pain (1:15-16).

- Eli then responded with a simple blessing and hope that her request would be answered. His words had an immediate and lasting effect on her, as she left, ate, and the sadness on her face disappeared (1:17-18). There’s something meaningful about a word of comfort and reassurance from a fellow believer.

When Hannah returned to the sanctuary with her son, she took joy in reminding Eli about her prayer and showing him God’s answer. Hannah’s joy and gratitude to the Lord, coupled with her faithfulness, led her to fulfill her vow. The Lord gave her a great gift, so she made good on her promise to give her son to the Lord. Samuel would serve the Lord all the days of his life. And the response was worship to the Lord (1:26-28).

INSTRUCT: Ask group members to use the scale in their DDG (p. 12) to consider how they tend to view the gifts God gives to them.

How are you prone to view the gifts God gives to you?

Selfishly          With Indifference          As Precious          With Purpose

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Point 2: A son is reason for joy and worship (1 Sam. 2:1-2,6-8).

READ: Ask a volunteer to read 1 Samuel 2:1-2,6-8 (DDG p. 13).

1 Hannah prayed:
   My heart rejoices in the Lord; my horn is lifted up by the Lord. My mouth boasts over my enemies, because I rejoice in your salvation. 2 There is no one holy like the Lord. There is no one besides you! And there is no rock like our God.

6 The Lord brings death and gives life; he sends some down to Sheol, and he raises others up. 7 The Lord brings poverty and gives wealth; he humbles and he exalts. 8 He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the trash heap. He seats them with noblemen and gives them a throne of honor. For the foundations of the earth are the Lord’s; he has set the world on them.

EXPLAIN: Use the first paragraph in the DDG (p. 13) to contrast Hannah’s praise to God with some in the world who view a child as a burden.

What a gift from God a son or daughter is! Parents are given the blessing of loving and raising another image bearer of God for His glory. What an amazing joy and stewardship. Sadly, this truth is lost on many people who see children as a burden, with some even advocating for abortion or infanticide—both the murder of image bearers. Hannah’s heart, however, welled up with spontaneous praise at the gift of her child. We all need these reminders at times: Children are a blessing from the Lord (Ps. 127).

Commentary: Hannah’s song of praise would one day influence Mary’s “Magnificat,” her song praising God for sending His Son through her (Luke 1:46-55). Both Hannah and Mary found themselves spontaneously praising God for the miraculous gift of a son when it was thought impossible. They both praised Him for His greatness and strength and declared that He is the One who raises up the lowly to a place of honor and blessing. These two women are shining examples in Scripture, but Bible readers must note how quickly they emphasized their humanity, that they were lowly and needy. God uses the lowly and needy, not just the powerful, and He works mightily in and through them, and that includes us.

INTERACT: Ask group members the following question.

How can the church challenge the worldview that children are a burden and not a blessing from God? (Christians should be mindful about how they speak about children so as not to communicate that they are a burden; Christians can participate in and support foster care, adoption, and struggling families; churches can be welcoming of children of all ages as a part of their ministries and their worship services)
EXPLAIN: Use the second paragraph in the DDG (p. 13) to put Hannah’s praise in its emotional context, demonstrating the depth of her thankfulness and praise to the sovereign God.

Hannah thanked God for His gift and praised Him for His sovereignty and greatness even as she was leaving Samuel with Eli. Surely her heart was breaking, but that doesn’t appear to be her focus. Her heart was so full of thankfulness and praise to God. Perhaps this brought comfort and courage to her for what she was about to do. Or maybe she realized that the gift of this son was about more than just her. Perhaps she understood that her life and his life were ultimately about the glory of the Lord.

EXPLAIN: Show how Hannah was in a position where she had no choice but to throw herself on the mercy of God. She went to the Lord in need, and He answered. So she responded with joy and worship, knowing the sovereign God uses even our worst trials for good.

- She was childless. No human could open her womb. She needed the Giver of life (vv. 5,9).
- She was afflicted by enemies, namely, Peninnah. She needed the Savior God to step in on her behalf (vv. 1,3,9).
- She was among the poor and needy in her barrenness, by her own estimation. She needed the intervention of the mighty and awesome Creator God to raise her up (vv. 1-2,4-8).

