

## Grade 3—Unit 3

# Samuel

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Hannah asked God for a child. God heard her prayer and gave her a son, Samuel. Hannah, according to her promise, took young Samuel to Shiloh, to serve the Lord. He lived at the Tent of Meeting and served with Eli, the priest. Samuel came to know the voice of the Lord and listened to all that God told him. He became one of Israel's great judges and was a prophet during Saul's reign.

### LESSONS

1. The Birth of Samuel
2. Samuel, Servant of God

# Unit 3: Samuel

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## Unit Information

### SUMMARY

God listened to Hannah's request for a child and gave her Samuel. She fulfilled her promise and gave her son to the Lord for all the days of his life. Samuel lived with Eli, as his servant, and learned the life of a priest. Samuel came to know the voice of the Lord and listened to all that God told him. Samuel brought the people of Israel back to God.

### KEY BIBLE TEXTS

1 Samuel 1

**1 Samuel 2:1a, 2 (memory verse)**

1 Samuel 2:1-10, 18-21, 26

1 Samuel 3:1-21

**1 Samuel 3:10 (bonus memory verse)**

**1 Samuel 3:19, 20 (bonus memory verse)**

1 Samuel 4:12-18

**Psalms 32:8 (main memory verse)**

### BIBLICAL BACKGROUND

#### Hannah's Prayer

Hannah was one of the wives of Elkanah. She was childless, yet the favored wife. This was remarkable, because she was unable to bear the sons that every Israelite family desired. This caused Peninnah, the rival wife, to be jealous of Hannah and persecute her. The persecution continued, year after year. Hannah prayed fervently for a child, vowing that if Yahweh gave her a son, she would give him back to God. Hannah was completely honest in expressing her true longing for a child. The prayer of her heart was simple and brought her peace.

Samuel, son of Elkanah and Hannah, was born among the hills of Ephraim. Before his birth, his mother dedicated him to the office of a Nazarite. While still a young child, he was placed in the temple with Eli.

Each year, Hannah took Samuel a robe she had made for him, when she and Elkanah went to offer their yearly sacrifice. Eli blessed the couple, and God gave them five more children: three sons and two daughters. Samuel grew in favor with God and the people around him.

#### Hannah's Song

Hannah's praise song, found in 1 Samuel 2:1-10, is also called a prayer, because thanksgiving and praise are parts of prayer. It is a song of praise typical of true worshippers at any time and in any place. Hannah shares her gratitude to the Lord and praises God, who is sovereign over all of life. She does not mention Samuel in this second prayer. The subject is not her need or her son. The subject of this prayer is God.

## **Servant in the Temple**

Hannah brought Samuel to the Lord's house at Shiloh. There he lived and served with Eli, the priest, at the Tent of Meeting, which was similar to the portable tabernacle designed in the wilderness. The Tent of Meeting may have had an enclosure, or there may have been a structure alongside it, where Samuel and Eli lived. Samuel was an attendant at the shrine in Shiloh and continued to gain the respect of both Yahweh and the people. He performed the priestly service of Aaron and his sons, along with Eli's sons, who were misbehaving. Samuel wore a linen ephod, a garment for priests or those dealing with sacred things. Another garment was worn with the linen ephod. This was the robe that Hannah brought for Samuel each year, when she and Elkanah came to give their annual sacrifice.

## **“Speak, Lord”**

During Samuel's stay at Shiloh, visions were not common. One night, however, while Samuel was sleeping near the Ark of the Covenant, he heard someone call his name three times. Each time, he ran to the aged Eli, thinking he had called. But the priest denied it and urged him to go back to bed. With the third occurrence, Eli recognized that Yahweh was the caller and instructed Samuel what to say when he would call again. Yahweh called a fourth time. Samuel answered, “Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.” Then God repeated and reaffirmed the word of judgment against the house of Eli, because of the priest's failure to keep his sons from sinning. In the morning, Eli asked Samuel what he had heard. Samuel told all, and the priest submitted to Yahweh's will. Samuel continued to grow in Yahweh's favor, and everyone recognized his prophetic character.

