



Samuel's Preparation – Part 1 (1 Sam 2)

Notes: Week Two

1 Samuel 2 (HCSB)

Hannah's Triumphant Prayer

2 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.

³ Do not boast so proudly,
or let arrogant words come out of your mouth,
for the LORD is a God of knowledge,
and actions are weighed by Him.

⁴ The bows of the warriors are broken,
but the feeble are clothed with strength.

⁵ Those who are full hire themselves out for food,
but those who are starving hunger no more.

The woman who is childless gives birth to seven,
but the woman with many sons pines away.

⁶ The LORD brings death and gives life;
He sends some 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 garbage pile.

He seats them with noblemen
and gives them a throne of honor.^[a]

For the foundations of the earth are the LORD's;
He has set the world on them.

⁹ He guards the steps^[b] of His faithful ones,
but the wicked perish in darkness,
for a man does not prevail by his own strength.

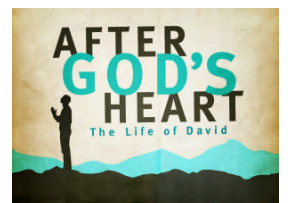
¹⁰ Those who oppose the LORD will be shattered;^[c]
He will thunder in the heavens against them.

The LORD will judge the ends of the earth.

He will give power to His king;

He will lift up the horn of His anointed.

¹¹ Elkanah went home to Ramah, but the boy served the LORD in the presence of Eli the priest.



Eli's Family Judged

¹² Eli's sons were wicked men; they had no regard for the LORD ¹³ or for the priests' share of the sacrifices from the people. When any man offered a sacrifice, the priest's servant would come with a three-pronged meat fork while the meat was boiling ¹⁴ and plunge it into the container or kettle or cauldron or cooking pot. The priest would claim for himself whatever the meat fork brought up. This is the way they treated all the Israelites who came there to Shiloh. ¹⁵ Even before the fat was burned, the priest's servant would come and say to the man who was sacrificing, "Give the priest some meat to roast, because he won't accept boiled meat from you—only raw." ¹⁶ If that man said to him, "The fat must be burned first; then you can take whatever you want for yourself," the servant would reply, "No, I insist that you hand it over right now. If you don't, I'll take it by force!" ¹⁷ So the servants' sin was very severe in the presence of the LORD, because they treated the LORD's offering with contempt.

¹⁸ The boy Samuel served in the LORD's presence and wore a linen ephod. ¹⁹ Each year his mother made him a little robe and took it to him when she went with her husband to offer the annual sacrifice. ²⁰ Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife: "May the LORD give you children by this woman in place of the one she^[a] has given to the LORD." Then they would go home.

²¹ The LORD paid attention to Hannah's need, and she conceived and gave birth to three sons and two daughters. Meanwhile, the boy Samuel grew up in the presence of the LORD.

²² Now Eli was very old. He heard about everything his sons were doing to all Israel and how they were sleeping with the women who served at the entrance to the tent of meeting. ²³ He said to them, "Why are you doing these things? I have heard about your evil actions from all these people. ²⁴ No, my sons, the report I hear from the LORD's people is not good. ²⁵ If a man sins against another man, God can intercede for him, but if a man sins against the LORD, who can intercede for him?" But they would not listen to their father, since the LORD intended to kill them. ²⁶ By contrast, the boy Samuel grew in stature and in favor with the LORD and with men.

²⁷ A man of God came to Eli and said to him, "This is what the LORD says: 'Didn't I reveal Myself to your ancestral house when it was in Egypt and belonged to Pharaoh's palace? ²⁸ Out of all the tribes of Israel, I selected your house^[e] to be priests, to offer sacrifices on My altar, to burn incense, and to wear an ephod in My presence. I also gave your house all the Israelite fire offerings. ²⁹ Why, then, do all of you despise My sacrifices and offerings that I require at the place of worship? You have honored your sons more than Me, by making yourselves fat with the best part of all of the offerings of My people Israel.'

³⁰ "Therefore, this is the declaration of the LORD, the God of Israel:

'Although I said
your family and your ancestral house
would walk before Me forever,
the LORD now says, "No longer!"
I will honor those who honor Me,
but those who despise Me will be disgraced.

³¹ "Look, the days are coming when I will cut off your strength and the strength of your ancestral family, so that none in your family will reach old age. ³² You will see distress in the place of worship, in spite of all that is good in Israel, and no one in your family will ever again reach old age. ³³ Any man from your family I do not cut off from My altar will bring grief^[f] and sadness to you. All your descendants will die violently.^{[g][h]} ³⁴ This will be the sign that will come to you concerning your two sons Hophni and Phinehas: both of them will die on the same day.