SAY: The apostle Paul proclaimed in Romans 8:28, “We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.” God took a broken, grieving woman and turned her into a vessel through whom would come a great prophet of Israel. Hannah worshiped God without even knowing the significance of the plan God had for her son because God’s ways are beyond our comprehension.

INTERACT: Ask group members the following question.

Why should the sovereignty of God over our circumstances lead us to joy and worship rather than bitterness and despair? (because God is love and He is good; God’s plans are for our good, not our destruction; God’s ways are higher than our ways, and He can be trusted in the midst of difficult circumstances; the success of our enemies and oppressors must be temporary because God will accomplish His justice for His people)
Point 3: A son is called by God to share His words (1 Sam. 3:15-21).

EXPLAIN: Use the first two paragraphs in the DDG (p. 14) to contrast Eli’s sons, Hophni and Phinehas, with Samuel, providing background on Eli’s sons’ sins with the leader content below, if needed. Then note that God’s speaking to Samuel was an example of God’s “special revelation.”

Samuel’s surrogate family was less than ideal, marked by wickedness that God would not overlook. Eli’s two wayward sons, Hophni and Phinehas, took advantage of their position as priests at the sanctuary. Eli had expressed his misgivings about their sinful actions, but he did not stop them and allowed them to continue to despise the Lord.

Samuel, on the other hand, grew in stature and in favor with God and His people (1 Sam. 2:26). He knew who God was and faithfully served Him, but he didn’t know the Lord personally yet because he hadn’t heard from Him. Though Samuel lived in a time when a word from the Lord was rare, God would speak to this young man.

The sins of Eli’s sons, Hophni and Phinehas:
- They disobeyed the rules of sacrifice. Eli’s sons took whatever portion they could get for food. They also insisted on taking the fat, which was reserved for God alone, and required their portion raw instead of boiled, meaning the blood was still in it (1 Sam. 2:15-16; see Lev. 3:12-17; 7:25-27,31-34).
- They enticed the Israelite women at the tent of meeting to have sex with them (1 Sam. 2:22).
- They ignored their father’s attempt to correct them (1 Sam. 2:23-25).

FILL IN THE BLANKS: Provide group members with the answers for the call-out in their DDG (p. 14).

Special Revelation: Refers to God’s revealing Himself to humanity through historical events, His Word, and through Jesus Christ. Through special revelation, human beings learn about God’s character, His will, His purpose for creation, and His plan of redemption.

Essential Doctrine “Special Revelation”: Special revelation refers to God’s revealing Himself to humanity through historical events, His Word, and through Jesus Christ. Through special revelation, human beings learn about God’s character, His will, His purpose for creation, and His plan of redemption. Special revelation shows us the nature and character of God, and because God has revealed Himself in this way, we can know Him—through a saving relationship with Him in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

SAY: One night, on three separate occasions, Samuel thought he heard Eli call his name, but each time Eli sent him back to bed. The third time, Eli clued in on what was happening and instructed Samuel to listen to the Lord. What Samuel heard was his first prophecy, a message of judgment against Eli and his sons (1 Sam. 3:3-14).
15 Samuel lay down until the morning; then he opened the doors of the Lord’s house. He was afraid to tell Eli the vision, 16 but Eli called him and said, “Samuel, my son.” “Here I am,” answered Samuel. 17 “What was the message he gave you?” Eli asked. “Don’t hide it from me. May God punish you and do so severely if you hide anything from me that he told you.” 18 So Samuel told him everything and did not hide anything from him. Eli responded, “He is the Lord. Let him do what he thinks is good.” 19 Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him, and he fulfilled everything Samuel prophesied. 20 All Israel from Dan to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was a confirmed prophet of the Lord. 21 The Lord continued to appear in Shiloh, because there he revealed himself to Samuel by his word.

INTERACT: Ask group members the following question.

What are some of the similarities and differences between Samuel’s prophetic message for Eli and sharing the gospel of Jesus with others? (sometimes we can be afraid to share the gospel; the gospel is a message of judgment for those who don’t believe; the gospel is a message of grace for those who do believe; the gospel is a privilege to share with sinners because we have been saved by it)

EXPLAIN: Compare Samuel as a prophet to Jesus as the prophet of God.

