

SEPTEMBER WEEK THREE: HANNAH

Monday

1 Samuel 1:1–2:11

Year after year, Elkanah went to Shiloh to worship and sacrifice at the tabernacle, the tent of worship for the people of Israel. Elkanah's wife, Hannah, went too. Each year she was very sad because she had no children and was teased about it.

One day, while they were at the tabernacle, Hannah prayed to the Lord. She asked God to remember her and give her a son. She promised, "Then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life."

As she prayed, Eli the priest saw her. Hannah's lips were moving while she prayed, but she wasn't saying anything out loud. Eli thought that Hannah was a drunken woman talking to herself.

But Hannah answered, "No. I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have been pouring out my heart before the Lord."

Then Eli answered, "Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant your petition that you have made to him." Hannah went on her way, no longer sad, and trusting the Lord to answer her prayer.

In time, Hannah found out she was going to have a baby. When the baby was born, she named his Samuel.

When Samuel grew up to be a young boy, Hannah kept her promise. She took Samuel to Eli the priest, to serve the Lord all the days of his life. Hannah said, "For this child I prayed, and the Lord has granted me my petition that I made to him." God had answered Hannah's prayer. So Hannah gave Samuel to the Lord, to help Eli the priest serve in the house of the Lord.

- **What did Hannah do when she was so sad?**
- **How did God answer Hannah's prayer?**
- **Is there anything God has ever done for you when you were sad that maybe seemed impossible at the time?**

Close with prayer

SEPTEMBER WEEK THREE: SAMUEL

Tuesday

Judges 6:1-8:21

God had answered Hannah's prayer, so she had given her son Samuel to the Lord. When Samuel grew up to be a young boy, he was old enough to serve in the tabernacle, God's tent of worship for the people of Israel. Samuel would be a helper to Eli, the high priest. Every year, when Hannah and her husband Elkanah came to the tabernacle to offer their sacrifices to God, Hannah would bring new clothes that she had made for Samuel.

One night, when Eli and Samuel were in their beds, Samuel heard someone calling him. He thought it was Eli, so he got up and went to Eli. Samuel said, "Here I am, for you called me."

Eli said, "I did not call you. Go back to bed."

Samuel went to lie back in bed, but again he heard a voice saying, "Samuel, Samuel."

Samuel returned to Eli. "Here I am. You called me?" he said.

But again, Eli said, "I did not call. Go lie down."

Samuel went back to bed and the voice called once more. Samuel went to Eli, again saying, "Here I am, for you called me."

Finally, Eli understood that it was God who was calling Samuel. He told Samuel, "Go lie down, and if he calls again, say, 'Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.'"

Samuel went back to his bed. And the Lord called again, "Samuel! Samuel!"

Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening." Then God talked to Samuel and told him what he was going to do.

As Samuel grew, the Lord came and talked to him at other times too. All his life, Samuel served the Lord in the tabernacle. He told the people about God, and he taught God's Word to them. When God had a message for his people, he gave it to Samuel to tell them. God was with Samuel and blessed him.

Years later, God sent the Lord Jesus Christ to serve his Father and to be our Savior. Jesus taught God's Word perfectly. And he showed us perfectly what God is like. Jesus still speaks to us through his Word today. He gives us his Word in the Bible to teach us about him, and he gives us people who share that Word and teaching with us. They tell us about God's holiness and love, and how God sent Jesus to save us from our sins. And they teach us how we should live to please the Lord and serve him.

- Who spoke to Samuel in the middle of the night?
- Who has God given to you in your life to help you hear and understand what God teaches us?

Close with prayer

SEPTEMBER WEEK THREE: ELIJAH AND THE CHARIOTS OF FIRE

Wednesday

2 Kings 2:1–14

After Elijah had faithfully spoken God's Word to Israel for many years, God gave Elijah a helper named Elisha. God chose Elisha to replace the prophet Elijah, and now God was about to take Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind.

While Elijah was on a journey with Elisha, they came to the Jordan River. Elijah took off his cloak, rolled it up, and hit the water with his cloak. Immediately the water separated – some water going to the right and some to the left. And the men walked to the other side on dry ground right through the river.

After they cross the river, Elijah told Elisha, "Ask what I shall do for you, before I am taken from you." Elisha said, "Please let there be a double portion of your spirit on me." Elisha wanted to be a mighty prophet like Elijah, faithfully speaking God's Word to his people.

Elijah told Elisha, "You have asked a hard thing." But, he said, if you see me when the Lord takes me to heaven, "it shall be so for you."

As they were walking, suddenly chariots of fire and horses of fire came down from the sky, and Elisha was separated from Elijah. God took Elijah to heaven in a whirlwind as Elisha watched and cried out to Elijah. Elisha never saw Elijah again.

