

## 1Samuel 1

- Jesus Christ is our suffering Prophet, our High Priest, our righteous King and the Judge for all Creation
  - We need these roles filled so that we can know, serve and enjoy God the Father
    - We need a Prophet to explain the Father to us
    - We need a High Priest to intercede for our sake
    - And we need a Judge to rightly condemn unrighteousness
    - We need a King to lead us into righteousness
  - The Old Testament tells the story of how the Lord gave Israel each of these roles in lesser forms
    - Prophets were sent to the people
    - Priests were appointed to serve in the tabernacle
    - Judges ruled the people
    - And ultimately kings ruled the nation
  - Yet in each case, the scriptures reveal how human actors could not satisfy in these roles
    - Judges failed to stem the tide of sin among the people
    - Prophets were ignored and killed
    - Priests became corrupt and self-serving
    - Kings turned tyrannical and pursued vanity
    - And so Jewish society remained far from the God Who called them into a covenant
    - Like all men, they needed a Savior Who could serve in these roles
- The books of Samuel exist to the story of the rise of Israel's kings in this OT saga
  - Our study of 1Samuel is actually the study of the first half of a single work called Samuel

- Prior to the Septuagint, 1Samuel and 2Samuel were one work in the Jewish Bible
- They were later divided like Chronicles and Kings for convenience
- The earlier parts of the book were probably written by Samuel
- But the rest were later finished by other prophets like Gad or Nathan
- The first seven chapters of 1Samuel overlap with the final period of Judges
  - During these chapters, Samson is the judge of Israel while Samuel is born and becomes his contemporary
  - At Samson's death, Samuel begins to judge Israel
- Finally, Israel demands a king in chapter 8
  - Then from chapter 8 until 31, we trace the reign of Israel's first king, Saul, a man after the people's heart
  - Midway through the book, we're introduced to Saul's eventual successor, David, a man after God's heart
  - Both Saul and David reigned for 40 years
  - Leading to a rivalry during the final half of the book
- There are several notable themes in this historical work, which we will highlight as we move through the book
  - Key among them is the sovereignty of God in ruling His people
    - Even as the people of Israel reject judges and demand a king, the Lord is still very much ruling over His people
    - He brings a king to satisfy the people's fleshly desires for status, ego and image
    - And quickly the people see the folly of Saul
  - Having made His point, then the Lord elevates a successor the people overlooked, David
    - This new man will one day become king

- But not before the Lord allows Saul's life to play out even as he tries to destroy the man the Lord anointed
- The delay gives opportunity for David to write most of the Psalms
- And it forms a picture of the suffering Messiah awaiting to enter into His kingdom
- Finally, the books of Samuel also reinforce the superiority of God's word as spoken through the prophets
  - During the time of patriarchs and judges, the Lord spoke to the people through their leaders
  - Once kings arrived, God began revealing Himself through prophets, beginning with Samuel
  - Kings will lead even the kings must turn to prophets to know the Lord's word
  - Demonstrating that God's word is the highest authority in God's creation
- But before we get to all that, we dive into Samuel's background

**1Sam. 1:1** Now there was a certain man from Ramathaim-zophim from the hill country of Ephraim, and his name was Elkanah the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephraimite.

**1Sam. 1:2** He had two wives: the name of one was Hannah and the name of the other Peninnah; and Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.

**1Sam. 1:3** Now this man would go up from his city yearly to worship and to sacrifice to the LORD of hosts in Shiloh. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests to the LORD there.

**1Sam. 1:4** When the day came that Elkanah sacrificed, he would give portions to Peninnah his wife and to all her sons and her daughters;

**1Sam. 1:5** but to Hannah he would give a double portion, for he loved Hannah, but the LORD had closed her womb.

**1Sam. 1:6** Her rival, however, would provoke her bitterly to irritate her, because the LORD had closed her womb.

**1Sam. 1:7** It happened year after year, as often as she went up to the house of the LORD, she would provoke her; so she wept and would not eat.

**1Sam. 1:8** Then Elkanah her husband said to her, "Hannah, why do you weep and why do you not eat and why is your heart sad? Am I not better to you than ten sons?"

[1Sam. 1:9](#) Then Hannah rose after eating and drinking in Shiloh. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat by the doorpost of the temple of the LORD.

[1Sam. 1:10](#) She, greatly distressed, prayed to the LORD and wept bitterly.

[1Sam. 1:11](#) She made a vow and said, "O LORD of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, and not forget Your maidservant, but will give Your maidservant a son, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and a razor shall never come on his head."