• Samuel was born, dedicated, and called as a prophet to speak to God’s people on His behalf. He was recognized as a prophet of the Lord whose word could be trusted (see Deut. 18:15-22). While his ministry lasted his lifetime and would have great impact upon the world, it was still temporary and limited.

• Jesus, however, fulfilled the role of prophet to perfection, by design. All the prophets, from Moses to Samuel and beyond, spoke God’s messages and announced the two comings of Jesus (Acts 3:17-26). But more than that, Jesus is the message of God, the Son of God who came to save sinners (Heb. 1:1-3).

FILL IN THE BLANKS: Provide group members with the answers for the call-out in their DDG (p. 14).

Christ as Prophet: Jesus fulfills the role of prophet: He alone is the ultimate teacher and has the words of eternal life (John 6:68). Jesus is also God’s ultimate revelation of Himself, the very Word of God (John 1:1).

Essential Doctrine “Christ as Prophet”: As one of His offices, Jesus fulfills the role of prophet: He alone is the ultimate teacher and has the words of eternal life (John 6:68). Jesus is also God’s ultimate revelation of Himself, the very Word of God (John 1:1).
EXPLAIN: When Eli confronted his sons about their sins, he made a fearful statement: If one man sins against another, God can intercede for him, but if a man sins against the Lord, who can intercede for him (1 Sam. 2:25)? Their sins in the sanctuary led the Lord to kill them in judgment. But in truth, all sin deserves such judgment. That’s why God created the sacrificial system in the first place, so a substitute death could take place for sins. God alone can intercede for humanity when they have sinned against Him, and He did that once for all in sending Jesus, the Son of God made man, the one Mediator between God and man (1 Tim. 2:5-6). Though sinners are far off from God, they are never too far from His grace in Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:13). Those wretched sinners who have experienced His grace through faith (i.e., Christians) then have the joy to praise God for their redemption and the privilege to share His gospel with the whole world.

READ the following missional application statement in the DDG (p. 15), and encourage group members to choose at least one of the options below as a way to respond to the truth of God’s Word.

Because we have experienced the power of the Word of God leading to our salvation, we listen carefully to what God says to us in His Word and share His truth to those around us.

- What will you pray about in light of the truth that God is sovereign, gracious, and good?
- How can your group support those who are struggling with faith in the midst of their life circumstances?
- What steps will you take to overcome your fear of sharing the gospel with others this week?

CLOSE IN PRAYER: Father, thank You for the gift of Your promised Prophet, the Word made man, Jesus. Though we deserve Your judgment for our sin, by faith in Him, You have graced us with freedom from our sin, eternal life with You, and Your Holy Spirit to speak Your truth to our hearts as sons and daughters. May our lives reflect Your holiness and our words proclaim Your gospel that even more sinners may hear and be saved. Amen.

INSTRUCT: As your group departs, encourage group members to read and respond to the Daily Study devotions in their DDG (pp. 16-18), which build and expand upon the group study. Also advocate for small groups or families to use Encourage One Another (p. 19) for mutual accountability and fellowship grounded upon the foundation of God’s Word.
Daily Discipleship

Throughout the week following the session, use the ideas below to remind and encourage your group members to live as disciples of Jesus Christ. The **Daily Study** devotions in the DDG (pp. 16-18) will help group members get into God’s Word and study it for themselves. **Encourage One Another** (p. 19) will help group members and families fellowship with one another with purpose.

**Daily Study**

Brief daily devotions in the DDG (pp. 16-18) will help group members take initiative in their own discipleship.

- Make sure all group members have access to a Bible to read. Have some Bibles available to give to guests who may need one, or offer to get one and arrange a time to meet to give it and show how to navigate it for the devotions.
- Share the following idea from the devotion for Day 5 as a part of point 3 in the session: *We may long for God to break the silence in our lives and world audibly, but our neglect of what He has spoken to us in His Word should cause us to tremble.*

Consider leading by example and reading the daily devotions yourself with your own DDG. Based on your study, use brief messages throughout the week (group text, email, social media) to encourage your group to keep up with their daily time in God’s Word and to live it out. Here are a couple of examples you can use:

- **Day 1:** “God wants us to be real with Him and with others. When we do, we show how God is able to meet us in our greatest times of need.”
- **Day 3:** “Hannah understood that God was just as good when she cradled Samuel in her arms as when she placed him in the care of Eli.”

