

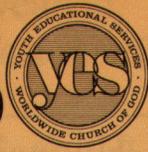
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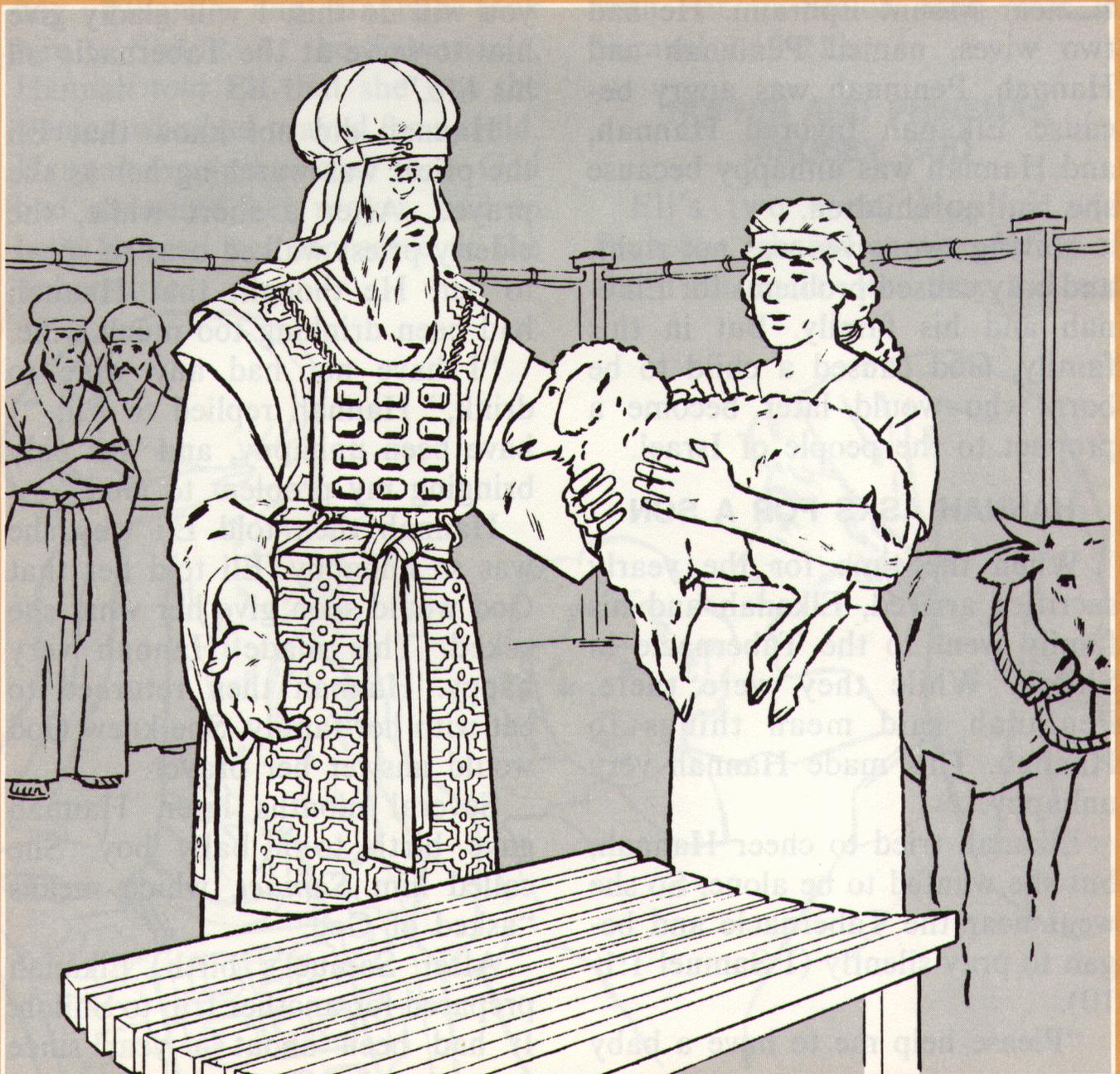
LEVEL 4

BIBLE

LESSONS



LESSON 11



Samuel the Prophet

SAMUEL THE PROPHET

Elkanah was a Levite who lived near Mount Ephraim. He had two wives, named Peninnah and Hannah. Peninnah was angry because Elkanah favored Hannah, and Hannah was unhappy because she had no children.

Having two wives was not right, and only caused problems for Elkanah and his family. But in this family, God caused a child to be born who would later become a prophet to the people of Israel.