The sons of Eli were wicked and violated the system of donations to the priests. Eli confronted them with the severe consequences of sins against Yahweh, but they did not listen. Because of Eli's tolerance of his greedy sons, his whole family was destroyed, except for one man. As a sign of this disaster, his sons Hophni and Phinehas died on one day.

## **Prophet, Priest and Judge**

Samuel became a spiritual leader during a difficult period of Israel's history. He served as a judge and led the Israelites back to God. Serving as the last judge of Israel, Samuel called the people back to their covenant relationship with God. He was also recognized as a prophet, revealing God's messages and pronouncing God's judgment on Israel. Samuel interceded on the people's behalf, asking God for forgiveness and for help to drive out the Philistines.

## **ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS**

- God blessed Hannah by answering her prayer.
- Hannah remembered her promise to God, and dedicated Samuel to the Lord's service at Shiloh.
- Hannah wanted Samuel to grow up to love and serve God.
- A priest represented the people before God.
- Samuel sought God's guidance in all that he did.
- Samuel was a prophet who dedicated his entire life to serving God.

## WORSHIP

1. Compare Hannah's first prayer (1 Samuel 1:11) with her second prayer (1 Samuel 2:1-11). The first prayer is full of pain, while in the second prayer she sees God as sovereign over all of life. Read the second prayer and notice all that Hannah believes about God.
2. The Bible contains many songs of praises to God. Moses and Miriam praised God after crossing the Red Sea. David offered praises to God through music. Read short psalms of praise in unison: Psalm 103:1-5; Psalm 113:1-3; Psalm 117; Psalm 145:1-2; Psalm 146:1-2; Psalm 147:1; Psalm 148: 1-5; Psalm 150. Students may celebrate God's goodness as they compile a praise book of prayers from the Bible, prayers of others, or their own prayers.
3. Bring symbols of baby dedications to the worship center.
4. As a class, write an alphabet psalm for God, about growing up. For each letter, write a short prayer that begins with that letter. *For example: Alleluia! God, I am growing up! Be with me when \_\_\_\_\_.*
5. Talk about the role of the priest. Explain that Eli, the high priest, taught Samuel how to serve God as a priest in God's house. Bring symbols of a priest to the worship center.
  - A priest served God by working in the tabernacle.
  - The priest represented the people before God. *(Today we have representatives in government; they represent the people as decisions are made. This might help students understand a priest being a representative before God.)*
  - The priests prayed for the people.
  - They offered sacrifices to God, so the people would be forgiven.

## MEMORY PASSAGES

This unit offers a main memory verse passage, plus several bonus passages to be used if desired. These passages are provided in large format on pages 49-52, to be used as posters or overheads.

## ASSESSING TEACHING / LEARNING

- Symbols drawn on students' Faith Hero T-shirts may be used to assess their understandings of Hannah and Samuel.
- Students will discuss, as a group, Hannah's promises and her commitment to these promises.
- As children meet Samuel, they are challenged to serve God and work for the church, as young Samuel did. Sharing in small groups will show their understanding of Samuel's life as he served God and what they, as children, can do for God.
- Students' comprehension of the Bible stories of Hannah and Samuel may be evaluated as they do their worksheets and use puppets to retell the story.



I will instruct you and  
teach you in the way  
you should go;  
I will counsel you and  
watch over you.

Psalm 32:8





Then Hannah prayed and said,

My heart rejoices in the Lord;

There is no one holy

like the Lord;

There is no one

besides you;

There is no Rock like our God.

1 Samuel 2:1a,2





The Lord came and stood  
there, calling as at other  
times, "Samuel! Samuel!"

Then Samuel said,  
"Speak, for your servant  
is listening."

1 Samuel 3:10





The Lord was with Samuel  
as he grew up, and he let  
none of his words fall to the  
ground. And all Israel from  
Dan to Beersheba recognized  
that Samuel was attested  
as a prophet of the Lord.

1 Samuel 3:19-20

# Samuel

## LESSON 1: THE BIRTH OF SAMUEL

### Objective

Students will recognize how Hannah kept her promise to God.

