**BACKGROUND ON SAMUEL:**

“**ELI** (Heb. "uplifted"; EE-Ii)

The first Israelite to serve as both Priest and Judge, he was the direct descendant of Aaron through his son, lthamar. Weak and

indecisive, although good and pure, Eli was not able to control his evil sons. When he heard that they had been killed in the battle and the Ark stolen by the Philistines, he fell over backward and died.

**HANNAH**, the long-barren wife of Elkanah, finally conceived and gave birth to a son, whom she dedicated to the service of the Lord as a Nazirite. This meant, among other things, that Samuel would never cut his hair or drink wine. He grew up in the Tabernacle at Shiloh under the supervision of Eli, the High Priest and Judge. At an early age Samuel received his first call from God. He was told about Eli's two degenerate sons, Hophni and Phinehas. Eli knew about their misdeeds but still permitted them to serve as priests

As Samuel grew up he received many other calls from God and won the respect of the people as a circuit Judge, Priest and Prophet.

Samuel, a consecrated Nazirite from birth, grew up in the Tabernacle under the supervision of the Judge and High Priest Eli,

whom he succeeded.

While still a boy Samuel received the call from God. His life was structured from conception, and lay before him in a set pattern from which he was never tempted to deviate: Under the direction of Jehovah he would lead his people as Prophet, Judge

and High Priest. On the surface he does not seem to have had any weaknesses, although if we read carefully we find two: When the

Israelites insisted that they wanted a king, he was hurt, feeling thatthey were rejecting him

personally. After prayer he realized that

they were rejecting Jehovah's leadership, not his, and the hurt was quickly healed. Following God's instructions, he chose Saul as the Pioneer King, but again allowed his personal feelings to temporarily run away with him. When it became obvious that the kingship must be taken from Saul, Samuel suffered the disappointment that stems

from personal pride: How could this King, whom he had chosen and groomed up for the job and watched over all those years, have turned out so badly? Only when severely scolded by Jehovah for "mourning"unnecessarily did Samuel fill his horn with oil and go to anoint young David.

Samuel and his era were vitally important. The Israelites, just coming out of the slithery period of the Judges, needed his firm

hand to knit the scattered tribes together into a loose confederacy, which finally became a nation. In the beginning it was not so much

a monarchy as a theocratic democracy: Jehovah was always the real King acting through a leader chosen by the people. The Kingdom, or Confederacy, formed by Saul split at his death into Israel in the North and Judah in the South. It was David's patient, expert statecraft that finally united them into one strong nation”

(Tathom, *The OT Made Easy*, pages 236-241).