HANNAH ASKS FOR A SON

When the time for the yearly sacrifice arrived, Elkanah and his family went to the Tabernacle in Shiloh. While they were there, Peninnah said mean things to Hannah. This made Hannah very unhappy.

Elkanah tried to cheer Hannah, but she wanted to be alone. So she went near the Tabernacle and began to pray silently (I Samuel 1:1-10).

“Please help me to have a baby

boy,” Hannah prayed to God. “If you will do this, I will gladly give him to serve at the Tabernacle all his life.”

Hannah did not know that Eli the priest was watching her as she prayed. After a short while, the elderly priest walked over to speak to her. He thought that Hannah had been drinking too much wine.

“I have not had any wine to drink,” Hannah replied to Eli. “I have been unhappy, and was only bringing my problem to God.”

Hannah then told Eli why she was so unhappy. Eli told her that God would soon give her what she asked. This made Hannah very happy. Hannah then returned to eat with her family. She knew God would answer her prayer.

Several months later, Hannah gave birth to a baby boy. She called him *Samuel*, which means “asked of God.”

After Samuel’s birth, Elkanah prepared for another trip to Shiloh. It had been about a year since

Hannah had prayed for a son at the Tabernacle (I Samuel 1:11-21).

“I will not be going with you this year,” Hannah said to Elkanah. “When Samuel is weaned, I will take him to the priest as I have promised.”

When Samuel was still a small boy, Elkanah and Hannah took him to Shiloh. At the Tabernacle, Hannah told Eli that she was the woman who had prayed for a child. Hannah was thankful that God had answered her prayer, and to have Samuel her son serve at the Tabernacle.

While they were there, Eli asked a blessing on Hannah for giving Samuel to serve at the Tabernacle. God later blessed Hannah with three more sons and two daughters. And each year, Elkanah and his family returned to spend time with Samuel. Hannah also made him a new coat to wear and brought it with her to Shiloh each year (I Samuel 2:19-21).

HOPHNI AND PHINEHAS DISOBEY GOD

Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, shared in the duties of the Tabernacle. But they did not





obey God. Remember how Aaron's sons, _____ and _____, were killed because of their disobedience to God? (Leviticus 10:1-2.)

God had given rules as to how the offering should be cooked and divided. One part of the meat was for God, another part for the priests and the rest was given to the person who brought it. The part for God was to be roasted while the rest was boiled.

But Hophni and Phinehas were greedy. They began to take their share of the meat before roasting the part that was for God. They also roasted their part instead of boiling it, and stole part of the family's share.

Many people could see that they were disobeying God's laws. The Israelites did not want to bring their offerings to the Tabernacle. But many feared to disobey or blame a priest of doing wrong (I Samuel 2:12-17).

After a while, the aging priest learned about the actions of his sons.

"I have heard news about your conduct at the Tabernacle," Eli sadly said to his sons. "You are causing the people to sin against God."

"Who are these people? They have told you lies!" Hophni and Phinehas answered. "They have no right to judge us!"

"God is our judge and you should fear Him," Eli warned them. "Your bad examples are causing people to stay away from the Tabernacle."

Eli could see that his sons would not listen to him. Their attitude was not one of repentance. Eli knew that they should be punished, but he did not keep them away from the Tabernacle (I Samuel 2:22-25).

Not long after this, a man came to the Tabernacle. He had a message for Eli. The elderly priest knew that the man was a messenger sent by God.

“God chose Aaron and his family to be priests to serve Him,” the messenger said to Eli. “God also gave rules about offerings and other duties at the Tabernacle. God knows of your failure to punish your sons for their actions. You have honored your sons above God by allowing them to continue serving at the Tabernacle. Soon they will lose their lives. God will then choose a priest who will faithfully serve Him.”

GOD SPEAKS TO SAMUEL

One night, Samuel was awakened by a voice calling his name. Thinking that Eli had called for



him, Samuel ran to the priest's room.

“Here I am,” Samuel said to Eli.

“I did not call for you,” Eli sleepily answered. “Go back to bed.”

Samuel returned to his room. But before he could fall asleep, he again heard his name. Samuel quickly ran to Eli's room, where he was again told that he had not been called.

When Samuel heard his name a third time, he again ran to Eli's room.

“Here I am,” Samuel said to Eli.

This time Eli knew that God had called Samuel's name. Eli told Samuel what to say if he heard the voice again.

A short time later, when God called to Samuel, what was Samuel's reply? (I Samuel 3:10.)____

Samuel must have been surprised when God spoke to him. But Samuel listened carefully to what God had to say.