³⁵ "Then I will raise up a faithful priest for Myself. He will do whatever is in My heart and mind. I will establish a lasting dynasty for him, and he will walk before My anointed one for all time. ³⁶ Anyone who is left in your family will come and bow down to him for a piece of silver or a loaf of bread. He will say: Please appoint me to some priestly office so I can have a piece of bread to eat.'"

Holman Christian Standard Bible - *Study Bible*¹

1 Samuel 2

2:1 A lifted up horn provides a picture of a proud animal with its head held high. Enemies may allude to Peninnah ([1:6-7](#)) and perhaps to others who had spoken cruelly to Hannah during her time of barrenness.

2:2 The twofold occurrence of no one emphasizes God's uniqueness. Rock denotes an immovable, jutting cliff, not a mere stone. This word commonly occurs in the Bible to describe God's support and defense of His people ([Ps 18:2](#); [95:1](#); [Isa 44:8](#)).

2:3 Arrogant words might come from people who did not realize God's ways were higher than theirs ([Isa 55:8-9](#)).

2:4 Warriors are broken... feeble are clothed. These images are not surprising from God's perspective, where poor become rich and rich become poor ([2Co 8:9](#); [Jms 2:5](#)), the first become last and the last first ([Mt 19:30](#); [20:16](#)), and those who seek to save their lives lose them while others who willingly lose their lives gain life ([Lk 9:24-25](#)).

2:5 Full... starving... childless... many sons. As in [verse 4](#), life often brings unexpected turnabouts, especially since the Lord can intervene to overrule the expected.

2:6-7 God is sovereign; nothing happens apart from His control.

2:8 The argument of this verse is from the greater to the lesser; if God controls the earth's foundations, He controls the status of its citizens.

2:9 The Lord not only sees people's actions, but He knows His faithful ones (cp. [Nah 1:7](#)) and the hearts of the wicked, and He blesses or judges them accordingly.

2:10 The Hebrew word behind oppose has a legal connotation; no one has a case against the LORD. The mention of God's king and His anointed may anticipate the establishment of the kingship in Israel. Some interpreters have suggested that Hannah spoke prophetically of God's everlasting kingdom under the Messiah.

2:11 The term served is not used of slaves, and it often denotes a higher level of service ([Jos 1:1](#)), including priestly service ([Dt 10:8](#); [1Ki 8:11](#)).

2:12 The phrase wicked men means literally "sons of worthlessness." The expression commonly denotes morally corrupt individuals; Hannah used the feminine form of the expression as she implored Eli not to consider her a daughter of worthlessness ([1:16](#)). Had no regard for means literally "did not know."

2:13-14 The priests' share of the sacrifices was specifically prescribed in the law of Moses ([Lv 7:32-34](#)). A three-pronged meat fork was nowhere stipulated; rather, Eli's sons were making their own rules for sacrifice, presumably to secure more for themselves.

2:15-16 The fat was the Lord's portion of the sacrifice ([Lv 3:3-5](#)). The text implies Eli's sons were also eating the fat of the sacrificial animals. The warning that the fat must be burned first—a warning that went unheeded—indicates the common people had a greater moral conscience than Eli's sons did.

1. Jeremy Royal Howard, ed., *HCSB Study Bible*, (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2010), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "1 Samuel 2".

2:17 The Hebrew verb translated treated... with contempt indicates strong displeasure or disdain; it also would later describe David's sin with Bathsheba ([2Sam 12:14](#)). It is often translated "despise" ([Num 14:11](#); [Isa 1:4](#); [5:24](#)).

2:18 On served, see note at [verse 11](#). Samuel's linen ephod was a vest-like garment that priests or the high priest wore ([Ex 28:6-13](#)). It contained special embroidery and 12 stones as a visible reminder of Israel's 12 tribes.

2:19 The little robe that Hannah made for Samuel may be linked with the one prescribed for the priests ([Ex 28:31](#); [Lv 8:7](#)). Samuel was gone from Hannah's home but not from her heart.

2:20 The one she has given is literally "request she requested" or "grant she granted" (cp. [1:28](#)), and it reinforces the special nature of Samuel's birth and dedication.

2:21 The Lord paid attention to Hannah's need is literally "Yahweh visited Hannah." The same Hebrew expression occurs in reference to Abraham's wife Sarah when she conceived Isaac, another child of promise ([Gen 21:1](#)). Hannah is abundantly blessed, but her three sons and two daughters are nonetheless contrasted with the boy Samuel, who grew up in the presence of the LORD.

2:22 The words very old probably hint at Eli's lack of strength to stop his sons from their sins, which the text now mentions also included sexual immorality.