### Key Concepts

- Hannah kept her promise to God.
- Hannah’s faithfulness provided the Israelites with a godly prophet who guided them for many years.
- Hannah dedicated Samuel to grow up to love and serve God.

**Texts:** 1 Samuel 1; 1 Samuel 2:1-11, 18-21, 26

**Estimated Lesson Time:** 45 minutes

### Materials

- Bible
- “Child of Blessing, Child of Promise” song (p. 142 in old curriculum, OR #620 in *Hymnal: A Worship Book*, Mennonite Publishing House, 1992)
- “World of Samuel” map (p. 104)
- Paper and markers for praise posters
- For Extend the Lesson, option one: Faith Hero T-shirts, fabric crayons/markers
- For Extend the Lesson, option two: child dedication certificate
- For Extend the Lesson, option four: Hall of Faith cards
- For Extend the Lesson, option five: Bible memory journals, pencils, crayons/markers
- For Extend the Lesson, option six: “Hannah’s Prayers” worksheet (p. 105)

### Teacher Preparation

- Be familiar with the story of Hannah in 1 Samuel 1; 2:1-11, 18-21, 26.
- Make copies of “Child of Blessing, Child of Promise” (one per student), OR supply copies of *Hymnal: A Worship Book* for students to use.
- If using Extend the Lesson, option two, invite a parent to come and share about dedicating a child.
- If using Extend the Lesson, option six, make copies of the “Hannah’s Prayers” worksheet, one per student.

## INTRODUCING THE LESSON

**Discuss parent-child dedication services** that children have experienced in their congregations. Assign the students to find out about their own dedication ceremonies. Sing “Child of Blessing, Child of Promise,” or read the words of the song.

## LESSON STEPS

**1. Tell or read Hannah’s story** from 1 Samuel 1; 2:1-11, 18-21, and 26. Look at the “World of Samuel” map and locate Ramah and Shiloh.

**2. Discuss the promises Hannah made to God.** Did Hannah stay committed to her promises? How?

*Hannah cried to God, promising to give her child back again, if God chose to give her a child. If God gave her a boy, she promised to dedicate him as a Nazarite. This meant that he would not drink wine or cut his hair. (See Numbers 6:1-21.)*

*Hannah consecrated her expected son to the service of God, rather than to war. Samuel was a Nazarite because his mother promised he would be.*

*Hannah remembered her promise and returned Samuel to God. She took him to Shiloh to live and to serve God all of his life. Each year Hannah made Samuel a robe and took it to him when she and Elkanah went to offer their annual sacrifice.*

*1 Samuel 2:26 says that Samuel grew in stature and in favor with the Lord and with the people.*

*God blessed Hannah and Elkanah with three more sons and two daughters.)*

**3. Hannah’s song of praise.** When Hannah took Samuel to the temple, her heart was filled with praise, because God had answered her prayers. Ask the children to share about events that make them want to jump up and down and shout for joy. Such feelings of joy inspired Hannah to sing a song of praise to God.

**4. Make a praise poster.** Read 1 Samuel 2:1-2 aloud and write the words, “My heart rejoices in the Lord,” on the board. Hand out paper and markers. Invite the children to make a praise poster by copying the words and making a decorative border around them.