Visit [www.GospelProject.com/Blog](http://www.GospelProject.com/Blog) for additional content and resources you can use to help group members gain more insight into their daily studies. Send group members a link or a portion of a blog post or other content that you believe will be helpful and encouraging for their time in God’s Word.

**Encourage One Another**

This brief plan for fellowship and accountability in the group member’s DDG (p. 19) will help groups of 2-4 people to meet sometime during the week to reflect on the session and to share how God is working and they are responding. It could also be used for family discipleship with students and children who are using *The Gospel Project* in their groups.

- **Encourage group members to share with one another when they have most recently rejoiced over something God has revealed to them in His Word.**
- **See yourself as a member of the group who also needs encouragement in the faith, and participate in such a group this week.**

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Additional Commentary

Point 1: A son is dedicated for God’s service (1 Sam. 1:20,24-28).

“To develop the theme of leadership, the writer of 1 Samuel focused on the life stories of four leading personalities in ancient Israel, two priests (Eli and Samuel), and two warrior-politicians (Saul and David). More than that, he enriched his treatment of leadership by supplying examples of good leaders (Samuel and David) and bad ones (Eli and Saul). By pointing out the sinful and foolish choices of Eli and Saul (1 Sam. 2:29; 13:13; 15:19-23a; 28:8) and then describing the harsh consequences that followed (2:31-34; 15:23b,28; 16:1; 28:18-19), the biblical writer clearly showed that poor leadership leads to disaster for both the individual and the nation. In sharp contrast to the mostly negative narratives of Eli and Saul, the biblical writer provided more positive accounts of the careers of Samuel and David. Unlike the poor leaders, Samuel and David lived in fellowship with the Lord (3:19-21; 16:18; 18:12,14,28). They consistently spoke and acted with divinely inspired wisdom and boldness (3:21; 17:37; 18:27-28). As a result, they, along with the entire nation, experienced the Lord’s blessing (7:13-14; 17:52).”

“Once Samuel is weaned, Hannah goes to the sanctuary to dedicate him to permanent service to the Lord (1:24-28). Probably to fulfill her vow, she brings the Lord a costly burnt offering with its accompanying grain and drink offerings (Lev. 22:18-19; Ps. 66:13-15). Then she goes to the priest Eli and makes it clear that she is confirming her unusual vow. She gives Samuel to the Lord for his whole life. Out of Hannah’s need and pain comes a life that will revive all Israel. We also have barren situations in our lives that bring us pain and social stigma, situations that limit us and even situations in which only a miracle can help. But we can be assured that God is working, even if he does not act immediately. Instead of wondering whether our barrenness is actually God’s will, we should turn to him in faith knowing that, when the time is right, he will act.”

Point 2: A son is reason for joy and worship (1 Sam. 2:1-2,6-8).

“Hannah’s poetic prayer celebrates God’s action on her behalf. She especially emphasizes his salvation of the weak and needy and his humbling of the self-sufficient and proud (vv. 3-8). These verses emphasize a theme, seen throughout the OT, that God reverses fortunes. Truly a person does not prevail by his own strength. This theme is seen again in Mary’s song in Luke 1:46-55. Another significant part of Hannah’s prayer is her mention of God’s king and anointed. This not only ties the birth of Samuel to the theme of kingship in 1 and 2 Samuel but also shows that Hannah herself expected the coming of a king. Furthermore, these two words, along with the reference to the ends of the earth, link this passage to Psalm 2 (see vv. 2,8), which is interpreted as messianic prophecy in the NT (see Acts 13:33; Heb. 1:5; 5:5).”
“Hannah’s prayer in 1 Samuel 2:1-11 is effectively a song of praise to Yahweh in which she extends the sovereignty she has experienced in her life to the whole field of human relationships. It is a sovereignty that jars modern susceptibilities, for in practice we often prefer to domesticate the divine power to conform to our ideas of what is reasonable. Hannah will have none of that. Her conception of God’s greatness soars to the heights of the absolute; there are no secondary causes in her portrayal of his majesty. It is the Lord who reverses fortunes, who elevates and relegates, who raises the humble and demotes the proud, apportions poverty and wealth, life and death as he sees fit (1 Sam. 2:4-8). The language is poetic, the theological principle profound. This is forthright divine omnipotence, and only a fool would fail to bow down before such awesome majesty (1 Sam. 2:3). With such a God on one’s side victory is secure for his chosen and faithful ones, but to oppose his purposes is to be doomed to death and destruction (1 Sam. 2:9). The only appropriate response therefore is to seek his favor as Hannah had done.”