- Our story opens with a Samuel's parents
  - Samuel was born to Elkanah
    - He is described as a "certain man" in the opening verses
    - He lived about 5 miles north of Jerusalem in Ramah
  - Elkanah was a Levite by birth, according to 1Chr 6, so he was a priest
    - But Eli's living in a small town in central Ephraim
    - He's not living in a Levite town as he should
    - This is our first clue that this man isn't focused on obeying the Law
  - In v.3 we also hear he travels annually to worship in Shiloh
    - Shiloh is the location of the tabernacle during the years from Joshua until David
    - Jerusalem was an unconquered Jebusite city in these days
- We also notice Elkanah practices bigamy, which was against the word of God
  - His two wives are Hannah and Peninnah, and from Peninnah he received many sons and daughters, but Hannah was barren
    - The prospect of Hannah ever having children was remote at this point
    - Much like Sarah and Rebecca, only the Lord could bring a child
    - The Lord withholds the giving a child to a woman in scripture from time to time
    - So that when a child finally comes, his arrival can be pregnant with meaning

- Elkanah was a decent provider to this family, including always giving his wives and children their allotted portions
  - But in sympathy and love to Hannah, he gave her a double portion
  - Much like Hager with Sarah, Peninnah resented her husband's attention directed toward Hannah
  - Which led Peninnah to mock and torment Hannah over her lack of children
  - To be childless in this time in history was the height of dishonor for any woman
- Here's another example reminding us that the Bible always reflects negatively on taking multiple marriages
  - Whenever we see a man taking multiple wives, the circumstances reflect the mistake of that choice
  - Usually, we see the sin play out as jealousy and bitterness among the wives
  - Which is completely logical, considering a man's affections were always intended to be directed toward one woman and vice versa
- Hannah was a devote and godly woman it would seem, since she traveled regularly to the tabernacle in Shiloh to seek the Lord's mercy for her barrenness
  - And each time as she prayed at the tabernacle, Hannah would weep and fast hoping to receive a positive response from the Lord
    - Meanwhile, Peninnah, who was there with the rest of the family, would provoke Hannah again
    - She was mocking Hannah's hope in the Lord
    - The fact that Hannah still held out the possibility that the Lord might grant her a child was evidence of her faith in God's promises
    - Even as Peninnah mocked her faith
  - Meanwhile, her husband shows he wasn't the most sensitive sort either
    - He dismisses Hannah's misery in a cold and uncaring way

- First, he asks why she was so upset at the tabernacle?
- Why did she go to such effort to pray and fast and weep?
- He flippantly asks why having him as a husband wasn't better than ten sons
- This is the thinking of every caring husband (not)
  - Why would our wives need anything at all beyond us??
  - So not only has Peninnah mocked Hannah but so has her husband
  - All she had to cling to was her faith in the Lord and His mercy
- You can see just how godly this woman was when you read the first part of v.9
  - When her husband tells us to rise up from her weeping and fasting to eat, Hannah does so
  - I doubt she felt like doing so, but she obeyed her husband's request
  - Everything about this woman's life testifies to her godliness
  - Even her name, which means "grace"
- Meanwhile, the priest at the tabernacle was a man called Eli
  - He was also the judge of Israel in the years leading up to Samuel's birth before Samson
    - When Hannah returned to the temple to pray and weep again, Eli was there to observe
    - And as she prayed to the Lord, she made a vow to the Lord
  - She declared that if the Lord should give her a son, this son would be dedicated to serving God from birth
    - Moreover, he would be raised as a Nazarene
    - Nazarenes were men who took a vow to be dedicated to serving the Lord
    - And as evidence of that vow, they neither cut their hair nor drank alcohol

- Hannah was essentially bargaining away the companionship of her son
  - From an early age, her son would be in the company of the priests learning the Law and serving in the tabernacle
  - This is a serious sacrifice on her part
  - She is trading away the very thing she seems to want most
- In reality, what she wants is something much more important
  - She wants the honor of the Lord
    - It was understood in that day that a barren woman was made barren by the will of God
      - It wasn't bad luck or chance
      - It was a purposeful act of a sovereign God
    - And therefore, a barren woman viewed her circumstances as the Lord withholding His favor from her
    - Which is why Hannah's prayer was to receive the favor of the Lord
  - This too is evidence of her faith
    - For since she believed that her barrenness was of the Lord's doing
    - Then she also understood that if the Lord were to grant her a child, it could only mean He had some specific purpose in mind for doing so
    - Therefore, she concludes that any such a child would have a special future in God's plan
    - So she loses nothing in acknowledging the obvious, that the child would belong to God
    - But Hannah would be vindicated before her enemies

**1Sam. 1:12** Now it came about, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli was watching her mouth.

**1Sam. 1:13** As for Hannah, she was speaking in her heart, only her lips were moving, but her voice was not heard. So Eli thought she was drunk.

