

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

AUGUST 5TH-6TH, 2023 // 1 SAMUEL

## BACKGROUND:

The book of Judges describes a period in the nation of Israel where anarchy (political, spiritual, and moral) was the norm (Judges 17:6).

- Israel wasn't a united people (as in the days of Joshua), but rather a loose confederation of tribes with God-appointed judges ruling in separate areas.
- There was no standing army, military leader, or king.
- In the land of Philistia (palaistine/Palestine) there was a people group with advanced technology (iron weapons and tools) and a formidable military.
- These Philistines began to move inland from the coast of Canaan and built their civilization in five cities (Gaza, Gath, Ashkelon, Ashdod, and Ekron, Joshua 13:3).
- The Philistines continually harassed and oppressed the Israelites, invading their territory and thwarting their development as a nation.
- With the growing threat of the Philistines and the need for unity amongst the Israelites, the elders of the tribes of Israel approached the prophet Samuel and asked him to appoint a king to become their new leader (1 Sam. 8:5).
- The books of 1&2 Samuel describe this transition to a kingship under Saul and eventual emergence of David as the ruler over a united Israel.

## WHO WROTE 1 SAMUEL?

The author is anonymous—we know that Samuel wrote a book (1 Sam. 10:25), so maybe he contributed along with other prophets/historians.

- 1 & 2 Samuel were originally one book (the Septuagint separated them), and they cover a span of history that's about 100 years (1100-1000 BC)
- The final form of 1&2 Samuel came about most likely during the Babylonian exile (600-500 BC).

## WHAT IS 1 SAMUEL ABOUT?

Samuel was the bridge builder between two epochs in Israel's history—he was the last judge and the first of a new line of prophets after Moses who anointed two kings (Saul, David).

- 1 Samuel is a book of history that clarifies the importance of God's people living lives of wholehearted, faithful obedience to God alone.
  - 1 Samuel also illustrates the consequences of sin, compromise and disobedience.
1. God opposes the proud.
  2. God exalts the humble.
  3. God rewards faithfulness and disciplines disobedience and sin.
  4. Human leaders are flawed and will let us down, but there is a coming messianic King— God will not leave His people without a savior.

## WHY IS 1 SAMUEL IMPORTANT?

Amongst the people of God in our generation, there is a type of spiritual and moral anarchy (Judges 17:6).

- There is a lack of unity, very little fear of the Lord, and there exists in many a cavalier/indifferent attitude to sin, compromise and disobedience.
- There are many who aspire to leadership within the Church at large, but the temptations of power, money, fame and acclaim often corrupt.
- Inner character, holiness, and obedience and faithfulness to God isn't a high priority in the minds of many, but to God it's what matters more than anything else (1 Sam. 15:22).
- God alone is to receive honor and glory— not human leaders/celebrities/politicians.
- God will eventually humble the proud, disobedient and compromising: and He will eventually reward the faithful.

## HANNAH (1 SAMUEL 1:1-8)

This book of history begins with the birth of the prophet Samuel.

- Israel was in anarchy and chaos and lacked clear spiritual leadership—God solves the problem by sending a certain person He will use.
- Samuel's father was Elkanah—he was a Levite (1 Chron. 6) who lived in Ramah (vs. 1), a town in the hill country near the border of Benjamin and Ephraim.

Elkanah had two wives (vs. 2)—apparently Hannah had been his first wife, but when she was found to be barren he married Peninnah so that he could have a family and an heir.

- Polygamy was just a fact of life in the ancient world, however, the Bible never prescribes polygamy, it only describes it.
- Polygamy was never God's design (Gen. 2:22, Mark 10:6-10), and strife and conflict always show up in polygamous arrangements.

Every year Elkanah would take his family up to Shiloh (where the tabernacle was stationed) to worship and sacrifice before the Lord.

- When a family would go up to worship and sacrifice before the Lord, they would eat a meal together as part of their worship (Deut. 12:1-7).
- At this meal, each year Elkanah would give a double portion of meat to Hannah because he loved her the most (vs. 4-5).

Peninnah may not have been Elkanah's favorite, most loved wife, but at least she wasn't barren.

- Peninnah would taunt and provoke Hannah out of her jealousy by pointing to Hannah's inability to have a child.
- This would upset Hannah so much that she wouldn't be able to eat and enjoy the meal she was intended to enjoy as an act of worship before the Lord (vs. 6-7).

## "THE LORD KEPT HER FROM CONCEIVING..." (VS. 5-6)

Infertility is an incredibly difficult, gut-wrenching, and painful thing for any couple to walk through.

- Infertility is not a sign of God's punishment or judgment on a woman's sin or disobedience.
- The barrenness of certain women in the Bible was painful, but God was sovereign and had a plan despite the pain. The Lord has His purposes, and we can trust that they are good.

## "HANNAH, WHY ARE YOU CRYING?" (VS. 8)

In response to his wife's pain and anguish, Elkanah gives her a very male, self-centered approach.

- What she needed was empathy and understanding, not leading questions to try and reason with her.