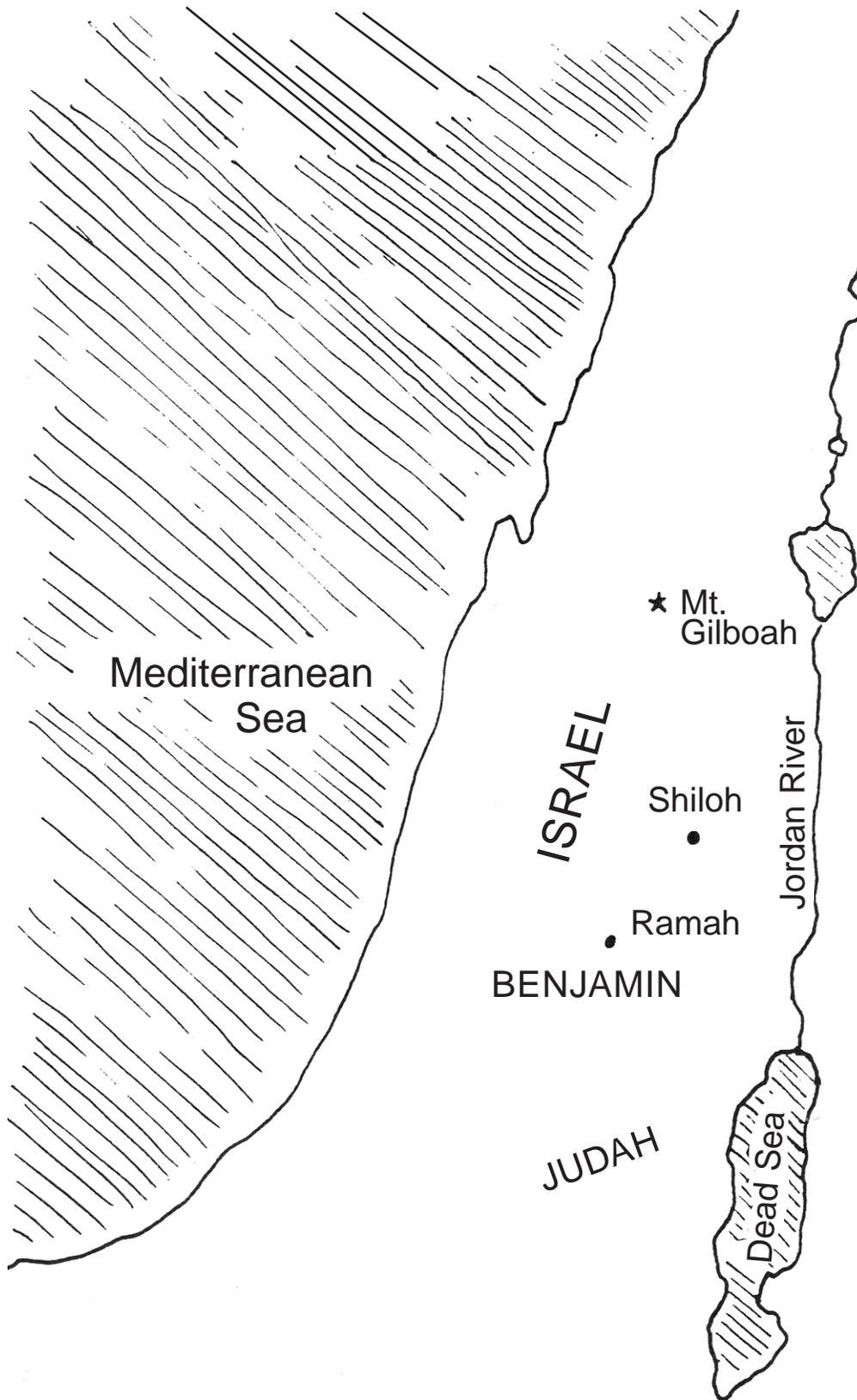
**5. Sing “Child of Blessing, Child of Promise”** again.

## **EXTEND THE LESSON**

*(These activities will extend the lesson to longer than 45 minutes.)*

- **Work on Faith Hero T-shirts.** Invite students to add Hannah’s name and a symbol from her story to their Faith Hero T-shirts. Provide fabric crayons or markers.
- **Invite a parent** to talk about what it meant to dedicate their own child to God. Show a certificate from a dedication ceremony. Be sure students understand the important role of the congregation in their spiritual upbringing.
- **Build awareness** of persons who, like Hannah, have not been able to give birth to children. Discuss adoption, emphasizing that adopted children and children in foster care are tremendous blessings to their families. They are, indeed, gifts from God.
- **Use Hall of Faith cards** to review Bible heroes studied. Put two cards for each faith hero studied into a hat. A student picks a card and acts out scenes from the hero’s life or mimes clues to the rest of the class as they try to guess the identity.
- **Bible memory journal.** Students may add Psalm 32:8 to their journals. While they are working, have them think about the words to the psalm. In what ways may Hannah have listened to God’s instructions? How did God watch over her?
- **“Hannah’s Prayers.”** Have students complete page 105 as a worksheet, or use it as an assessment.

