

SAMUEL

Making The Bible Come Alive

The Listener

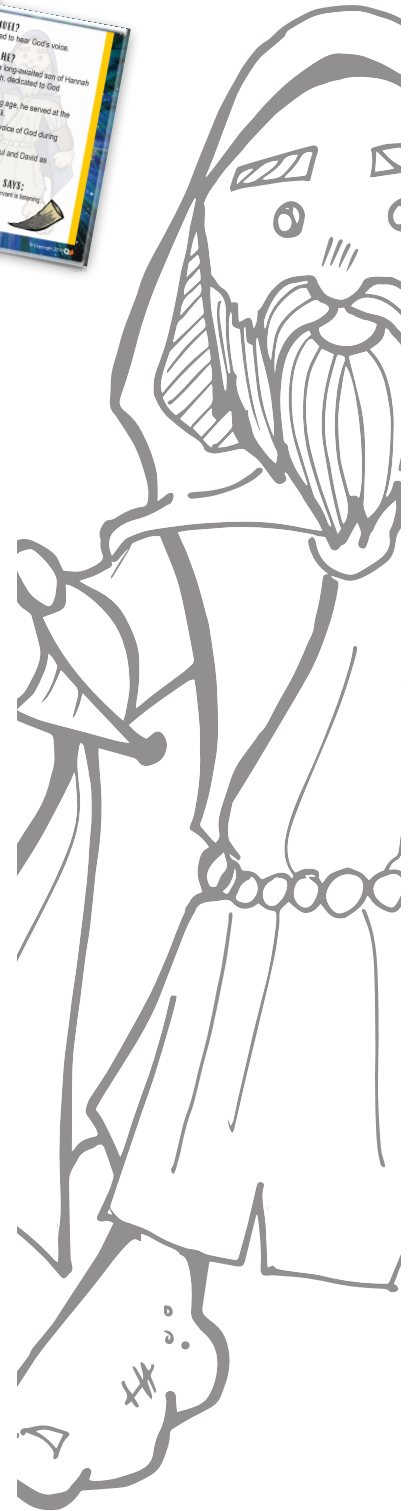
WHO WAS THIS PERSON?

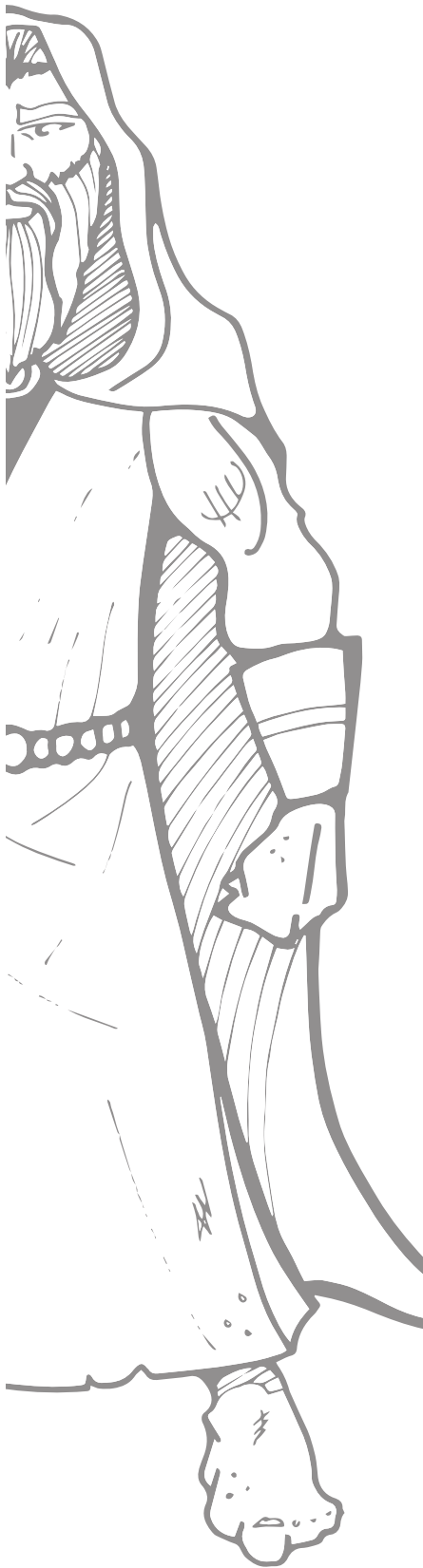
• Samuel's mother, Hannah, had tried many years to have a baby, however she never conceived. Each year she would go to the temple when it came time to offer yearly sacrifices. While there, she would pray and ask that God would grant her request to have a child. Eli, the temple priest saw her in the temple talking, but not making a sound. Eli thought she was drunk, but she assured him she was not. She was, however, pouring out her soul to God and desperately pleading with Him for a baby. (1 Samuel 1:12-16) Eli assured her that God heard her cry. A year later, when Hannah returned to the temple with her husband, Elkanah, she had given birth to a baby boy whom she named Samuel. Hannah promised to give the baby back to God when he was old enough and she did.