2:25 In a dispute between two men, God might intercede, but if someone's sin was directly against the LORD, no intercession was possible—only condemnation. The words since the LORD intended to kill them reveal that much like Pharaoh in Moses' day ([Ex 4:21](#); [5:2](#); [7:13](#)), the persistent unbelief of Hophni and Phinehas led to God's giving them over to judgment.

2:26 The phrase grew in stature and in favor with the LORD and with men is strikingly similar to the description of Jesus as a child ([Lk 2:52](#)).

2:27 Ancestral house... in Egypt recalls God's choice of Aaron ([Ex 4:14-16](#)).

2:28 The responsibilities listed were strictly limited to the priests, whom the law of Moses designated as the sons of Aaron ([Ex 28:1-5](#); [Lv 8-9](#)).

2:30 With the words no longer, God indicated that He had not set aside His promise to Aaron's line. The words I will honor those who honor Me reveal that God had judged Eli's house unfit to serve as priests among Aaron's sons.

2:31-32 God in His grace did not destroy Eli's house, but drastically reduced its strength.

2:34 As the chief sinners, Hophni and Phinehas would be the first to die—and on the same day.

2:35 Some suggest Samuel is intended by the phrase a faithful priest, but Samuel did not have a lasting dynasty ([8:1-5](#)). The term may denote the priestly line of Zadok, who eventually succeeded Eli's line ([1Ki 2:27](#)), or any and all priests who followed the Lord faithfully. My anointed one designates the line of David, for whom God also built a lasting dynasty ([2Sam 7:11-16](#)).

2:36 This verse suggests that Eli's descendants would not even partake of the sacrificial portions reserved for the priests ([Lv 2:3](#); [5:13](#); [7:7-10](#)).

English Standard Version - Study Bible²

1 Samuel 1

2:1-10 Hannah's Song. Hannah's song fits well in the narrative and marks the end of the story of Samuel's birth. Many of Hannah's themes are found in the Magnificat of Mary ([Luke 1:46-56](#)). The reference to the "king" in [1 Sam. 2:10](#) also looks forward to the rest of the book. At the other end of the grand narrative of 1-2 Samuel are the songs of David in [2 Samuel 22-23](#). These three songs are a frame around the entire narrative of 1-2 Samuel. Hannah's song is really a song of praise, or a hymn, to the God who reverses human fortunes by his mighty power, the Creator beyond all human understanding who protects the faithful. There are many similarities to psalms and other passages of the OT, as the numerous ESV cross-references show. It is especially close to [Psalm 113](#). It starts with Hannah's personal emotions, but it is not about gloating over Peninnah, who was presumably still living with her children in Elkanah's household. Rather, Hannah's emotions are a step toward glorifying the Lord for his guidance in human affairs. Hannah alternates between the themes of the Lord's holy sovereignty ([1 Sam. 2:1b-3, 6-7, 8b-10a](#)) and the reversal of human fortunes ([vv. 4-5, 8a](#)) and ends with the theme of kingship ([v. 10b](#)).

2:1 my strength is exalted in the LORD. The song both starts and ends with the declaration that the Lord exalts. The verb translated as "exalt" or "raise up" appears also in [vv. 7, 8](#), and [10](#) and expresses the theme of the song. The Hebrew for "horn," translated as "strength" (here) and "power" (in [v. 10](#)), is often used as a symbol of strength (cf. [Deut. 33:17](#); [2 Sam. 22:3](#); [Ps. 89:17](#); etc.). With the expression **my enemies**, Hannah is not making a personal attack on Peninnah (one person) but is speaking against God's enemies. His enemies are also Hannah's enemies, because his enemies attack her trust in God and his dealings with her (see [Ps. 139:21-22](#)). The climax of this verse is **because I rejoice in your salvation**.

2:2 The first and third lines of this verse are parallel: **holy** is parallel to **rock**, and **the LORD** is parallel to **God**, with different structure but similar meaning. The formula "there is no... like..." denotes incomparability. Thus, **there is none besides you** states that there is no absolutely holy being besides the Lord; moreover, only the Lord is God, i.e., "monotheism" is true (see [Deut. 4:35](#); [32:39](#); [2 Sam. 22:32](#)). "Rock," a common OT epithet for God (e.g., [Deut. 32:4, 15](#); [2 Sam. 22:2](#); [23:3](#)), indicates God's protection and strength. In [Ps. 118:22](#) and [Isa. 8:14](#); [28:16](#); as well as in [1 Pet. 2:6-8](#), "rock" has a messianic significance (see note on [1 Sam. 2:10](#)). With "**our God**," Hannah speaks as a member of the covenant community, whom she addresses in the next verse.

