

=BOOKS OF THE BIBLE=

Lesson 9

I Samuel

Objects to have:

Your sign reading: I SAMUEL

About Samuel, Saul and David

Three “signs” with the word PROMISE on each

A picture of praying hands

A picture of a baby

A picture of a boy

Your Bible.

Introducing the lesson:

(Say the first seven books of the Bible with the children. If there is time at the end of the lesson, review the themes of the books.) The next two books in the Bible are named after another man. His name is Samuel.

See this book in my Bible. (Show the children the location of I Samuel.) This is I Samuel. Tell me what the name of this book is. This book of I Samuel is about Samuel, Saul and David.

The story for today is the story of promises. A promise is saying that you will do something. When you do what you said you would do, that is keeping your promise. In our story for today a lady made a promise, God made a promise and a boy made a promise. We’ll see if the lady kept her promise, if God kept His promise, and if the boy kept his promise.

Telling the story:

(Hold up the praying hands.) The lady was very sad. There was something that she wanted very, very badly, but did not have. She and her husband did not have a baby boy. She wanted a baby boy very badly. The lady named Hannah went to the tabernacle.

The tabernacle was like a church, but it was really a big tent with two rooms in it. The tabernacle was beautiful on the inside, but there were no chairs and no pews; there was not an organ, and there was not a piano. There were three pieces of furniture in the first huge room: the golden candlestick, the table and the altar of incense. The only people who were allowed inside the first main room were the priests. In the second main room was only the ark of the covenant - all covered with gold. The high priest was the only person who was allowed in that second room. So, when Hannah went to the tabernacle, she stayed outside in the yard that was around the tabernacle; she could not go into the tabernacle.

Hannah wanted to pray. We can pray anywhere we are, but Hannah wanted to go to the tabernacle to pray. It was not a time for a lot of people to go there at one time, like a church service or like Sunday school. She just went there alone.

When Hannah came into the courtyard, the preacher, Eli, was sitting beside a pillar. Hannah stood while she was praying. She was not praying out loud; she was whispering her prayer. Hannah knew that God hears our prayers whether we talk out loud or whisper or don’t say a word. Hannah prayed, “Please, dear Lord, may I have a baby boy? I promise You that I will give him back to You. He can be a preacher. He can live in the tabernacle.”

Eli, the preacher, was watching Hannah. He saw Hannah's lips moving, but he heard no sound. The preacher did not know the lady. He thought she had been drinking strong liquor and was drunk. The preacher, Eli, came up to Hannah. "Lady, I think that you are drunk. It is sinful to drink strong liquor."

Hannah said, "Oh, no, Preacher Eli, you have it wrong. I have been praying. I don't drink liquor. It is just that I am so sad."

"What makes you so sad?"

"My husband and I do not have any children. We want a baby boy. I have been praying for a baby boy."

God let Eli know what God would do. Eli told the lady, "God is making a promise to you. He is promising that you will have a baby boy." Hannah went home. (Hold up the picture of the baby boy.) After many days she got the baby boy whom God had promised. God kept His promise! God always keeps His promises! Our Bible is full of promises that God made, and He keeps every promise He makes! She and her husband named their baby boy Samuel.

Hannah kept her promise that she made to God. When Samuel got old enough, Hannah took her young son to the tabernacle. (Hold up the picture of the young boy.) He may have been around five years old. Hannah said to Eli, "This is the boy for whom I prayed. Now that he is old enough to be away from home, he may live here in the tabernacle with you and serve the Lord." See how Hannah kept her promise!

Hannah did not forget Samuel; oh, no, not at all! Every year Hannah made a new coat for Samuel and took it to him. Even though his father and his mother lived many miles away from the tabernacle, still they came to see Samuel and to bring him his new coat that his mother, Hannah, had made for him.

The boy, Samuel, was a good boy. He was a very good helper to Eli the preacher. In the mornings he would open the doors of the tabernacle. He would light the lamps at night with his little torch of fire. He had other jobs to do, too, all through the daytime. He enjoyed doing work there with Eli.

One night it was almost bedtime. Samuel was busy. He had some work to do for Eli. About the last thing which he did was to make sure that the lamps were lit. Then it was bedtime. Samuel lay down on his bed. Maybe he was about to go to sleep. Then he heard a voice. The voice was calling, "Samuel, Samuel." Samuel got out of bed quickly.

Samuel ran to Eli. "Yes, Preacher? What is it that you want?"

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

Samuel went back to bed. He lay there very still, I think. He knew he had heard a voice calling him. There was no one else in the place where they were sleeping but he and Eli. "Samuel. Samuel."

Samuel knew he heard a voice! He got up from his bed quickly and ran to Eli. "Yes, Eli, what is it that you want?"

"I did not call you, Samuel. Go back to bed." Well, now Samuel knew that he had heard a voice calling him, but he obeyed Eli. As soon as he was told to do something, Samuel obeyed always. Samuel lay back down on his bed. He wondered what was going on! He knew that two times he had heard someone calling him.

"Samuel. Samuel." Samuel jumped up from his bed. He ran to Eli.

"Yes, Eli? I heard my name called. Did you call me?"

Then Eli guessed what was happening. He said, "Samuel, God is calling your name. God wants you to listen to Him." Eli knew that Samuel was not saved yet. Samuel had not asked Jesus to be his Saviour; Samuel therefore could not know when God was talking to him. Eli said, "Samuel, God wants you to ask Him to be your Saviour. The next time you hear the voice, you say, "Here am I, Lord!"

Samuel listened very carefully to the instructions which Eli gave. He went back to bed. I think he was wide awake and perhaps his heart was pounding as he waited for God to call him again.

"Samuel. Samuel." This time Samuel knew Who was calling. It was God.

Samuel answered, "Yes, Lord. Talk to me. I am listening to You. I want to be Your servant. I want to do whatever You tell me to do."

Did you hear the promise that Samuel made to God? He promised that he would serve God and do whatever He wanted him to do.

God said, "Samuel, My people have sinned." Remember, children, about the judges. Remember that the people would sin, then God would give them a judge. Then when that judge would die, the people would forget about God again. Well, the people had forgotten about God again. God said, "Samuel, I want you to tell My people about their sin. I want you to tell them that I am not pleased. I want you to tell them that I am going to punish them for their sins. Even Eli the preacher has sinned. He has not made his own sons behave right. He has not stopped them from doing wrong."

Samuel listened to God. He promised God that he would do whatever God wanted him to do. Samuel never broke his promise. From the time that he was a little boy until he grew to be a man and lived to be a very old man, he always listened when God talked to him. Samuel always obeyed what God told him to do.

God told him one day to tell Saul that he was to become the king. After it was time for Saul to stop being the king, then God told Samuel to go choose David to be the king. There are many, many good stories in the book of I Samuel! It would take many, many Sundays to tell you all those stories!

Will you be like Samuel? Will you always obey what God tells you to do? Will you say, "Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth"? I hope you will.

LEARN OUR BIBLE VERSE: I Samuel 3:9, "...say, Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth...."