# The World of Samuel



Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Hannah's Prayers

*Directions:* Use words from the list below to fill in the blanks in the story.



Elkanah, Hannah, Peninnah, and children went every year to \_\_\_\_\_, to \_\_\_\_\_ and offer a sacrifice to the Lord. While they were there, they ate together as a family. Because he loved her, \_\_\_\_\_ gave \_\_\_\_\_ twice as much meat as the rest of the family. Hannah was \_\_\_\_\_, because she had no \_\_\_\_\_.

Hannah prayed to God, \_\_\_\_\_ to give her child back to the Lord, if God chose to give her a \_\_\_\_\_. She promised to dedicate the child as a \_\_\_\_\_. The priest, \_\_\_\_\_, told her to go in \_\_\_\_\_, saying, "May the God of Israel \_\_\_\_\_ you what you have asked."

God answered Hannah's prayer and \_\_\_\_\_ was born. Hannah remembered her \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ Samuel to God. She took him to Shiloh to live and to \_\_\_\_\_ God all of his life. Each year, Hannah made Samuel a \_\_\_\_\_ and took it to him when they went to offer their yearly \_\_\_\_\_.

God blessed Elkanah and Hannah with three more sons and two daughters. Hannah \_\_\_\_\_ God by praying: "There is no one \_\_\_\_\_ like the Lord; there is no one besides you; there is no \_\_\_\_\_ like our God."

Samuel  
praised  
Nazirite  
son  
Shiloh  
grant

robe  
Elkanah  
serve  
Eli  
peace  
sad

promising  
holy  
Hannah  
worship  
children  
Rock

promise  
returned  
sacrifice

## **Hannah's Prayers—Answer Key**

Elkanah, Hannah, Peninnah, and children went every year to Shiloh, to worship and offer a sacrifice to the Lord. While they were there, they ate together as a family. Because he loved her, Elkanah would give Hannah twice as much meat as the rest of the family. Hannah was sad, because she had no children.

Hannah prayed to God, promising to give her child back to the Lord, if God chose to give her a son. She promised to dedicate the child as a Nazirite. The priest, Eli, told her to go in peace, saying, “May the God of Israel grant you what you have asked.”

God answered Hannah's prayer and Samuel was born. Hannah remembered her promise and returned Samuel to God. She took him to Shiloh to live and to serve God all of his life. Each year, Hannah made Samuel a robe and took it to him when they went to offer their yearly sacrifice.

God blessed Elkanah and Hannah with three more sons and two daughters. Hannah praised God by praying: “There is no one holy like the Lord; there is no one besides you; there is no Rock like our God.”

# Samuel

## LESSON 2: SAMUEL, SERVANT OF GOD

### Objective

Children will explore Samuel's life as he served God.

### Key Concepts

- Eli, the priest, was Samuel's teacher and mentor.
- Samuel had jobs to do in the tabernacle.
- God called Samuel to serve as a prophet to the Israelites.
- Samuel listened to God and obeyed.

**Texts:** 1 Samuel 3:1-21; 1 Samuel 4:12-18; 1 Samuel 7:2-17

**Estimated Lesson Time:** 45 minutes

### Materials

- Bibles
- Self-stick labels and markers for Introducing the Lesson
- *God's Chosen King* by Eve B. MacMaster
- 4 copies of "Samuel, My Son" readers' theater (pp. 109-110)
- Song, "I Will Hear" (old curriculum, p. 155)
- For Extend the Lesson, option one: clothespins, scraps of fabric, yarn, string, pipe cleaners
- For Extend the Lesson, option two: Faith Hero T-shirts, fabric crayons/markers
- For Extend the Lesson, option three: Hall of Faith cards
- For Extend the Lesson, option four: Bible memory journals, pencils, crayons/markers
- For Extend the Lesson, option five: Unit 3 Review (p. 111)

### Teacher Preparation

- Cut apart labels, leaving backing paper intact.
- Be ready to read or tell chapters 2 and 3 from *God's Chosen King*.

