

**Nativities: Mothers and Babies in the Hebrew Bible Week 2**  
**Church of the Holy Trinity   Helen Goodkin   December 2023**

**Five Women conspire to save the baby Moses**

**Exodus 1:8** Now a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph... <sup>7</sup> But the Israelites were fruitful and prolific; they multiplied and grew exceedingly strong, so that the land was filled with them.

<sup>8</sup> Now a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. <sup>9</sup> He said to his people, "Look, the Israelite people are more numerous and more powerful than we. <sup>10</sup> Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, or they will increase and, in the event of war, join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land." <sup>11</sup> Therefore they set taskmasters over them to oppress them with forced labor. They built supply cities, Pithom and Rameses, for Pharaoh. <sup>12</sup> But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread, so that the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites. <sup>13</sup> The Egyptians became ruthless in imposing tasks on the Israelites, <sup>14</sup> and made their lives bitter with hard service in mortar and brick and in every kind of field labor. They were ruthless in all the tasks that they imposed on them.

<sup>15</sup> The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other Puah, <sup>16</sup> "When you act as midwives to the Hebrew women, and see them on the birthstool, if it is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, she shall live." <sup>17</sup> But the midwives feared God; they did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but they let the boys live.

<sup>18</sup> So the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and said to them, "Why have you done this, and allowed the boys to live?" <sup>19</sup> The midwives said to Pharaoh, "Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women; for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife comes to them."

<sup>20</sup> So God dealt well with the midwives; and the people multiplied and became very strong.

<sup>21</sup> And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families. <sup>22</sup> Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, "Every boy that is born to the Hebrews you shall throw into the Nile, but you shall let every girl live."

**Exodus 2:1** Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a Levite woman.

<sup>2</sup> The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was a fine baby, she hid him three months.

<sup>3</sup> When she could hide him no longer she got a papyrus basket for him, and plastered it with bitumen and pitch; she put the child in it and placed it among the reeds on the bank of the river.

<sup>4</sup> His sister stood at a distance, to see what would happen to him.

<sup>5</sup> The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her attendants walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid to bring it.

<sup>6</sup> When she opened it, she saw the child. He was crying, and she took pity on him, "This must be one of the Hebrews' children," she said.

<sup>7</sup> Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and get you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?"

<sup>8</sup> Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Yes." So the girl went and called the child's mother.

<sup>9</sup> Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give you your wages." So the woman took the child and nursed it.

<sup>10</sup> When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and she took him as her son. She named him Moses, "because," she said, "I drew him out of the water."

NOTE: Unusually, the two midwives are named. In Numbers 26:25, we learn the names of Moses' parents and sister, Amram, Jochebed, and Miriam. The royal princess remains nameless.

## Hannah Prays for the birth of a child who would grow up to be Samuel, priest, prophet, judge

**1 Samuel 1:1** There was a certain man whose name was Elkanah. <sup>2</sup> He had two wives; the name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.

<sup>3</sup> Now this man used to go up year by year from his town to worship and to sacrifice to the LORD of hosts at Shiloh,

<sup>4</sup> On the day when Elkanah sacrificed, he would give portions to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and daughters; <sup>5</sup> but to Hannah he gave a double portion, because he loved her, though the LORD had closed her womb.

<sup>6</sup> Her rival used to provoke her severely, to irritate her, because the LORD had closed her womb.

<sup>7</sup> So it went on year by year; as often as she went up to the house of the LORD, she used to provoke her. Therefore Hannah wept and would not eat. <sup>8</sup> Her husband Elkanah said to her, "Hannah, why do you weep? Why do you not eat? Why is your heart sad? Am I not more to you than ten sons?"

<sup>9</sup> After they had eaten and drunk at Shiloh, Hannah rose and presented herself before the LORD. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat beside the doorpost of the temple of the LORD.

<sup>10</sup> She was deeply distressed and prayed to the LORD, and wept bitterly.

<sup>11</sup> She made this vow: "O LORD of hosts, if only you will look on the misery of your servant, and remember me, and not forget your servant, but will give to your servant a male child, then I will set him before you as a nazirite until the day of his death. He shall drink neither wine nor intoxicants, and no razor shall touch his head."

<sup>12</sup> As she continued praying before the LORD, Eli observed her mouth.

<sup>13</sup> Hannah was praying silently; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard; therefore Eli thought she was drunk.

<sup>14</sup> So Eli said to her, "How long will you make a drunken spectacle of yourself? Put away your wine."