[1Sam. 1:14](#) Then Eli said to her, "How long will you make yourself drunk? Put away your wine from you."

[1Sam. 1:15](#) But Hannah replied, "No, my lord, I am a woman oppressed in spirit; I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have poured out my soul before the LORD.

[1Sam. 1:16](#) "Do not consider your maidservant as a worthless woman, for I have spoken until now out of my great concern and provocation."

[1Sam. 1:17](#) Then Eli answered and said, "Go in peace; and may the God of Israel grant your petition that you have asked of Him."

[1Sam. 1:18](#) She said, "Let your maidservant find favor in your sight." So the woman went her way and ate, and her face was no longer sad.

- As all this is taking place, the priest is observing Hannah praying
  - In this time of history, most public prayer was spoken out loud
    - Private, silent prayer was not the norm
    - People prayed out loud to relieve a burden before the Lord
    - In the same way that we might "vent" to a person in charge
  - But Hannah is pray without making a sound which was unusual
    - Eli notices her lips are moving but no sound is coming out of her mouth
    - So Eli makes an assumption that Hannah is drunk
    - And he chastises her for it
  - Naturally, Hannah defends herself and explains her situation
    - In v.15 she says she is oppressed
    - And in v.16 she explains she has been praying like this for some time
    - But she never explains her situation to Eli
  - Eli must have realized he was wrong from the moment she began to speak
    - Clearly, she wasn't stumbling to form her words
    - She's fully in control of her senses, so he quickly backs down and says go in peace

- And then he adds may the Lord grant her petition
- This encounter seems innocent to us, but it was much more to Hannah
  - The priest and judge of Israel took notice of Hannah in prayer
    - It was highly unlikely that a man of such power and importance in Israel would take note of anyone in particular
    - And to address a woman was even more unexpected
    - But then to have him pronounce a blessing upon her request was like hitting the lottery for Hannah
  - Remember in this day Eli was priest and judge of Israel
    - He was the man through whom the Lord judged Israel
    - And he was the man God spoke to in delivering the word of the Lord to Israel
    - He was the prophet, priest and judge of Israel
    - And he just said the Lord grant Hannah her request
  - Hannah heard his blessing as a confirmation that the Lord was already at work answering her request
    - Notice in v.18 she breaks her fast
    - And she is no longer sad
    - This is a woman operating in faith from beginning to end
    - She has faith to put this request before the Lord
    - And when she receives a word from the Lord, she has faith to rest in that word
- But will she maintain her vow when the time comes?

**1Sam. 1:19** Then they arose early in the morning and worshiped before the LORD, and returned again to their house in Ramah. And Elkanah had relations with Hannah his wife, and the LORD remembered her.

**1Sam. 1:20** It came about in due time, after Hannah had conceived, that she gave birth to a son; and she named him Samuel, saying, "Because I have asked him of the LORD."

[1Sam. 1:21](#) Then the man Elkanah went up with all his household to offer to the LORD the yearly sacrifice and pay his vow.

[1Sam. 1:22](#) But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, "I will not go up until the child is weaned; then I will bring him, that he may appear before the LORD and stay there forever."

[1Sam. 1:23](#) Elkanah her husband said to her, "Do what seems best to you. Remain until you have weaned him; only may the LORD confirm His word." So the woman remained and nursed her son until she weaned him.

