

Why was Samuel allowed to serve in the Tabernacle like the Levites when he was from Ephraim?

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Question: In the Bible, we see that only the priests were allowed to serve in the Tabernacle of God, and only they were allowed to enter the house of God. They had to be from the tribe of Levi; anyone else who entered would die. But in that same Bible, we see the boy Samuel, who was not a Levite, placed in the Tabernacle before the Ark of the Covenant, and he did not die. We read that his father, Elkana, came from the tribe of Ephraim. If you read 1 Samuel 1, you will see this. I need a little clarification here.

Answer: If we read 1 Samuel 1:1, it says:

*"There was a certain man of Ramathaim, a Zuphite, of the hill country of Ephraim, whose name was Elkana, the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephraimite."*

It is true that this sentence clearly shows that Samuel's father was an Ephraimite. But if you study the Scriptures carefully, you

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will find that Elkana, Samuel's father, was actually a Levite.

Remember, during the time of the Old Covenant, when Joshua divided the land of Canaan among all the tribes of Israel, the tribe of Levi did not have any inheritance. God set them apart to serve at the altar only. So, when they crossed the Jordan, they were distributed among all the tribes to serve the people in matters of the Law and worship.

Thus, Levites living in Dan were called Danites, Levites in Reuben were called Reubenites, and Levites in Ephraim were called Ephraimites.

Deuteronomy 18:1-2 says:

*"The priests the Levites, the whole tribe of Levi, shall have no portion nor inheritance among Israel; they shall eat the offerings of the Lord made by fire, and their inheritance shall be the Lord. They shall have no inheritance among their brothers; the Lord is their inheritance, as He has said to them."*

To confirm that Samuel was a Levite, let us return to the book of 1 Chronicles. Let us read:

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## 1 Chronicles 6:33-48

*“And these are those who served, with their sons: of the sons of Kohath; Heman the singer, the son of Joel, the son of Samuel; 34 the son of Elkana, the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu; 35 the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, the son of Elkana, the son of Mahath, the son of Amasai; 36 the son of Elkana, the son of Shaul, the son of Uzziel, the son of Uri; 37 the son of Tahath, the son of Assir, the son of Ebiasaph, the son of Korah; 38 the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, the son of Israel.*

*39 And his brother Asaph, who stood on his right, was Asaph, the son of Berechiah, the son of Shimea; 40 the son of Michael, the son of Baaseiah, the son of Malchiah; 41 the son of Ethan, the son of Zerah, the son of Adaiah; 42 the son of Jeatherai, the son of Zerah, the son of Ido; 43 the son of Joel, the son of Zimmah, the son of Shimei; 44 the son of Jahath, the son of Gershom, the son of Levi.*

*45 On the left side were their brothers, the sons of Merari: Ethan, the son of Kishi, the son of Abdi, the son of Malluch; 46 the son of Hashabiah, the son of Amaziah, the son of Hilkiah; 47 the son of Amzi, the son of Bani, the son of Shemeri; 48 the son of Mahli, the*

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*son of Mushi, the son of Merari, the son of Levi. And their brothers, the Levites, were set apart to do all the service of the Tabernacle of the house of God."*

Do you see that? If you follow the genealogy of Elkana, Samuel's father, you will see that it ends with Levi. Therefore, it is clear that Samuel's father, Elkana, was not an Ephraimite but a Levite. God would not allow anyone who was not a Levite to serve in His house or Tabernacle.

Thus, Samuel was a Levite—a Levite living in Ephraim. It is like today when a Chaga person born in Kenya moves to live in Tanzania—they are known as Kenyan because of where they were born, even though their ancestry and tribe are Tanzanian.

That is why Elkana, Samuel's father, was called an Ephraimite—it refers to where he came from, not his tribe.

Blessings.

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