<sup>15</sup> But Hannah answered, "No, my lord, I am a woman deeply troubled; I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have been pouring out my soul before the LORD. <sup>16</sup> Do not regard your servant as a worthless woman, for I have been speaking out of my great anxiety and vexation all this time." <sup>17</sup> Then Eli answered, "Go in peace; the God of Israel grant the petition you have made to him."

<sup>20</sup> In due time Hannah conceived and bore a son. She named him Samuel, for she said, "I have asked him of the LORD."

<sup>21</sup> The man Elkanah and all his household went up to offer to the LORD the yearly sacrifice, and to pay his vow.

<sup>22</sup> But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, "As soon as the child is weaned, I will bring him, that he may appear in the presence of the LORD, and remain there forever; I will offer him as a nazirite for all time."

<sup>24</sup> When she had weaned him, she took him up with her, along with a three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour, and a skin of wine. She brought him to the house of the LORD at Shiloh; and the child was young. <sup>25</sup> Then they slaughtered the bull, and they brought the child to Eli. <sup>26</sup> And she said, "Oh, my lord! As you live, my lord, I am the woman who was standing here in your presence, praying to the LORD. <sup>27</sup> For this child I prayed; and the LORD has granted me the petition that I made to him. <sup>28</sup> Therefore I have lent him to the LORD; as long as he lives, he is given to the LORD." She left him there for the LORD.

<b>Hannah's Song 1 Samuel 2:1</b>	<b>Mary (or Elizabeth's) Song Luke 1:46</b>
<p>Hannah prayed and said, "My heart exults in the LORD; my strength is exalted in my God. My mouth derides my enemies, because I rejoice in my victory.</p> <p><sup>2</sup> "There is no Holy One like the LORD, no one besides you; there is no Rock like our God.</p> <p><sup>3</sup> Talk no more so very proudly, let not arrogance come from your mouth; for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed.</p> <p><sup>4</sup> The bows of the mighty are broken, but the feeble gird on strength.</p> <p><sup>5</sup> Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread, but those who were hungry are fat with spoil. The barren has borne seven, but she who has many children is forlorn.</p> <p><sup>6</sup> The LORD kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up.</p> <p><sup>7</sup> The LORD makes poor and makes rich; he brings low, he also exalts.</p> <p><sup>8</sup> He raises up the poor from the dust; he lifts the needy from the ash heap, to make them sit with princes and inherit a seat of honor. For the pillars of the earth are the LORD's, and on them he has set the world.</p> <p><sup>9</sup> "He will guard the feet of his faithful ones, but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness; for not by might does one prevail.</p> <p><sup>10</sup> The LORD! His adversaries shall be shattered; the Most High will thunder in heaven. The LORD will judge the ends of the earth; he will give strength to his king, and exalt the power of his anointed."</p>	<p><sup>46</sup> And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord,<sup>47</sup> and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,</p> <p><sup>48</sup> for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;</p> <p><sup>49</sup> for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.</p> <p><sup>50</sup> His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.</p> <p><sup>51</sup> He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.</p> <p><sup>52</sup> He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly;</p> <p><sup>53</sup> he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.</p> <p><sup>54</sup> He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy,<sup>55</sup> according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever."</p>

**1 Samuel 2** <sup>11</sup> Then Elkanah went home to Ramah, while the boy remained to minister to the LORD, in the presence of the priest Eli.

**Samuel 3:1** Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD under Eli. The word of the LORD was rare in those days; visions were not widespread. <sup>2</sup> At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room; <sup>3</sup> the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was.

<sup>4</sup> Then the LORD called, "Samuel! Samuel!" and he said, "Here I am!"

<sup>5</sup> and ran to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call; lie down again." So he went and lay down.

<sup>6</sup> The LORD called again, "Samuel!" Samuel got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again."

<sup>7</sup> Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him.

<sup>8</sup> The LORD called Samuel again, a third time. And he got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli perceived that the LORD was calling the boy.

<sup>9</sup> Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

<sup>10</sup> Now the LORD came and stood there, calling as before, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

<sup>18</sup> So Samuel told [Eli] everything and hid nothing from him. Then he said, "It is the LORD; let him do what seems good to him." <sup>19</sup> As Samuel grew up, the LORD was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. <sup>20</sup> And all Israel from Dan to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was a trustworthy prophet of the LORD.

<sup>21</sup> The LORD continued to appear at Shiloh, for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the word of the LORD.

**1 Samuel 4:1** And the word of Samuel came to all Israel.