### INTRODUCING THE LESSON

**Make hero labels.** Lay out markers and labels and invite students to design a sticker depicting their favorite Bible hero from those they have studied. (Suggestions: *Joshua and the fall of Jericho; Deborah and Barak singing praises; Gideon and his men with torches and trumpets; Samson pulling down the temple.*) Students may either write slogans or draw pictures on their labels. As they work, guide the conversation: Why is this your favorite story? What did you like best about your hero? What did you learn from your hero's life? Explain that today's hero, Samuel, was the last of the judges. He was also a great prophet and a priest.

### LESSON STEPS

1. **Read or tell the story of Samuel** from *God's Chosen King*, chapters 2 and 3.

**2. Readers' theater.** Ask four students to read the "Samuel, My Son" readers' theater from pages 109-110.

**3. Sing "I Will Hear,"** from the old curriculum, page 155.

**4. Discuss the story of Samuel.** Divide into groups of three to discuss the following questions (or discuss them as a class):

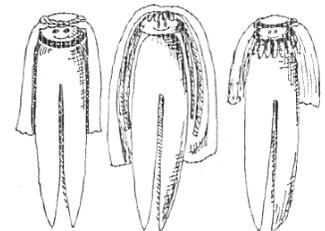
- Samuel wore "the sacred linen *ephod*," or apron. That means he had an important job at the temple. He wasn't just watching grownups work. What mission and worship work do the children of your congregation (or school) do? What other jobs could they do to serve God?
- While Samuel was growing up, people of all ages appreciated and respected him. Your gifts and ideas are also appreciated and respected at church (or school) now. What act of service have you done that someone appreciated? Read 1 Timothy 4:12. What can we learn from this verse?
- When things happened as Samuel said they would, people in the land of Israel knew God had chosen him to be a prophet—someone who spoke for God. The word "prophet" means "messenger." Prophets shared God's messages with the people. Some prophets, like Samuel, were able to tell what would happen in the future. How was God revealed to Samuel? Give two ways. (See I Samuel 3:21.) How does God speak to us today?

**5.** Looking at 1 Samuel 4:12-18 and 1 Samuel 7:2-17, help students see that Samuel has now taken Eli's place as priest, because Samuel was ready to do whatever God wanted him to do.

## EXTEND THE LESSON

*(These activities will extend the lesson to longer than 45 minutes.)*

- **Make clothespin figures of Samuel and Eli.** Add scraps of fabric, yarn, string, and pipe cleaners to make clothes. Have students gather in pairs and use these figures to retell the story to each other.
- **Work on Faith Hero T-shirts.** Invite students to add Samuel's name and a symbol from his story to their Faith Hero T-shirts. Provide fabric crayons or markers.
- **Hall of Faith cards.** Put two cards for each faith hero you have studied so far into a hat. Invite a student to reach in the hat and pull out a card without looking. The student then reads three facts about the hero to the class and asks a classmate to guess the hero. The person who guesses correctly becomes the next to pull a card from the hat.
- **Bible memory journals.** If children did not have time to complete writing and decorating Psalm 32:8 in their journals, give time for that now. Think about how Samuel may have followed God in the way he should go. How did God watch over Samuel?
- **Complete the Unit 3 review** as a worksheet or assessment.



# Samuel, My Son

## Readers' Theater Based on 1 Samuel 3:1-20

- Narrator:** The boy Samuel ministered before the Lord under Eli. In those days, the word of the Lord was rare; there were not many visions. One night Eli, whose eyes were becoming so weak that he could barely see, was lying down in his usual place. The lamp of God was not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the Lord, near the Ark of God. Then the Lord called:
- Lord:** Samuel!
- Samuel:** Here I am.
- Narrator:** Samuel got up, ran to Eli and said:
- Samuel:** Here I am. You called me.
- Eli:** I did not call. Go back and lie down.
- Narrator:** So Samuel went and lay down. Again the Lord called:
- Lord:** Samuel!
- Narrator:** And Samuel got up, went to Eli and said:
- Samuel:** Here I am. You called me.
- Eli:** My son, I did not call. Go back and lie down.
- Narrator:** Now Samuel did not know the Lord. The word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. The Lord called Samuel a third time. Samuel got up, went to Eli and said:
- Samuel:** Here I am. You called me.
- Narrator:** Then Eli realized that the Lord was calling the boy. So Eli told Samuel:
- Eli:** Go, lie down, and if you hear the call again, say, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