2:3 by him actions are weighed. The ESV follows the "spoken" (*Qere*) Hebrew tradition, and means that God's **knowledge** extends even to the motives behind human actions. The "written" (*Ketib*) tradition, "actions are not weighed," would not make sense unless one added "*his actions are not weighed*," i.e., God is not subject to human judgment.

2:5 seven. Hannah herself actually bore only six children, including Samuel ([v. 21](#)), but this is a general statement, and seven is a poetic number for perfection. **is forlorn.** The Hebrew usually means "becomes a widow," but here it means "becomes childless."

2:6-7 The Lord has total authority over life and death, including material and social life. [Verses 4-5](#) give examples of how the Lord reverses human fortunes; [vv. 6-7](#) state it more generally. **kills... brings to life, brings down... raises up, makes poor... makes rich, brings low... exalts.** These are merisms, expressions in which two words on the extreme ends of a scale are used to express everything on the whole scale. The Lord controls not only birth and death, but also the whole of life in between.

2. Lane T. Dennis, ed., *ESV Study Bible, The: English Standard Version*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Bibles, 2008), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "1 Samuel 2".

2:6 **Sheol** here refers to the place of the dead. In the Bible, it is usually found in idiomatic expressions such as “go down to Sheol” or “come up from Sheol.” God is also the One who **raises up** a soul from Sheol (e.g., [Ps. 30:3](#)), so he has authority over the dead as well as the living. He is the One who holds the key to Job’s question: “If a man dies, shall he live again?” ([Job 14:14](#)). Job remains confident: “For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth” ([Job 19:25](#)). Hannah affirms that same confidence.

2:8 The Lord is sovereign over life, for he created and owns the **world**. The exact meaning of the word **pillars** (Hb. *metsuqe*) is not known, but there are similar expressions using the ordinary word for “pillars” (Hb. *‘ammudim*; [Job 9:6](#); [Ps. 75:3](#)) or “foundations” ([2 Sam. 22:16](#)). The reference to the foundation or support (“pillars”) of the earth is meaningful here, for the Lord upholds both the place where his people live as well as the moral order of this world; he protects his faithful, while he destroys the wicked ([1 Sam. 2:9](#)).

2:9 **Darkness** functions here as a metaphor for the silence brought upon the wicked in death ([Ps. 35:6-8](#)).

2:10 For the kingship of the Lord and his role as **judge**, see [Ps. 96:10](#). **The ends of the earth** almost always appears in the context of describing the Lord’s uniqueness, majesty, and dominion (e.g., [Ps. 67:7](#); [98:3](#); [Prov. 30:4](#); [Isa. 52:10](#); [Mic. 5:4](#); [Zech. 9:10](#)). Since there was as yet no **king** in Israel, it is possible that the last two lines are a comment by the narrator rather than part of Hannah’s prayer. The law made provision for a king, however, and the institution was well known in Israel even before it was practiced ([Judg. 8:22](#); [9:6](#); [1 Samuel 8](#)), so there is no reason to think that these are not Hannah’s words. **His anointed**, or “his messiah,” appears here for the first time in the Bible (though Hb. *mashiakh*, “anointed,” is used of priests, e.g., [Lev. 4:3](#)). In the OT, priests and prophets are also referred to as “anointed,” but in Samuel most references are royal. Though the anointing of kings is known from various places in the ancient Near East, “messiah” as a royal title is attested only in the Bible. The song concludes with a twofold plea for the Lord to raise the king of Israel to a position of **power** and prominence worthy of the great God who appointed him.

2:11-36 **Samuel, and Eli’s Two Sons**. At the same time that the boy Samuel is ministering to the Lord at Shiloh ([vv. 11, 18, 3:1](#)), Eli’s own two sons are hindering the worship there.

The Rise of Samuel, Israel's Last Judge

Decline of Eli’s Sons	Rise of Samuel
Wickedness of Eli’s sons (1 Sam. 2:12-17)	Samuel approved by Eli (1 Sam. 2:18-21)
Eli reproves his sons (1 Sam. 2:22-25)	Samuel grows in favor (1 Sam. 2:26)
Prophecy against Eli and sons (1 Sam. 2:27-36 ; cf. 4:11-18)	Samuel called and given prophetic word (1 Sam. 3:1-4:1a)
The Philistines; the ark and Eli’s house [defeat/capture/covenant defiled] (1 Sam. 4:1b-22)	The Philistines; the ark and Samuel [return/victory/covenant renewed] (1 Sam. 7:2-17)

2:12-17 The **priest’s servant** ([vv. 13, 15](#)) was probably one of the **worthless... sons of Eli** ([v. 12](#); cf. “young man” [Hb. *na‘ar*; [vv. 13, 15](#), ESV footnote] with “young men” [Hb. *ne‘arim*, plural of *na‘ar*, [v. 17](#)]), rather than merely a servant. Some interpret [vv. 13-14](#) as being the accepted, though degenerate, custom, and [vv. 15-16](#) as representing the perversion of this custom. Another interpretation is that the author condemns both practices. This latter view is supported by the use of the word **moreover** (Hb. *gam*) at the beginning of [v. 15](#). Thus in this passage there are two general statements about the sons ([vv. 12, 17](#)) framing descriptions of two of their wicked practices.

