

Story 22



Samuel and Eli

I Samuel 1:1-3:21

The Bridge:

As His people lived in the land that God promised Abraham, the Lord provided two vital offices to guide His relationship with His people. There were priests, like Eli, who were to lead the worship of God, and prophets, like Samuel, who helped the people understand their relationship with Him.

The Story:

- Eli, the High Priest, oversaw a more permanent place of worship than the tent of meeting. It was a temple in Shiloh, which was patterned after the tabernacle (I Samuel 1:9). Eli was "very old," and most likely retired [Numbers 8:23-26]. Eli stayed in the temple, but left most of the administration of the temple in the hands of his two sons, Hophni and Phinehas. However, as priests, "...the sons of Eli were worthless men; they did not know the LORD" (1 Samuel 2:12).
- During this time, a woman named Hannah was praying for God to give her a child. She promised that if God would answer her prayer, she would give him back to God to be His servant. God heard her prayer and gave her a son whom she named Samuel ("Because I have asked him of the LORD", I Samuel 1:20). When he was weaned [perhaps three years old], she took him to the temple of the Lord at Shiloh and gave him to Eli to be in the service of the Lord for the remainder of his days (1 Samuel 1:24-28).
- One night, God called, "Samuel." Samuel thought it was Eli calling him, so he ran to see what Eli wanted. Eli said, "I did not call you." After two more times, Eli realized that it was God calling. Eli told Samuel that when he heard the voice again to say, "Lord, what do you want me to do?" (1 Samuel 3:1-10)
- God told Samuel that Eli and his two sons would die and Samuel would be the next prophet. It was because of their disobedience that Eli and his sons would be removed from the Lord's service (1 Samuel 2:27-36 cf. 1 Kings 2:27).
- Samuel was a good prophet and spoke for God. He kept the Israelite people worshipping God and offered sacrifices each year for their sins, and all Israel knew that he was a prophet of the Lord (1 Samuel 3:19-21).



What was the role of the prophets in God's plan of salvation?