“I am going to allow some terrible things to happen to the people of Israel,” God told Samuel. “But first I will punish Eli and his sons for their sins. Eli has been careless in allowing his sons to serve at the

Tabernacle. Soon they will all die.” Samuel was saddened by this message from God and lay awake all night. He planned to say nothing to Eli about the message in the morning.

In the morning, Eli called for Samuel, and said, “I know God spoke to you last night. Tell me all that He said. Do not keep anything from me.”

After hearing what God had said, Eli was sad. He knew that God would do as He had said.

As time went on, Samuel grew to become a man. He also became well known in Israel as a prophet. He was also wise, and people listened carefully to what he said (I Samuel 3:19-21).

Do You Remember

1. Elkanah’s two wives were named _____ and _____.
2. Why was Hannah unhappy?_____
_____.
3. Who was the priest who saw Hannah praying?_____.
4. Hannah named her son _____, which means _____.
5. Samuel served at the _____.
6. What were the names of Eli’s sons? _____ and _____.
7. Did Eli’s Son’s obey God?_____.

PHILISTINES TAKE THE ARK

In a battle against the Philistines, many Israelites were killed or wounded. The Israelite leaders were surprised and saddened by the loss.

“How could we lose against the Philistines?” they asked themselves.

The Israelites should have known that God would not bless their disobedience. The leaders of Israel then decided that they needed the Ark in their camp to win against the Philistines.

The next morning, a group of Israelite soldiers arrived at the Tabernacle in Shiloh. They had come to take the Ark of the covenant back to their camp. When they did, Hophni and Phinehas went with them.

The Israelites cheered when they saw the Ark. Their shouting was so loud that it was heard by the Philistines. The Philistines soon learned that the Ark had been brought to the Israelite camp. Many of the Philistine soldiers became fearful because they had heard of the powerful God of Israel (I Samuel 4:3-8).

Then a Philistine officer spoke up, and said, “Be _____, and _____ like [act like]

men, O ye Philistines, that ye be _____ unto the _____, as they have been to _____: quit yourselves like _____, and _____” (I Samuel 4:9).

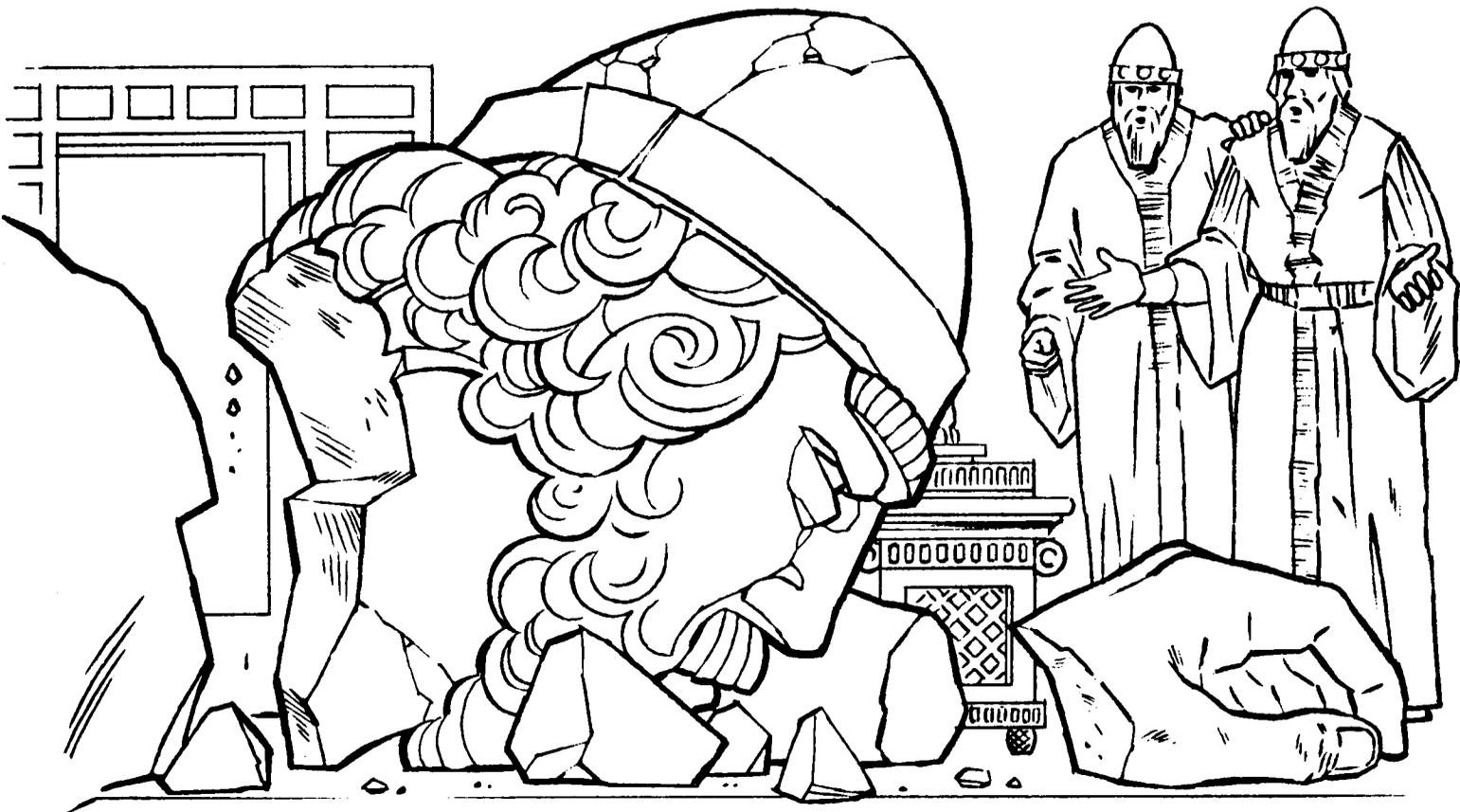
The Israelites depended on the Ark rather than God to keep them safe. They were not ready when the Philistine army attacked again. When the fighting stopped, the Israelites had lost more than 30,000 men. But that was not all they lost!