2:12-13 Custom (Hb. *mishpat*) usually means an expected standard (e.g., [Deut. 18:3](#), “this shall be the priest’s due [*mishpat*] from the people, from those offering a sacrifice”); it can also mean “justice” (cf. [1 Sam. 8:3](#)). Although it is hardly likely that the young men were ignorant of the regulations, their lack of real knowledge of the Lord or even concern for his honor (**They did not know the LORD**) meant that they completely ignored his commands.

2:13-14 The priests were to be supported by portions of the sacrifices of the people. In various parts of the Mosaic law the portion to be given to the priests is specified for various sacrifices, e.g., [Deut. 18:3](#) (shoulder, cheeks, and stomach) and [Lev. 7:31-32](#) (breast and right thigh). But the practice in [1 Sam. 2:13-14](#) has little in common with the regulations on priestly rights.

2:15-16 This is an extraordinary situation: the **priest**, who was supposed to know the rules of sacrifice, was engaging in behavior that shocked even the ordinary worshiper. The **fat** was normally removed from certain internal organs and offered as a burnt offering to God (see [Ex. 29:13](#); [Lev. 3:3-5](#)). Also, the priest would normally take his share right after killing the animal, before giving it to the worshiper.

2:17 It was because the sons of Eli did not know the Lord ([v. 12](#)) that they could treat **with contempt** his holy sacrifices that he had commanded for worship.

2:18-21 The story returns to another *na‘ar* (“young man, boy”), **Samuel** (cf. note on [vv. 12-17](#), “young man”). Before, Samuel was **ministering** “in the presence of Eli the priest” ([v. 11](#)), but now he is ministering simply **before the LORD**, in the garment of a priest. The **linen ephod** was probably a simple tunic or apron worn by priests ([22:18](#)) or sometimes by others, as by David as he brought the ark to Jerusalem ([2 Sam. 6:14](#)).

2:22-23 The **women** were not Canaanite cult prostitutes, as is sometimes speculated. Lying with them was considered among the sons’ **evil dealings**.

2:25 if someone sins against the LORD, who can intercede for him? This shows the need for a mediator between man and God. Because of Eli’s sons’ willful rejection of him, **it was the will of the LORD to put them to death**. When God is determined to destroy, no human intercession is effective. For the writers of the Bible, the fact that divine providence and human character mingle means that destinies are regarded as ultimately the result of the divine will. The most obvious example is Pharaoh in [Ex. 7:13](#), [22](#), etc. But this does not mean that people are not accountable; Hophni and Phinehas had rejected God, even ignoring their father’s warning.

2:26 Similar language is used in [Luke 2:52](#) to describe the physical and spiritual growth of the boy Jesus.

2:27-28 Did I indeed reveal... ? Did I choose him... ? These are rhetorical questions, expecting “Yes, indeed!” as an answer. **The house of your father** in [vv. 27, 28, 30](#) is a technical term referring to Eli’s extended family. “Your father” probably refers specifically to Ithamar, son of Aaron, who was made a priest of the Lord at Mount Sinai along with his father and brothers ([Ex. 28:1](#); cf. [1 Chron. 24:3](#)). Eli was a descendant of this house, according to [1 Chron. 24:3](#), where it is stated that his great-great-great-grandson Ahimelech was “of the sons of Ithamar.” The descent from Eli to this Ahimelech is as follows: Eli—Phinehas—Ahitub ([1 Sam. 14:3](#))—Ahimelech—Abiathar ([22:20](#))—Ahimelech ([2 Sam. 8:17](#); [1 Chron. 24:6](#)). The duties of the priest were **to go up to** the Lord’s **altar**, i.e., (1) to burn offerings on the altar (e.g., [Lev. 1:9](#)), which was connected with the privilege of being sustained from portions of the sacrifices, a privilege that Eli’s sons were abusing ([1 Sam. 2:12-17](#)); (2) to **burn incense** on the altar of incense ([Ex. 30:1](#); see [Luke 1:9](#)); and (3) to **wear an ephod before** God. This ephod was probably not the linen garment of [1 Sam. 2:18](#), but the jeweled breastplate described in [Exodus 28](#) that symbolized the people of Israel, with pockets for the sacred lots (for priests casting lots, see [Lev. 16:8](#), etc.).