- There is a type of pain so deep that it can't be reasoned with— what was needed was gentleness and compassion.

## ANSWERED PRAYER (1 SAMUEL 1:9-20)

One year during the family's trip to Shiloh, Hannah left the family after their festive meal and went into the tabernacle to pray (vs. 9).

- She was "deeply hurt", and she brought to the Lord that pain through her tears as she prayed (vs. 10).
- When we're in pain, anguish, and bitterness the best thing we can do is bring our pain to the Lord in prayer.

Hannah brought her pain to the Lord in tears, addressing God as the, "Lord of Armies"— she knew that God is mighty, able, and He's in control.

- Hannah made a vow to the Lord that if God would give her a son, she would give him to the Lord all the days of his life, and his hair would never be cut (vs. 11). Hannah was giving her yet unborn son to the Lord as a Nazarite (Num. 6:1-21).

A Nazarite vow was typically taken for a set and short period of time, but Samuel was unique because his mother promised him as a Nazarite all the days of his life.

- As Hannah was pouring out her heart to the Lord and making her vow, the priest Eli saw her praying silently and concluded that she was drunk (vs. 12-14). Was this a common issue in the house of God?

Hannah wasn't drunk, she was a woman with a broken heart who was simply praying from the depth of her anguish and resentment (vs. 15-16).

- Eli the priest blessed her and prayed that the God of Israel grant her request as he sent her on her way (vs. 17).
- Hannah didn't yet have her prayer answered, but still she left the house of God in peace (vs. 18).

Hannah is an example of real faith: she believed in God's ability to do something and rested in His power even when she didn't see it at first.

- Hannah went home and after, "some time", the Lord answered her prayer and she conceived and gave birth to a son (vs. 19-20).
- Hannah named him, "Samuel"— which means "heard of God" or "asked of God". Samuel was both an answer to prayer & a man of prayer.

## GIVEN TO THE LORD (1 SAMUEL 1:21-28)

After the birth of Samuel, Elkanah prepared his family again to take the pilgrimage to Shiloh, but Hannah stayed home with the baby to nurse and care for him (vs. 21-22).

- After the child was weaned (usually 3-4 years old), she would take him to the tabernacle and Shiloh and there he would stay in the service of the Lord permanently (vs. 23).
- Can you imagine how hard this would've been?

Sometimes we pray and ask God for blessings, and when He does bless us it's difficult for us to release that blessing back to Him.

- We often want to hold on so tightly to the things God has given us instead of trusting them into His hands.
- But Hannah and Elkanah are examples of obedient, sacrificial surrender to the Lord, even when it cost them a great deal.

When Samuel was weaned, Elkanah and Hannah went up to Shiloh to bring their sacrifices and present their child to the Lord.

- True to her word, Hannah brought the boy to Eli.
- She reminded Eli of her vow and declared that now she was giving her son to the Lord in accordance to her word (vs. 26-28).
- Hannah had prayed for this child, and the Lord had granted her request (vs. 27).

Now Hannah declared that for this boy's whole life, he would be given to the Lord (vs. 28).

- If you're a parent, your children are gifts from the Lord (Ps. 127:3): you don't own them.
- You may have your dreams and aspirations for what you want them to become, but you should be praying for and encouraging them to become what God desires them to be.
- Parents are stewards of God's gifts.

God's intention and design is for our children to be "given to the Lord" each day: that they would be taught and trained in godliness and truth and eventually sent out of our homes & churches on the mission of God to be a blessing to others, "like arrows" (Psalm 127:4).

- If we're not giving our children to the Lord each day by teaching and training them in godliness and truth, they're going to struggle.

Hannah dedicates this precious child she prayed for to the Lord in an act of complete surrender and commitment.

- God takes Hannah's sacrifice and raises up Samuel to be a mighty leader for the people of God who would lead them into a new era.
- Never underestimate the power of Godly homes with fully surrendered parents who dedicate their family and children completely to the Lord.

## BRING YOUR PAIN TO THE LORD (VS. 10, 15-16)

- There is a type of pain so deep that it can't be reasoned with— what's needed is not empty cliches, quick-fixes, or silly sayings.
- When we're in emotional or spiritual pain, the best thing we can do is to get into the presence of God and pour out our heart before the Lord.
- "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." (Ps. 34:18)

## BRING YOUR REQUESTS TO THE LORD (VS. 11, 18)

- Sometimes there are things we desire and want so badly we're afraid to ask God for them because we don't want to be disappointed if we don't get them.
- So we just don't ask...but maybe we, "have not, because we ask not" (James 4:2).
- The prayer of faith is knowing that God is mighty, able, willing, and He's in control.

## BRING YOUR EVERYTHING TO THE LORD (VS. 27-28)

- Everything we've been given in this life is a gift from God (James 1:17).
- When our lives and our gifts are fully surrendered to Him, there is no telling what God may do through them!
- What might you need to surrender and dedicate to the Lord? What needs to be given to the Lord in your life today?