

Day 21 – Feb. 27

We begin the book of 1 Samuel with the title character's backstory. Born to a barren woman and given a Nazarite vow in the womb, Samuel has a lot of similarities to other biblical characters from Isaac to Samson to Jesus Himself.

Like Sarah wife of Abraham, Hannah too is despised by her sister-wife. Barrenness was a significant curse in the OT because without a male heir, you would have no provision when you were old, and your family land would be passed to another. So both Sarah and Hannah were mocked for their barrenness. But unlike Sarah who abused Hagar for her mockery, Hannah had no recourse and so had to endure.

We have just finished the story of Samson who despised his own Nazarite vow made for him before he was born. Samson lived a selfish and worldly life, breaking the three primary parts of the vow. Samuel, as we will see, took the other path, living a Godly life and keeping his vow throughout his life. Once again, Samuel's devotion to his vow only stands as a foil to Samson's despising of his.

Most know Mary's song, called most recently The Magnificat, but few know Hannah's. Tomorrow we will read Hannah's Song, and upon even a cursory examination, we can see that it is Hannah's Song that is the model for Mary's. Both praise God for their good fortune, and both call upon the God of Justice to lift up the poor and lowly and bring down the rich and powerful.

Samuel is a transitional figure for us, taking us from the time of the Judges to the time of the Kings, and some have claimed that Samuel is himself the last Judge over Israel. Regardless, he will be the one to appoint, at God's command, the first and second King of Israel, making him an important figure indeed. Read on to see just how important he becomes!