Elisha took the cloak that had fallen from Elijah and walked back to the Jordan River. He hit the water with the cloak and called out, "Where is the Lord, the God of Elijah?" When Elijah's cloak hit the water, the river separated again, just as it had done for Elijah. Elisha walked on dry ground right through the river. God had blessed Elisha and had answered his prayer. He, too, became a mighty prophet like Elijah, faithfully speaking God's Word to his people.

God has given us Jesus, the greatest prophet of all – much greater even than Elijah or Elisha. Jesus shows us exactly what God is like because Jesus is God. God speaks through his Word today when pastors faithfully preach the Bible. God gives his Spirit to us so that we can understand his Word and faithfully serve him.

- **When Elijah asked Elisha what he wanted, what did Elisha say?**

Close with prayer

SEPTEMBER WEEK THREE: HEZEKIAH

Thursday

2 Kings 18–19

Hezekiah was a good king for God's people. He trusted God, and God helped him. Hezekiah "did what was right in the eyes of the Lord," as King David had done many years before.

One day, Hezekiah had a huge problem. A great army of enemy soldiers came to fight against his capitol city, Jerusalem. This army had already conquered all the cities in the land around Jerusalem.

The leader of the army sent King Hezekiah a letter. The letter told Hezekiah that if he did not surrender his city, the army would destroy it. Then the leader of the army made fun of Hezekiah's soldiers. And he made fun of God too! He told the Israelite soldiers that none of "the gods of the lands have delivered their lands out of my hand." There's no way, he said, that the Lord could save Jerusalem from the army's attack.

When the messengers brought the letter to Hezekiah, he took it to the temple and prayed, "O Lord, the God of Israel, you are the God, you alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; you have made heaven and earth." Hezekiah told God that the enemy army had destroyed many other cities, because the gods of those cities were not real. Hezekiah asked God to hear how enemy soldiers had made fun of God. "So now," King Hezekiah prayed, "O Lord our God, save us, please, from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you, O Lord, are God alone."

After Hezekiah prayed, God sent his prophet Isaiah to Hezekiah. Isaiah told King Hezekiah that God said he had heard Hezekiah's prayer. God told Isaiah that it was wrong of the enemy army to make fun of God. And God promised that he would turn the enemy army away before they could shoot even one arrow at Jerusalem. "I will defend this city to save it," God said.

That night the angel of the Lord went into the army camp and killed 185,000 enemy soldiers. The few soldiers who were left and the leader of the army turned around and went home, completely defeated by the angel of the Lord.

God had answered Hezekiah's prayer. He had saved his people from their enemies. He had shown that he was the true God, completely different from the false idols of the other nations.

God loves us and cares for us, too. He wants us to pray to him. He sent Jesus, so that we could pray to him boldly. God wants to show other people through us that he is the true God.

- What was King Hezekiah's huge problem, and what did he do about it?
- How can we pray for God to protect his people?

Close with prayer asking God to protect his people

SEPTEMBER WEEK THREE: HEZEKIAH'S ILLNESS

Friday

2 Kings 20:1-11

Hezekiah was sick and Isaiah the prophet told him that he was about to die. Hezekiah prayed to the Lord, asking God to make him well again. God heard Hezekiah's prayer. God send Isaiah to Hezekiah again, and Isaiah told him that God would add fifteen years to his life. Furthermore, God promised Hezekiah that he would deliver him from his enemies, the Assyrians. Then Isaiah told Hezekiah to take some medicine.

God promised Hezekiah that he would give him a sign that these promises would be kept. As the sign, God made the sun go backwards. On some steps at the temple, the shadow of the sun moved ten steps in the opposite direction from the way that it always goes.

God heard and answered Hezekiah's prayer. God hears and answers all prayers. God knows what is best for us and wants us to ask for the things we want. God is able to answer our prayers knowing that your eternal life is far more important than your earthly life. Sometimes when God answers our prayers, he wants us to wait. Sometimes he gives us something even better than what we thought we wanted.

God wants us to pray for ourselves and for others, including the members of our family. God wants us to pray that his will be done, that he be honored and that our faith be strengthened no matter what. God wants us to trust that he knows what is best for us and that he will help us and give us what is best. We don't deserve any good things from God, yet he still blesses us, helps us and provides for us.

- **Do you know someone who suffers from long-term sickness? How can you share the message of God's love with them? What passages might you share (ie. Psalm 103:2-3; Romans 8:31-32)?**

Close with prayer

Thank you, Lord, for eternally mending my life for the sake of Jesus.
Help me live according to your will. Help me always to trust in you. Amen.