According to [1 Sam. 21:9](#), that ephod was later kept in the sanctuary of Nob, and Abiathar took it with him when he escaped to David ([23:6](#)). **I gave to the house of your father all my offerings by fire.** Except for the case of burnt offerings, which were wholly burned, when an offering was made, part was burned as a “memorial portion,” but the rest of the grain offerings, sin offerings, and guilt offerings and a part of the peace offerings were normally eaten by the priests ([Lev. 6:14-18](#); [7:1-38](#)).

[2:27](#) A **man of God** is a synonym for “prophet” (e.g., [9:6](#); [2 Kings 1:9](#)). **Thus the LORD has said** is the regular prophetic “messenger formula.” In Samuel this formula appears also in [1 Sam. 10:18](#); [15:2](#); [2 Sam. 7:5](#), [8](#); [12:7](#), [11](#); [24:12](#). In the ancient world, messengers were supposed to recite their messages verbatim, so the messenger would begin with “[The sender] has spoken thus” and use the first person in the body of the message (e.g., [Gen. 45:9](#)).

[2:29](#) **You** is plural here. The form of the verb **scorn** indicates a habitual action. By scorning the offerings, Eli is scorning the Lord and honoring his sons, while the Lord honors those who honor him and lightly esteems those who despise him ([v. 30](#)).

[2:30](#) Though the Lord **promised**, he can revoke his promise for willful disregard of the terms of the promise. **Far be it from me** is a statement of strong denial of the previous statement (e.g., [Gen. 44:7](#); [1 Sam. 12:23](#); [2 Sam. 20:20](#); cf. also [1 Sam. 20:9](#)).

[2:31-34](#) This is a curse for breaking the Lord’s covenant, with punishment given in words of curses similar to the curses in the covenant. **Behold, the days are coming** is an eschatological formula often found in the Prophets. The **only one who shall be spared** is Abiathar, who escaped when the priests of Nob were killed ([22:20](#)). Solomon later banished him to Anathoth; see [1 Kings 2:26-27](#), where it is stated that the banishment was a fulfillment of the prophecy against Eli. Jeremiah was probably descended from this house ([Jer. 1:1](#)). **All the descendants** is a general statement, because there are references to those who were left (see the previous clause in [1 Sam. 2:33](#), as well as [v. 36](#)). Eli will not live to experience the punishment, but the death of his two sons **on the same day** will be a **sign** to him that the prophecy is true.

[2:35](#) The **faithful priest** with a **sure house** is probably Zadok, priest under David and a descendant of Ithamar’s brother Eleazar, son of Aaron ([2 Sam. 8:17](#); [1 Chron. 24:3](#); see also [Judg. 20:28](#)). The Hebrew word “faithful” is the same as “sure” later in the sentence: the *ne’eman* priest will have a *ne’eman* house. The **anointed** is the king. The wording here is similar to that in [2 Samuel 7](#), where David is promised a “sure” house ([2 Sam. 7:16](#)).

NLT Life Application Study Bible³

1 Samuel 2

2:1-10 Hannah praised God for his answer to her prayer for a son. The theme of her poetic prayer is her confidence in God's sovereignty and her thankfulness for everything he had done. Mary, the mother of Jesus, modeled her own praise song, called the Magnificat, after Hannah's prayer ([Luke 1:46-55](#)). Like Hannah and Mary, we should be confident of God's ultimate control over the events in our lives, and we should be thankful for the ways God has blessed us. By praising God for all good gifts, we acknowledge his ultimate control over all the affairs of life.

2:2 Hannah praised God for being a Rock—firm, strong, and unchanging. In our fast-paced world, friends come and go, and circumstances change. It's difficult to find a solid foundation that will not change. Those who devote their lives to achievements, causes, or possessions have as their security that which is finite and changeable. The possessions that we work so hard to obtain will all pass away. But God is always present. Hope in him. He will never fail.

2:3 No doubt as Hannah said these words, she was thinking of Peninnah's arrogance and chiding. Hannah did not have to get even with Peninnah. She knew that God is all-knowing and that he will judge all sin and pride. Hannah wisely left judgment up to God. Resist the temptation to take justice into your own hands. God will weigh your deeds as well as the deeds of those who have wronged you.