“And the _____ of _____ was _____” (I Samuel 4:11). The Philistine soldiers also killed the two men standing near the Ark, Hophni and Phinehas.

Later, Eli heard the news of his sons’ death and the loss of the Ark. The elderly priest was so upset at the news that he fell backward from his chair. Those around him rushed to help, but Eli died from the fall (I Samuel 4:16-18).

The Philistine army returned to the city of Ashdod. There they placed the Ark in their temple next to a statue of Dagon, a pagan god. In the morning, when the priests came into their temple, they were greatly surprised. The statue of Dagon had fallen to the floor in front of the Ark!

Workmen quickly set the statue back on its base. But when the



priests entered the temple the next morning, the statue was once again on the floor. This time the statue had broken in several pieces (I Samuel 5:1-4).

Soon the people of Ashdod began to have painful sores. Some of the Philistines died from the sores. God also allowed thousands of mice to plague the people. And soon, many Philistines began to blame their problems on the Ark.

“The Ark cannot stay with us,” said a Philistine leader. “It is only bringing us suffering and death!”

The leaders of the Philistines all agreed that something had to be done with the Ark. They decided to take the Ark to the Philistine city of Gath (I Samuel 5:6-8).

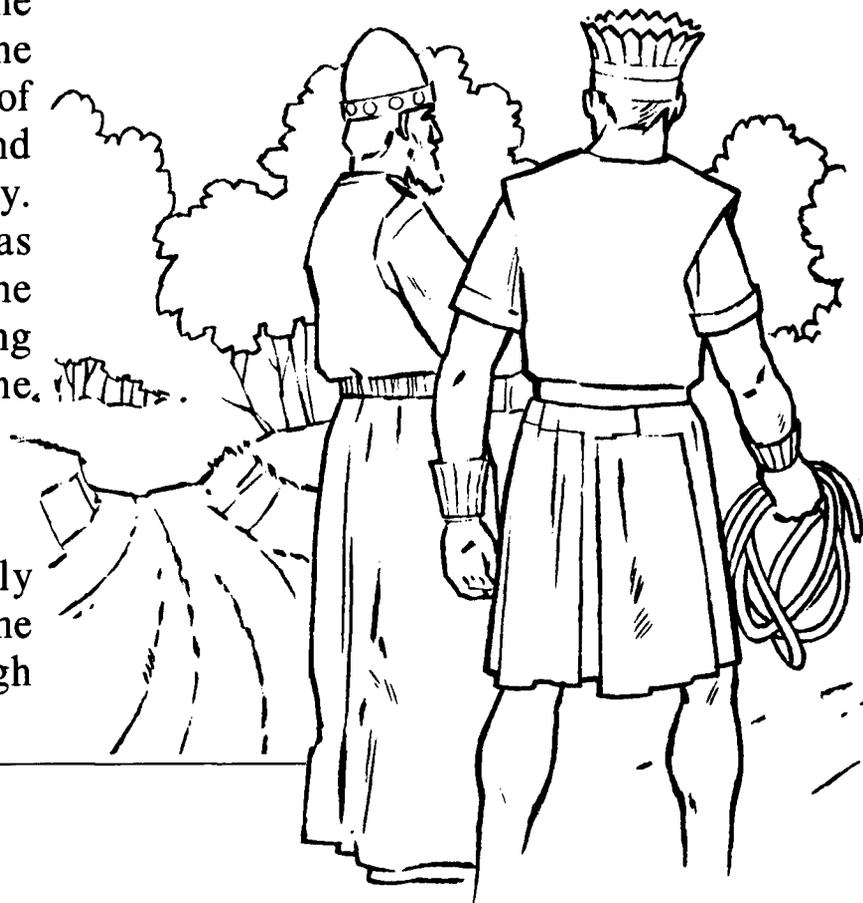
As soon as the Ark arrived, the people of Gath began to have the same painful sores as the people of Ashdod. They also decided to send the Ark to another Philistine city. For seven months the Ark was moved from city to city. Each time the painful sores brought suffering and death to many among the Philistines.

