

1st Samuel Chapter 1

Introduction: 1st and 2nd Samuel are both historical books of the Bible. Written approximately 1,100 years before the birth of Jesus.

- It is generally ascribed that Samuel wrote most of the book that bears his name, but he died about 6 chapters before the 1st book is complete.
- This book bears his name not so much from authorship as much as he's the initial subject contained in the book.
- Coming on the heels of the time of the judges, a time when there was no king in Israel, and when everyone did that which was right in their own eyes. Samuel is considered the last of the judges, and the first of the prophets who helps to unite the scattered tribes under king Saul and eventually under king David.
- Samuel oversees the transition from a Theocracy – a nation ruled directly by God, to which the nation had rebelled, to being like the other nations ruled by a monarchy, ruled by an earthly king.
- In our Bibles we see 1st and 2nd Samuel, then 1st and 2nd Kings, but in the Septuagint version, which is simply the Greek translation of the OT, translated around 250 BC lists these same books as 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Kings – basically following the historical account of Samuel, Saul, and David.

V: 1 A man of Ramathaim-zophim, of Mt. Ephraim. “Twin peaks” of Mt. Ephraim, the birth place and burial place of Samuel, Nebi Samwil – north west from Jerusalem, later called the Mount of Hope – because as you came over this hill you could see the smoke ascending from the Temple in Jerusalem.

- The Tabernacle at Shiloh was also located within the tribal area of Ephraim, which was adjacent to the area of Benjamin where Jerusalem is located.

Pictures: Maps / Ramah / Nebi Samwil / Jerusalem / Shiloh.

- **1 Chronicles 6:22-27** Describes Elkanah as a descendant of the Levitical tribe of Kohath
- He's called an Ephrathite because he's living in a Levitical city located within the tribal area of Ephraim, but he's a Levite.
- Elkanah = “God created”

V: 2 2 wives, Hannah = “Grace”, and Peninnah = “Pearl” “Jewel”. Peninnah had borne sons and daughters to Elkanah, whereas up to this point Hannah had not.

- The Bible records the fact that Elkanah had two wives, this is not an endorsement or approval – the opposite it true in scripture.

Genesis 2:24 “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife (singular), and they shall be one flesh.”

V: 3 Elkanah made a yearly pilgrimage to Shiloh to worship and offer sacrifices.

- Worship and sacrifice are always connected:

Psalms 54:6 “I will freely sacrifice unto thee: I will praise thy name, O Lord; for it is good.”

- He is sacrificing and worshipping “**The Lord of Hosts**” – this is the first time that this phrase is used – “The Lord of Hosts” or “**Jehovah Sabaoth**” – used 245 in the Bible and this is the first time.
- Shiloh = “Place of Rest” / Pictures:
- Shiloh is both the religious and geographical center of the country – where the Tabernacle of God is located, where the Ark of the testimony, the mercy seat, and the presence of God are located.
- Eli the high priest and his sons are identified: Hophni and Phinehas.
 1. Eli = “High”, “Ascension”
 2. Hophni = “tad-pole” – “pugilist”. A boxer, fights with fists.
 3. Phinehas = “Dark skinned one” – “Mouth of brass”.

V: 4-6 While making his offering at the Tabernacle, the first portion of a peace offering went to the Lord to be consumed upon the altar, a second portion went to the priests, and the remainder went back to those who had offered it so that they could all sit down in the presence of the Lord and enjoy a fellowship meal with the Lord.

- In that process Elkanah gave everyone a portion, but to Hannah he gave a significantly larger portion – in a way commensurate with his love for her because apparently he greatly favored her.
- This same disproportionate love caused friction and jealousy between Hannah and Elkanah’s other wife Peninnah. Any time there is more than one wife there will be contention.

Jesus expresses God’s intent for marriage:

Mark 10:7-8 “⁷For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; ⁸and they twain shall be one flesh.”

- Of particular contention was the fact that God had withheld children from Hannah, which apparently Peninnah used to her own advantage.
- For a woman not to have children was a great reproach, a wife's primary duty was to provide an heir to her husband, children to work in the field, a heritage. To not be able to do so was not only a reproach, it was grounds for divorce if the husband so chose.
- We see often in scripture when God wants to draw attention to an important person in God's plan that He withholds their birth, or keeps their mother from having children to draw attention to the fact when they do conceive and bear a child because it's something special.

V: 7-8 The family accompanied Elkanah every year as they went up to the house of the Lord. Hannah was particularly grieved this year, another year without a child.

- They are on their way to worship, on their way to church and the enemy is provoking... can anyone relate?
- Elkanah in typical male sensitivity – greatly to be admired I might add – asks the question that he already knows the answer to – “honey are you ok?” - “why are you crying, why aren't you eating? After all, you have me...”

V: 9 After everyone has finished their meal Hannah gets up and goes off by herself – she doesn't run away, she runs to:

- She runs to the Lord, to the house of the Lord and she spends time with Him.

Psalm 18:2 “The Lord is my Rock, and my Fortress, and my Deliverer; my God, my Strength, in whom I will trust; my Buckler, and the Horn of my Salvation, and my High Tower.”

V: 10 Being in bitterness of soul, weeping sore – grieved and broken before the Lord.

Psalm 51:17 “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.”

V: 11 Hannah had no doubt been praying for a son for quite a while, no doubt part of that prayer was a cry to God that she could give her husband a son – but when that prayer changed to I will give him to you... things began to change.

- As she vows this vow – she's saying that she will dedicate this child to the service of the Lord – no razor shall come upon his head – one of the elements of a Nazarite vow – a vow of dedication or consecration.
- She had no doubt heard the story of Samson's mother being in the same boat and her visitation by the angel declaring that she would indeed bear a son, but that he was to be consecrated to the Lord through a Nazarite vow.