2:10 Because we live in a world where evil abounds and where war and terrorism always threaten, we may forget that God is in control. Hannah saw God as (1) solid as a rock ([2:2](#)), (2) the one who knows what we do ([2:3](#)), (3) sovereign overall the affairs of people ([2:4-8](#)), and (4) the Supreme Judge who administers perfect justice ([2:10](#)). Remembering God's sovereign control helps us put both world and personal events in perspective.

2:11, 18 Samuel assisted Eli the priest. In this role, Samuel's responsibilities would have included opening the Tabernacle doors each morning ([3:15](#)), cleaning the furniture, and sweeping the floors. As he grew older, Samuel would have assisted Eli in offering sacrifices. The fact that he was wearing a linen garment (like the clothing worn only by priests) shows that he was a priest-in-training. Because Samuel was Eli's helper, he was God's helper, too. When you serve others—even in carrying out ordinary tasks—you are serving God. Because ultimately we serve God, every job has dignity.

2:12ff The law stipulated that the needs of all the Levites were to be met through the people's tithes ([Numbers 18:20-24](#); [Joshua 13:14](#), [33](#)). Because Eli's sons were priests, they were to be taken care of this way. But Eli's sons took advantage of their position to satisfy their lust for power, possessions, and control. Their contempt and arrogance toward both people and worship undermined the integrity of the whole priesthood.

Eli knew that his sons were evil, but he did little to correct or stop them, even when the integrity of God's sanctuary was threatened. As the high priest, Eli should have responded by executing his sons ([Numbers 15:22-31](#)). No wonder he chose not to confront the situation. But by ignoring their selfish actions, Eli let his sons ruin their own lives and the lives of many others. There are times when serious problems must be confronted, even if the process and consequences could be painful.

3. *Life Application Study Bible*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1988), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 410-413.

Hannah

Hannah's prayer shows us that all we have and receive is on loan from God. Hannah might have had many excuses for being a possessive mother. But when God answered her prayer, she followed through on her promise to dedicate Samuel to God's service.

She discovered that the greatest joy in having a child is to give that child fully and freely back to God. She entered motherhood prepared to do what all mothers must eventually do—let go of their children.

When children are born, they are completely dependent upon their parents for all their basic necessities. This causes some parents to forget that those same children will grow toward independence within the span of a few short years. Being sensitive to the different stages of that healthy process will greatly strengthen family relationships; resisting or denying that process will cause great pain. We must gradually let go of our children in order to allow them to become mature, independent adults.

Strengths and accomplishments

- Mother of Samuel, Israel's greatest judge
- Fervent in worship; effective in prayer
- Willing to follow through on even a costly commitment

Weakness and mistake

- Struggled with her sense of self-worth because she had been unable to have children

Lessons from her life

- God hears and answers prayer
- Our children are gifts from God
- God is concerned for the oppressed and afflicted

Vital statistics

- Where: Ephraim
- Occupation: Homemaker
- Relatives: Husband: Elkanah. Son: Samuel. Later, three other sons and two daughters.
- Contemporary: Eli the priest

Key verses

"Sir, do you remember me?' Hannah asked. 'I am the woman who stood here several years ago praying to the Lord. I asked the Lord to give me this boy, and he has granted my request. Now I am giving him to the Lord, and he will belong to the Lord his whole life.' And they worshiped the Lord there" ([1 Samuel 1:26-28](#)).

Her story is told in [1 Samuel 1-2](#).

[2:13, 14](#) This fork was a utensil used in the Tabernacle for offering sacrifices. Made of bronze ([Exodus 27:3](#)), it usually had three prongs to hook the meat that was to be offered on the altar. Eli's sons used the fork to take more meat from the pot than was due them.

[2:13-17](#) What were Eli's sons doing wrong? They were taking parts of the sacrifices *before* they were offered to God on the altar. They were also eating meat before the fat was burned off. This was against God's laws ([Leviticus 3:3-5](#)). In effect, Eli's sons were treating God's offerings with contempt. Offerings were given to show honor and respect to God while seeking forgiveness for sins, but through their irreverence, Eli's sons were actually sinning while making the offerings. To add to their sins, they were also sleeping with the women who served there ([2:22](#)).

Like Eli's sons, some religious leaders look down on the faith of ordinary people and treat their offerings to God casually or even with contempt. God harshly judges those who lead his people astray or scorn what is devoted to him ([Numbers 18:32](#)).

[2:18](#) Samuel wore a linen garment (also called an ephod). *Ephods*, long sleeveless vests made of plain linen, were worn by all priests. The high priest's ephod carried special significance. It was embroidered with a variety of bright colors. Attached to it was the chestpiece, a bib-like garment with gold embroidered shoulder straps. Twelve precious gemstones were attached to the chestpiece, each stone representing one of the tribes of Israel. A pouch on the ephod held the Urim and the Thummim, two small objects used to determine God's will in certain national matters.