THE ARK IS RETURNED

The Philistine leaders finally decided to return the Ark to the Israelites. They had suffered enough from the mice and painful sores.

“Let us make a new cart to carry the Ark,” a Philistine priest said. “It should be pulled by young cows who have not been trained to pull a cart. Then we will see which way they will go. If they go toward the land of Israel, we will know that the God of Israel has brought us this misery. But if the cows pull the cart some other way, we will know that the plagues happened by chance” (I Samuel 6:8-9).

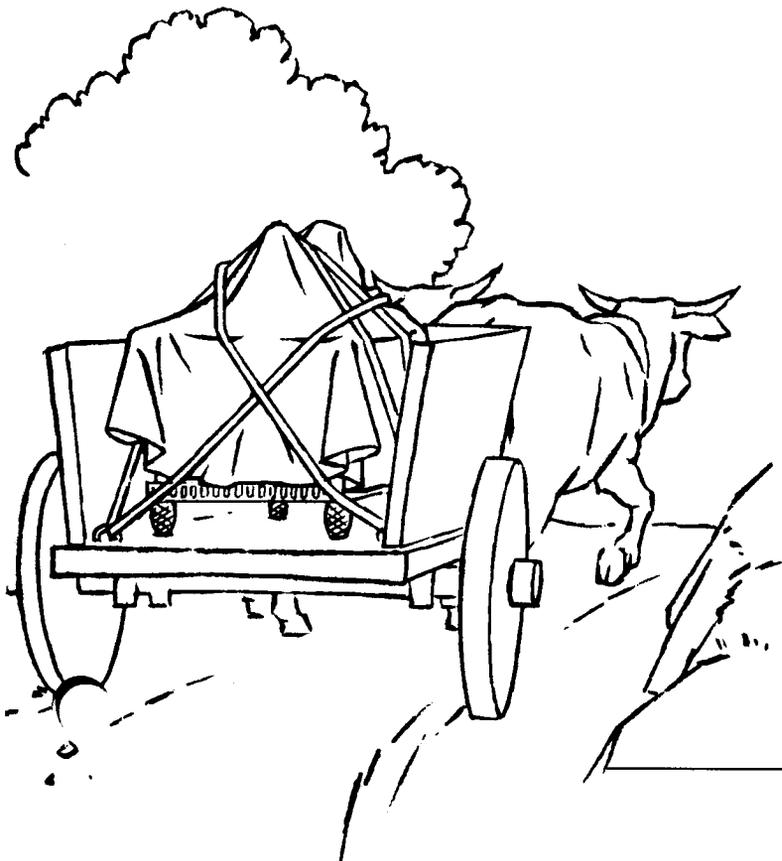
When the Ark was put on the cart, the Philistine leaders watched to see which way the cows would go. As the cows came to a fork in the road, the Philistine leaders were surprised. The cows turned down the road that led to a town in Israel. The Philistines then knew



that their suffering had come because of the Ark.

Many Israelites stopped working in their fields as the cows pulled the cart toward the Israelite town of Beth-shemesh. Some ran to the road to see what was in the cart. They were happy to learn that the Ark had been returned.