**Narrator:** So Samuel went and lay down in his place. Now the Lord came and stood there, calling as before:

**Lord:** Samuel! Samuel!

**Narrator:** Then Samuel said:

**Samuel:** Speak, for your servant is listening.

**Narrator:** And the Lord said to Samuel:

**Lord:** See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make both ears of anyone who hears it tingle. On that day, I will carry out against Eli everything I spoke about his house, from beginning to end. For I have told him that I would punish his house forever because of the sin he knew about. His sons were being disrespectful to the Lord, and he failed to stop them. Therefore, the guilt of Eli's house will never be erased by sacrifice or offering.

**Narrator:** Samuel lay there until morning, then he opened the doors of the house of the Lord. He was afraid to tell Eli the vision, but Eli called him and said:

**Eli:** Samuel, my son.

**Samuel:** Here I am.

**Eli:** What was it that he told you? Do not hide it from me. May God do the same to you, if you hide his words from me.

**Narrator:** So Samuel told him everything, hiding nothing from him. Then Eli said:

**Eli:** It is the Lord. Let the Lord do what is good in his eyes.

**Narrator:** The Lord was with Samuel as he grew up and he let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba recognized that Samuel was a trustworthy prophet of the Lord.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Unit 3 Review—Samuel

*Directions:* Match each person or place with correct description.

- |                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| 1. ____ Hannah   | A. He was the high priest.                        |
| 2. ____ Elkanah  | B. She was also married to Hannah's husband.      |
| 3. ____ Peninnah | C. The place where people went to worship God.    |
| 4. ____ Eli      | D. She promised to give her son back to the Lord. |
| 5. ____ Eli      | E. He was Hannah's husband.                       |
| 6. ____ Shiloh   | f. God called to him in the temple.               |

*Directions:* Put a T in the blank if the sentence is true and an F if it is false.

7. \_\_\_\_ Hannah had three children.
8. \_\_\_\_ The people traveled from Shiloh to Ramah, to worship and sacrifice to the Lord.
9. \_\_\_\_ Hannah's husband loved her more than his other wife.
10. \_\_\_\_ Hannah prayed that if God would give her a son, she would give the child to the Lord all the days of his life.
11. \_\_\_\_ Elkanah saw Hannah praying and thought she was drunk.
12. \_\_\_\_ Samuel lived at Shiloh with Eli.
13. \_\_\_\_ Eli's sons worshipped the Lord and obeyed the Lord's commands.
14. \_\_\_\_ Samuel became a judge.



*Directions:* Fill in each blank with a word from the list. Each word will be used one time. You will not use two words.

listening    Eli    Israelites    covenant    Samuel    intercede    servant

15. \_\_\_\_\_ heard the Lord call to him four times.
16. The first three times he thought it was \_\_\_\_\_ calling to him.
17. The fourth time he said, "Speak, for your \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_."
18. Samuel told the people that he would \_\_\_\_\_ with the Lord for them.

*Directions:* Answer with a complete sentence.

19. Why was Samuel afraid to tell Eli what the Lord had said to him?

### Unit 3 Review—Answer Key

1. D Hannah
2. E Elkanah
3. B Peninnah
4. F Samuel
5. A Eli
6. C Shiloh
  
7. F
8. F
9. T
10. T
11. F
12. T
13. F
14. T
  
15. Samuel
16. Eli
17. servant, listening
18. intercede
  
19. Why was Samuel afraid to tell Eli what the Lord had said to him?  
*Answers should give the idea that what the Lord had said to Samuel was not favorable to Eli.*