[2:21](#) God honored the desires of faithful Hannah. We never hear about Peninnah or her children again, but Samuel was used mightily by God. God also gave Hannah five children in addition to Samuel. God often blesses us in ways we do not expect. Hannah never expected to have a child at her age, much less six children! Don't resent God's timing. His blessings might not be immediate, but they will come if we are faithful to do what he says in his Word.

[2:23-25](#) Eli's sons knew better, but they continued to disobey God deliberately by cheating, seducing, and robbing the people. Therefore, God planned to kill them. Any sin is wrong, but sin carried out deliberately and deceitfully is the worst kind. When we sin out of ignorance, we deserve punishment. But when we sin intentionally, the consequences will be more severe. Don't ignore God's warnings about sin. Abandon sin before it becomes a way of life.

[2:25](#) Does a loving God really will or want to put people to death?

Consider the situation in the Tabernacle. A person made an offering in order to have his sins forgiven, and Eli's sons stole the offering and made a sham of the person's repentant attitude. God, in his love for Israel, could not permit this situation to continue. He allowed Eli's sons to die as a result of their own boastful presumption. They took the Ark into battle, thinking it would protect them. But God withdrew his protection, and the wicked sons of Eli were killed ([4:10, 11](#)).

[2:29](#) Eli had a difficult time rearing his sons. He apparently did not take any strong disciplinary action with them when he became aware of their wrongdoing. But Eli was not just a father trying to handle his rebellious sons; he was the high priest ignoring the sins of priests under his jurisdiction. As a result, the Lord took the necessary disciplinary action that Eli would not.

Eli was guilty of honoring his sons above God by letting them continue in their sinful ways. Is there a situation in your life, family, or work that you allow to continue even though you know it is wrong? If so, you may become as guilty as those engaged in the wrong act.

[2:31, 35, 36](#) For the fulfillment of this prediction see [1 Kings 2:26, 27](#). This is where Solomon removed Abiathar from his position, thus ending Eli's line. Then God raised up Zadok, a priest under David and then high priest under Solomon. Zadok's line was probably still in place as late as the days of Ezra.

Eli was one Old Testament person with a very modern problem. The recognition and respect he earned in public did not extend to his handling of his private affairs. He may have been an excellent priest, but he was a poor parent. His sons brought him grief and ruin. He lacked two important qualities needed for effective parental discipline: firm resolve and corrective action.

Eli responded to situations rather than solving them. But even his responses tended to be weak. God pointed out his sons' errors, but Eli did little to correct them. The contrast between God's dealing with Eli and Eli's dealing with his sons is clear—God gave warning, spelled out the consequences of disobedience, and then acted. Eli only warned. Children need to learn that their parents' words and actions go together. Both love and discipline must be spoken as well as acted out.

But Eli had another problem. He was more concerned with the symbols of his religion than with the God they represented. For Eli, the Ark of the Covenant had become a relic to be protected rather than a reminder of the Protector. His faith shifted from the Creator to the created.

It may be easier to worship things we can see, whether buildings, people, or Scripture itself, but such tangible things have no power in themselves. This book you hold is either merely a respectable religious relic, or it is the sharp and effective Word of God. Your attitude toward it is largely shaped by your relationship to the God from whom it comes. A relic or antique has to be carefully stored away; God's Word has to be used and obeyed. Which attitude accurately describes your approach to the Word of God?

Strengths and accomplishments

- Judged Israel for 40 years
- Spoke with Hannah, the mother of Samuel, and assured her of God's blessing
- Reared and trained Samuel, the greatest judge of Israel

Weaknesses and mistakes

- Failed to discipline his sons or correct them when they sinned
- Tended to react to situations rather than take decisive action
- Saw the Ark of the Covenant as a relic to be cherished rather than as a symbol of God's presence with Israel

Lessons from his life

- Parents need to discipline their children responsibly
- Life is more than simply reacting; it demands action
- Past victories cannot substitute for present trust

Vital statistics

- Where: Shiloh
- Occupations: High priest, judge of Israel
- Relatives: Sons: Hophni and Phinehas
- Contemporary: Samuel

Key verses

"Then the Lord said to Samuel, 'I am about to do a shocking thing in Israel. I am going to carry out all my threats against Eli and his family, from beginning to end. I have warned him that judgment is coming upon his family forever, because his sons are blaspheming God and he hasn't disciplined them. So I have vowed that the sins of Eli and his sons will never be forgiven by sacrifices or offerings'" ([1 Samuel 3:11-14](#)).

His story is told in [1 Samuel 1-4](#). He is also mentioned in [1 Kings 2:26, 27](#).