The Israelites quickly cut up the wooden cart for firewood and sacrificed the two cows. Some Israelites went to tell others that the Ark had been returned. Soon, thousands of people had heard the news and came to see the Ark. But, sad to say, they had forgotten, or were never taught, how to handle the Ark. Many had touched it or looked inside.



God had warned the Israelites that if any touched or looked inside the Ark they would die. It was to be carried only by the poles that had been made for it (Exodus 25:12-15; Numbers 4:5-6, 15).

Those who had touched or looked into the Ark began to die. Thousands of people died that day because of their disobedience. God gives us this example to teach us the value He places on obedience.

The people of Beth-shemesh asked the men from another Israelite town to come and take the Ark. When they did, they took it to the home of a man named Abinadab. His son, Eleazar, was asked to care for the Ark. It remained in Abinadab's house for the next 20 years (I Samuel 7:1-2).

Do You Remember?

1. The _____ took the _____ after winning a battle against the Israelites.
2. Eli's two sons, _____ and _____, disobeyed God and were killed by the Philistines.
3. What happened to Eli after he learned that the Ark had been taken by the Philistines? _____

4. The Philistines placed the Ark in a temple next to a statue of _____. What happened to the statue? _____

5. God sent _____ and _____ upon the Philistines.

6. How did the Philistines return the Ark? _____

7. What happened to the people of Beth-shemesh who touched or looked into the Ark? _____



THE ISRAELITES WANT A KING

As Samuel grew older, he gave more and more duties to his sons, Joel and Abiah. But they disobeyed God's laws, and their sins were soon told to Samuel (I Samuel 8:1-4).

"Your sons are not honest and just as you are, Samuel," one elder explained. "You are getting old and we will need someone to lead us. We want a king!"

Samuel was saddened by what

he heard and went into another room to pray.

"Give the people a king," God said to Samuel. "They are not rejecting you as their leader. They are rejecting Me. Since the day I brought them out of Egypt, they have disobeyed and served other gods.

"Listen to them and give them a

king. But warn them about the kind of life they will have under a king's rule," God continued.

Samuel returned to the elders and warned them just as God told him to do.

"Your young men will be put into a large army," Samuel told the elders. "And many will have to make weapons of war. A king will take your women to be bakers, housekeepers and cooks. He will take your best fields and vineyards to give to those in high office. He will take your servants and a tenth of everything you produce. You will not be happy with a king!"

There was a moment of silence, then one of the elders stepped forward.

"We are sure it cannot be that bad," he told Samuel. "We still want a king. We want to have a king over us to fight our battles!"

The Israelites were making the same mistake they had made many times before. Instead of looking to God for help, they wanted a king like the other nations around them. Samuel told them that they would soon have their king and sent the men back to their cities (I Samuel 8:19-22).

In our next lesson we will learn about a man named Saul, Israel's first king.

Matching Plus

Draw a line from each word in the left-hand column to the matching word or phrase in the right-hand column. Then underline a sentence in the lesson that contains each word. Also, choose three words from the list and write three sentences on the lines below using one of the words in each sentence.

| | |
|-------------|--|
| Ark | Priest |
| Tabernacle | Samuel's mother |
| Samuel | They took the Ark from the Israelites |
| Eli | God brought painful sores upon the Philistines because of this |
| Philistines | Samuel served at the |
| Hannah | He became known as a prophet |

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BIBLE MEMORY

Psalm 1:1-16

SAMUEL WORD SEARCH

Find the words in the Word Bank below in the Word Search puzzle. Words may be read up or down, left to right or right to left, backward or at an angle.

H O S A K Q U I S A M U E L B P O D A G O N H O
O A R B C F R C S A M J B L I J N O O P H Y G P
P P S J E A L F O R T B Y S E H H A N T H E Q R
H T H H E A B C I W T W Z O U R H M K R A L X O
N C F I D M D K E J S U F H C P D P E L I H U P
I O N J N O O O R R L M G A O F M H Y O S W S H
W B P X A E D E N O G J I N G A N O T N T T D E
P H I L I S T I N E S O E N I R G N V K E I L T
W V L J T Y N A U F E N S A R K O T T H D D O V
E N R N T K D I S T K Y C H O P P H I N E H A S
A S K E D O F G O D O D T S E I R P H R I J M L

WORD BANK

| | | | | |
|--------|--------|------|----------|--------------|
| ASHDOD | DAGON | KING | HOPHNI | PHILISTINES |
| COWS | PRIEST | ELI | PHINEHAS | ASKED OF GOD |
| HANNAH | SAMUEL | ARK | PROPHET | |