

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

AUGUST 6TH, 2023 // 1 SAMUEL

INTRO

The earliest Hebrew manuscripts did not divide 1st and 2nd Samuel. The division was a practical way of not having one big scroll. We don't know who wrote this book, but Samuel may have penned some of it. 1 Samuel begins around 1100 B.C. and ends around 1010 B.C.

SETTING

For about 300 years, Israel had been a nation under the direction of "Judges." They were more military leaders than magistrates. That time in Israel's history was marked by political, moral, and spiritual anarchy and deterioration. Israel needed a change, and God would deliver them again.

WHAT A STORY!

In 1 Samuel, we will meet some major players: Hannah, Samuel, Saul, and David. As we read and study, we will get to know them, be challenged by them, be disappointed in some of them, and identify with each of them at some time. We will find some challenging, scandalous realism in this book, and won't skip the hard stuff.

WHO'S STORY?

Over the next few weeks, we will discover that this isn't a story about the "major players", it's a story about our God. We will see His love for His people and how He answers individual prayers. We will also see His wrath and righteous judgment. Our goal should be to get to know Him better and see how He set the stage for the King of Kings: Jesus.

SORROW (1 SAMUEL 1:1-8)

ELKANAH

Elkanah was a Levite by birth but an Ephraimite by residence. He followed the law and sacrificed as it prescribed. His first wife, Hannah, could not have children, so he took a second wife, Peninnah.

- **It's important to note that bigamy is described in the Bible, not prescribed or sanctioned by God.**

DOUBLE PORTION

Elkanah loved Hannah, and it was no secret to Peninnah as he would give her double portions when it came time to sacrifice. She was loved, but his assurances of devotion couldn't outweigh her sorrow.

- **In Hannah's culture, a wife who couldn't bear children would have no significance, life, or hope.**

BAD TO WORSE

Elkanah's other wife, Peninnah, had a lot of children. Daily, Hannah was confronted with her failure by a rival who was all too willing to rub it in her face.

- **When we feel like a failure at the one thing we THINK we were made to do, only one thing can help us return to joy and purpose.**

PRAYER (1 SAMUEL 1:9-20)

HANNAH GOT UP...

After what may have been years of abuse and extreme sorrow, Hannah "got up" and prayed.

- **She was deeply hurt and could have cursed God. Instead, she prayed to the Lord and wept with many tears. We must remember that prayer changes things because God is listening.**

TAKE NOTICE

Humbly, Hannah asked God to notice her affliction, remember and not forget her.

- **She had prayed for a child before, but now, she would pray with a fresh commitment of everything in her life to God. It's not always what we ask God to do, it's more about why we ask. God notices our hearts and our motives.**

INTENSE PRAYER

Hannah's prayer was so intense that Eli, the priest, assumed she was drunk.

- **Hannah had made a vow and given her life to the Lord. We shouldn't be surprised when we are criticized by people who ought to encourage us. We must be sensitive so we can rejoice together and weep together.**

HANNAH'S RESPONSE

Convinced of her sobriety and hearing the depth of her anguish, Eli gives her his blessing.

- **Hannah had changed. It wasn't a guarantee, but she did find peace. There is always peace when we pray in God's will and joy in knowing that He is with us**

and for us in the next step we take.

GOD'S RESPONSE

Sometime after her prayer, Hannah conceived and had a son. She named him Samuel, "Asked of God."

- **For nine months, Hannah remembered her prayer and how God had answered. Will we take the time to see what God has done for us? Will we give Him the Glory He deserves?**

SURRENDER (1 SAMUEL 1:21-28)

ANNUAL SACRIFICE

When Elkanah went to the annual sacrifice, he would be expected to sacrifice for his firstborn son (by Hannah). But he agrees to allow Samuel to stay with Hannah for the first three years of his life. Then, they would take Samuel as a living sacrifice to the Lord.

- **Their level of commitment may astonish us, but God had plans!**

THREE YEARS

For three years, Hannah had Samuel. She cared for him and taught him everything a toddler could learn about serving the Lord. When the time was right, she returned to Shiloh, where she would pass her son to Eli.

- **Hannah didn't surrender that day in Shiloh; she had surrendered three years before, and now God would care for her son.**

GIVEN TO THE LORD

Elkanah and Hannah brought Samuel to Eli. Eli would teach him, but Eli's spiritual life would fail, and his sons were evil. They knew they could trust God to preserve Samuel from the pollution around him.

- **Eli had a "religious" home that had become godless. Samuel was born into a godly home that would honor the Lord.**

PRAYED FOR THIS BOY

Hannah reminded Eli that she had prayed to the Lord and that she had prayed for the boy. God had given her what she asked for, so she gave Samuel to the Lord.

- **Even faulty Eli would be bound by God's provision for Samuel. Hannah surrendered and prayed for God to be glorified, and it would change a nation!**

TROUBLE

- In this life, we will have trouble.
- **Difficult times can bring out the worst in us and in the people around us.**
- **There are times when we feel like a failure, incomplete, hopeless. Even when those that love us can't seem to break through the barriers to peace, we know One that has overcome this world of suffering.**

PRAYER

- Prayer always works when we pray in God's will.
- **The effectiveness of our prayers may depend on how we see ourselves (pride).**
- **Humility before God restored Hannah's Joy. When our expectations line up with God's glory, we will have new peace for today and will trust God with our future!**

EXPECTATIONS

- Did Hannah have any idea what would happen after pouring her heart out?
- **Prayer "works," but will it change anything?**
- **Are we willing to tell God everything and humbly surrender to His will? God changed Hannah first. Will we pray for God to change us?**