Point 3: A son is called by God to share His words (1 Sam. 3:15-21).

“The interaction between Eli and Samuel in vv. 17-18 conveys an idealized model of prophetic activity in society: the addressee encourages the prophet to speak the full revelation, the prophet does so, and the addressee accepts it willingly. In these verses both the seriousness of the prophetic responsibility and a model of its proper discharge are presented. Samuel’s alert, expectant reception of the divine message (v. 10b) and his full disclosure of the Lord’s revelation (vv. 17-18a) in spite of personal misgivings (v. 15) are the proper responses of a prophet to a revelatory divine visitation.”

“Was Israel’s worship center located at Shiloh or Shechem? The Bible indicates that both Shechem and Shiloh were used as places to worship the Lord in early Israelite history. In the days of Joshua a sanctuary had been built at Shechem (Josh. 24:1,25). But Shiloh was considered an even more sacred site, since it was there the Israelites set up the tabernacle (see Josh. 18:1). Only later, when the Lord chose Jerusalem as the only authorized worship center (see Deut. 12:5-14; 1 Kings 8:29), would Israel be limited to one authorized place for worship.”

References
WHAT’S NEXT?

Fall 2018  *In the Beginning*  
Creation and the Fall (Genesis; Job)  
God Establishes a Covenant People (Genesis)  
God Grows His Covenant People (Genesis)

Winter 2018-19  *Out of Egypt*  
God Redeems His People (Genesis; Exodus)  
God Provides for His People (Exodus)  
God Receives Worship from His People (Exodus; Leviticus)

Spring 2019  *Into the Promised Land*  
God Guides His People (Numbers; Deuteronomy)  
God Gives His People a Home (Joshua)  
God Delivers His People (Judges; Ruth)

Summer 2019  *A Kingdom Provided*  
God Provides a King (1 Samuel)  
God Provides a Godly King (1–2 Samuel; Psalms)  
God Provides a Wise King (1 Kings; Ecclesiastes)

Fall 2019  *A Nation Divided*  
God Speaks to His People (1–2 Kings)  
God Judges the Sin of His People (2 Kings; Prophets)  
God Shows Mercy to His People (2 Chronicles; Prophets)

Winter 2019-20  *A People Restored*  
God Sustains His People (Daniel)  
God Restores His People (Ezra; Prophets)  
God Prepares His People (Nehemiah; Esther; Malachi)

Spring 2020  *Jesus the Messiah*  
Jesus Comes into the World (Luke)  
Jesus Begins His Ministry (Gospels)  
Jesus Among the People (Gospels)

Summer 2020  *Jesus the Servant*  
Jesus the Healer (Gospels)  
Jesus the Teacher (Gospels)  
Jesus the Miracle-Worker (Gospels)

Fall 2020  *Jesus the Savior*  
Jesus and the Kingdom (Gospels)  
Jesus the Savior (Gospels)  
Jesus the Risen King (Gospels)

Winter 2020-21  *The Mission Begins*  
The Holy Spirit Comes (Acts; Epistles)  
Fundamentals of the Faith (Acts; Epistles)  
New Life in Christ (Acts; Epistles)

Spring 2021  *The Church United*  
Living Like Jesus (Acts; Hebrews)  
The Sent Church (Acts; Epistles)  
Don’t Forget (Acts; Epistles)

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