- Samuel was raised in the tabernacle by Eli the priest.
- Samuel was a priest, prophet and judge over Israel. He was also a counselor, and was known to be "God's man" at a turning point in the history of Israel.
- For a period of time Israel was ruled by judges. Samuel was the last (and greatest) of the judges before kings were put in place to rule the land of Israel. King Saul was the first King.
- The name, Samuel, comes from the Hebrew expression, "heard from God." God had shaped the life of Samuel from the very start. He was the answer to his mother's earnest (serious and desperate) prayer for a child.

WHAT IS THIS PERSON KNOWN FOR?

- He heard the voice of God at a young age and was obedient to share with Eli what God said. (1 Samuel 3:1-18). Read the entire chapter of 1 Samuel 3 aloud. It is a captivating story of how God called and made Himself known to Samuel.
- Samuel is known to have served God faithfully for his whole life.
- The Ark of the Lord was captured in a battle by the Philistines. The Israelites would continually fight them to try and get the "Ark"





back. The Israelites suffered defeat and loss of life fighting the Philistines and other surrounding enemies. After seven months, the Ark of the Lord was finally returned to the Israelites. Samuel told them how to defeat their enemies. They must turn their hearts to God 100%, get rid of all their idol and stop worshipping other gods, and serve Jehovah ONLY. (1 Samuel 7:3-4) The Israelites listened, repented and when they did, they began to see victory! (1 Samuel 7:7-15)

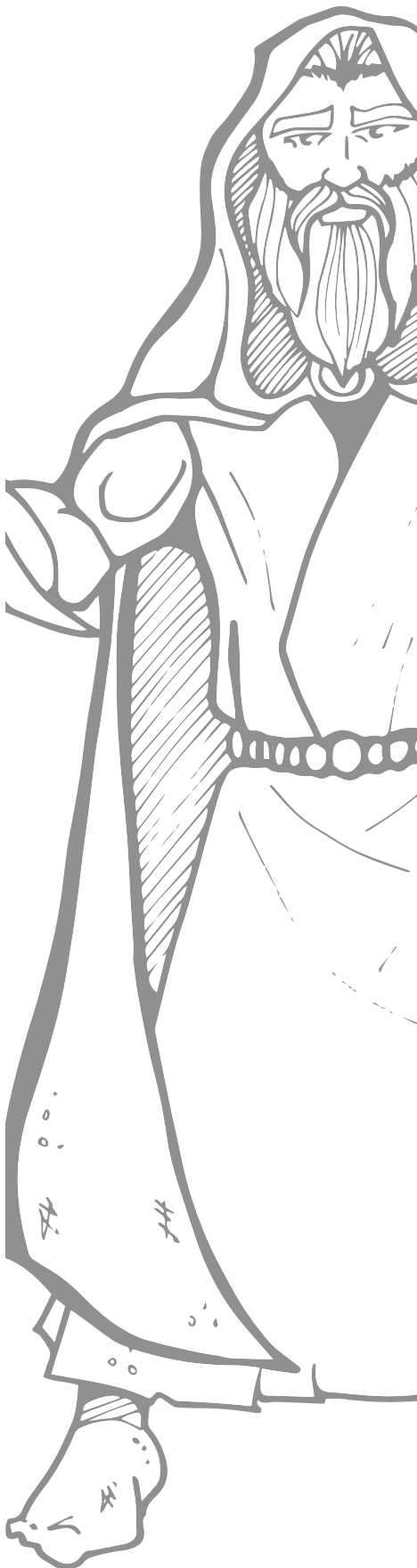
- When Samuel grew old, he appointed his sons to be judges, however the elders of Israel didn't like this idea because Samuel's sons were evil and dishonest. Instead they requested a king to rule Israel. Samuel knew this wasn't going to be the best option but he consulted the Lord and did as he was instructed. (1 Samuel 8:1-22)
- God told Samuel to anoint Saul as the first king of Israel in answer to the people's requests. (1 Samuel 8; 9:1-10) In 1 Samuel 9:17 it says, "When Samuel caught sight of Saul, the LORD said to him, "This is the man I spoke to you about; he will govern my people." God was very clear in his instructions to Samuel! Saul was 30 years old when he became king and reigned over Israel for 42 years. (1 Samuel 13:1)
- In his old age, Samuel served as King Saul's counselor, by instructing him in the ways of God and guiding him as he made decisions. Saul had attacked the Philistine outpost, and the people were summoned to join Saul at Gilgal. Saul and his troops were fearful. Saul waited at Gilgal seven days for Samuel to arrive, but Samuel did not come, so Saul's men scattered. Because Saul was fearful of defeat by the surrounding armies, instead he decided to offer up the burnt offering. But, doing so was pure disobedience. Samuel told him, "You acted foolishly. You have not kept the command the LORD your God gave you; if you had, He would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time. But now your kingdom will not endure..." (1 Samuel 13:13-14) This act of disobedience began Saul's downfall and it wasn't long before his actions put his soldiers' lives and his own in jeopardy. Saul thought he could fix things by offering sacrifices but Samuel reminded him that it isn't about sacrifices. Rather, it is about obedience. (1 Samuel 15:20-24).
- Samuel was the one who needed to break the news to Saul that because of his hard heart and evil practices he was to be removed as king over Israel. (1 Samuel 15:26-29)
- God then directs Samuel to go and anoint a young shepherd boy named David, the youngest of eight boys