Psalm 22:24 “For He hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath He hid His face from him; but when he cried unto him, He heard.”

- Samson and Samuel share the distinction of being Nazarites from birth, but that is where the similarities end – Samuel would give spiritual direction to the nation.

V: 12-14 Now Eli demonstrates a lack of discernment, sitting watching – misjudging.

2 Chronicles 16:9 “For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards him...”

Ezekiel 22:30 “And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none.”

- There are those times when God is searching for a faithful man to do His will – like now, and apparently Eli isn't cutting it, his sons as we'll read are worse – so, not finding the qualified man – in a sense He makes one, and He uses Hannah in her brokenness to do it.
- As we get into chapter two, a large part of that chapter is dedicated to recording Hannah's prayer – and it's a beautiful heart felt prayer extolling the virtues and glory of God; she is a Godly woman.
- It's a prayer that is bourn out of deep personal trial and affliction, circumstances that drove her ever closer to her Lord and Savior – that is what trials do, they either drive us closer to God, or if we choose – they can be allowed to drive us from God – it's always our choice.
- Hannah is praying in her heart, mouthing her prayer much like what the Apostle Paul describes:

Romans 8:26-27 ²⁶“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. ²⁷And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”

- Hannah was a godly woman who allowed her trial to bring her into a deeper relationship with God – a good example to follow. Having then been prepared of God, God proceeds to use her for His purposes and glory.

V: 15-16 Hannah corrects Eli; she's in sorrow of spirit.

- She hasn't had any wine or strong drink – possibly following in the foot steps of Samson's mother relative to the Nazarite vow.

Psalm 37:5 “Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass.”

- She's not a daughter of Belial, she's not a wicked woman, not a drunken pagan.
- This gives us an interesting insight to the times – Eli wasn't used to seeing a woman pour out her heart – he assumes that this is another drunken woman hanging around the Tabernacle of God...
- She's praying from her heart, she's pouring out her soul before the Lord.

Jeremiah 29:12-13 “¹²Then shall ye call upon Me, and ye shall go and pray unto Me, and I will hearken unto you. ¹³And ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart.”

- When we pour out our hearts to God, we'll find that he's right there!

V: 17- 18 4 times now she has referred to herself as a “handmaid” of the Lord, a servant of the Lord – now Eli agrees, referring to Hannah as a “handmaid of the Lord.

- Eli commends her to go in peace stating that God has heard her supplication.
- She walked away, comforted and strengthened – she was able to eat and her countenance was no more sad – she had been impacted by her time with the Lord.

1 Corinthians 5:7 “For we walk by faith, not by sight.”

- There is that saying that “Prayer changes things” but in reality Prayer changes us!

James 5:16 “... The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”

V: 19-23 “Remembered” – this is an “anthropomorphism” – a way of explaining God's actions in human terms that we can understand. God hadn't “forgotten” Hannah, it was all a matter of God's will and timing.

- Samuel = God hears, because God heard her prayer.

Psalm 34:15 “The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.”

- God gave Hannah conception and she bears a son, Samuel.
- The next year rolls around and Samuel is probably around 2-3 months old, and Hannah stays home when everyone else goes on their annual pilgrimage to Shiloh.
- She won't go back to Shiloh until Samuel is weaned and ready to turn over to Eli and the priests at Shiloh – where he will stay forever as promised.

V: 24-28 Hannah keeps her vow, Elkanah her husband is in agreement. He could have reversed her vow (Numbers 30) but he doesn't, in fact he says in V:23 "The Lord establish His word." – He's affirming what is taking place.

- They take with them 3 bullocks (wealthy, substantial sacrifice), a bushel of flour, and a bottle or skin of wine.
- Some of the other translations (NIV, NASB) state that they took a 3 year old bull, as opposed to three bulls. The fact that they took a skin of wine and an ephah or bushel of meal / flour indicates that 3 bullocks is correct. In Numbers 28:12 it states that 3/10 of an ephah of grain was needed for each bull sacrificed.
- These are all the elements to the meal offering, offering of thanksgiving, and the burnt offerings and drink offerings of consecration.
- Considering Eli's lax character, and the evil character of his sons and the general compromises evident in the priesthood it took considerable faith for Hannah and Elkanah to leave their innocent 3-4 year old son in their care.
- But the Lord was with Samuel and would preserve him from the pollutions around him. Just as God protected Joseph in Egypt, so He would protect Samuel in Shiloh – just as He can protect our children and grandchildren in this present evil world.
- 3 bullocks are also symbolic of the strong meat of the word:

Hebrews 5:12-14 ¹²For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. ¹³For everyone that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. ¹⁴But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."

- The ephah of flour and the skin of wine represent the elements of communion – the remembrance of our Lord's sacrifice for us.
- Hannah reminds Eli who she is and about her vow, and look this is the child that I was praying for – who belongs to God.

- This is the model for baby dedication.
- In Luke chapter 2 we see Jesus himself being brought to the Temple and being dedicated to the Lord.
- It is not required that parents have their children dedicated to the Lord, but God will take any territory we give him.
- Eli praises God!
 1. One of the lessons we can learn from this story is that the life and future of a nation depends on the character of the home, and the character of the home depends on the spiritual life of the parents.
 2. “The ruin of a nation begins in the homes of it’s people.” Old African proverb.
 3. Eli and his sons had religious homes that were godless, but Elkanah and Hannah had a Godly home that honored the Lord, and they gave Him their best – and the nation of Israel was forever changed.
 4. We should never underestimate the power of the home, or the power of a child dedicated to God.