belonging to Jesse, to become Israel's next king! (1 Samuel 16: 1-13)

WHY DO YOU THINK THIS PERSON HAS BEEN INCLUDED IN GOD'S STORY?

- **When we listen for God He will speak to us.** As a little boy growing up in the tabernacle, young Samuel heard the voice of God three times. Did you know, God STILL speaks to us today? God speaks to us through different methods; sometimes it may be words of encouragement, other times He may speak words of correction, and sometimes He will share words of warning. God speaks in audible voices and He also speaks through His Word, through worship and through other people. (Psalm 46:10; 119:1-176; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; John 16:13; Romans 10:17; Philippians 4:7; Revelations 3:20).
- **We can do great things for God at any age:** Samuel was a young boy who was encouraged to listen, be available and to obey God, and because he did, God used him. Samuel served God by helping Eli the priest in the temple as a young boy. Through his training and Godly instruction in these early years God blessed Samuel with wisdom and he became a man who instructed leaders and helped to bring change to a nation.
- **Leadership isn't easy.** Sometimes we look at leaders and think about their nice houses, servants, cars, trips, money and being the boss. Sure there may be some perceived benefits to being a leader, but in looking at the life of Samuel, his responsibilities were not easy. He had to make some very difficult decisions that were not favorable.
- **We all need God's help:** It doesn't matter if we are a Prime Minister, pastor, truck driver, parent or a student—every person needs God. First of all, we need to receive Him as our Saviour because the Bible reminds us, "ALL have sinned." (Romans 3:23; John 13:6) Secondly, we need to connect daily with God and really get to know Him, and let Him strengthen our spirit. Our hope must be in Him! (Psalm 5:3; Psalm 33:20; Psalm 37:7; Isaiah 40:31;) Thirdly, we must keep our focus on God because the beliefs and practices of the world are often different to what God's Word says. It is quite easy to drift away from God if we don't put into practice God's principles. Samuel warned the people of Israel how to live and that if they were obedient, they would see victory. King Saul drifted as he began to do things his own





way and because he did, there were consequences to his actions. (Proverbs 3:5-7, Psalm 14; Psalm 119:11; 2 Chronicles 7:14)

• **God is in control of all things, as does as He wills:**

Sometime it seems like things are out of control when we hear things on the news that can be unsettling. Never forget that God sees everything and He is in control. God heard the cry of Hannah who wanted a baby. It was God who told Samuel to appoint Saul as king. It was God who removed Saul from power so that one day David could become king. And then Scripture prophesized that Jesus the Messiah would be born from the household/family line of KING David. (11 Samuel 2:6-7; Daniel 2:21; Isaiah 9:6-7; 45:7; Matthew 8:27). Romans 8:28 declares, “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose”.

LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

Pose the following two questions to your children, one at a time. Allow for interaction and discussion, letting them share their thoughts while you guide the conversation.

- What life lessons can I learn from this Bible character about how I should and should not live?
- Based on what I have learned from this Bible character, how can I live in a way that is pleasing to God.

MORE IN GOD'S WORD

Challenge yourself to find five minutes each day for a week, to quiet your spirit, finding a spot where you are not distracted, and practice just listening to God and being in tune with Him. Take your Bible to that quiet place. Use some of that time to pray, and some time to just meditate on His Word. Keep your ears and your heart open to what God is wanting to say to you. It's not a matter of IF He wants to talk to you. He does want to speak. But, He also wants you to be ready and positioned for listening, so you can actually hear in your heart what He is saying. Then, respond in obedience with a heart that is open to what God would have you to do. God called Samuel three

times. How many times is He calling you? The more you spend time in His presence, the less He will have to try calling you over and over again. Maybe you will hear His voice the very first time He calls!