- After they travel back to Ramah, they return to regular life
  - And in the course of events, Hannah becomes pregnant
    - At this point, the miracle of her conception would have only served to reaffirm her confidence and faith
    - She's asked for the Lord to grant this favor for years
    - This time when she asked, she received a confirmation through Eli that the time had come for the Lord to grant her petition
  - Still, there's always room for doubt even in the life of a believer
    - But at the first indication that she was with child, Hannah must have felt such joy at the confirmation
    - Whatever doubt she might have had was wiped away
    - And her trust in the Lord was vindicated
    - Such is the Lord's work in our lives as well
  - When He is ready to move in our life in some way, He will often make that move in a series of smaller steps
    - With each step, the Lord asks us to believe anew and trust Him for the rest
    - And with each next step becomes a sign to encourage further trust
    - Each step we take along that path will require faith and trust
    - But He'll never ask more of us than we are capable of giving

- And with each step we take in God's direction, the Lord will show up to encourage us onward
- And the next step comes easier
- But here's the thing...you'll never reach the end of the path if you stop along the way
  - We often talk of walking in faith with the Lord as an all or nothing proposition
  - Certainly, when we're talking about saving faith, it's either present or not
  - But for the believer, the question is of faith is really answered in degrees
  - And we can experience more and more of what it means to follow the Lord if we are willing to take the small steps He asks of us along the way
- Then Samuel is born
  - The name Samuel probably means something like "heard of God" or "God hears"
    - He is Hannah's only son
    - And she will give him up
  - When Samuel was born, his father prepared to travel to the tabernacle in Shiloh to pay his vow
    - In Lev 27, the Law required that when a person made a vow to the Lord, that vow must be accompanied by an offering
    - It's called Elkanah's vow because it became his vow to protect once he heard of his wife's action and he didn't reverse it
    - So Elkanah is obligated to pay the associated offering
  - But Hannah refused to accompany her husband
    - She wasn't required to make the trip
    - And she says she won't take Samuel to the priests until the day comes to give him up
    - Clearly, she's not going back on her vow to the Lord

- She says she will keep the boy only long enough to wean him, but this was considerably more heartbreaking than it may have sounded
  - In the ancient times, weaning traditionally took place at the age of five
  - So as hard as it would be for anyone to give up their child, this woman is giving up a five year old son
  - This is no small sacrifice for this mother

**1Sam. 1:24** Now when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with a three-year-old bull and one ephah of flour and a jug of wine, and brought him to the house of the LORD in Shiloh, although the child was young.

**1Sam. 1:25** Then they slaughtered the bull, and brought the boy to Eli.

**1Sam. 1:26** She said, "Oh, my lord! As your soul lives, my lord, I am the woman who stood here beside you, praying to the LORD.

**1Sam. 1:27** "For this boy I prayed, and the LORD has given me my petition which I asked of Him.

**1Sam. 1:28** "So I have also dedicated him to the LORD; as long as he lives he is dedicated to the LORD." And he worshiped the LORD there.

- Hannah knew this day would come, and as promised she brought Samuel to the Lord
  - She brought a significant thanks offering with the boy
    - A bull, which was very expensive
    - A large quantity of flour and wine
    - The nature of items she brought were evidence of her great thankfulness
  - After she performed the sacrifice, she presented her son to Eli
    - He must have recognized the mother yet still been surprised to see her deliver a boy into her hands
    - So she explains why he's about to receive this young child as a ward of the tabernacle
    - He was the answer to prayer, and the time has come to make good on her part of the agreement

- In v.28, she declares that Samuel will be dedicated to the Lord
  - The word for dedicated in Hebrew conveys the idea of giving something completely to the Lord
    - She was holding nothing back
    - And because she gave up her son, Israel gained a prophet and kingmaker
  - Samuel is one of the most important prophets of the Old Testament
    - Not only did he write major parts of the books that go by his name, but he also likely wrote Ruth and Judges
    - This man was a gift back to the Jewish people
    - A gift made possible by a mother's sacrifice
  - Hannah's choice to give up Samuel is a beautiful example of how all God's children should respond to His gifts
    - Whatever the Lord has given us should be made available to the Lord for His use
    - Paul tells us to make our lives a living sacrifice, and this is what that looks like
    - Holding nothing back, giving Him our all
    - And when we do that, He can take our sacrifices and make them into so much more than we can imagine
- Notice at the end of v.28 we're told that "he" worshipped the Lord there
  - The "he" is a reference to Samuel
    - Samuel begins to worship the Lord from the start of his time with Eli's family
    - The Lord begins to raise this boy
    - If you wonder how Hannah would leave her son in the hands of a man like Eli, consider she wasn't leaving Samuel with Eli
    - She was leaving Samuel with the Lord

- If the Lord gave Samuel to Hannah, then He has a plan for Samuel, and so she can trust the Lord with Samuel...even in the hands of a man like Eli
  - This is the full impact of living with a trust in God's sovereignty in our daily lives
  - We have to learn to act with the trust we claim to have
  - For example, can He take care of our kids when we aren't there?
- In fact, the story of Eli and his sons will make clear that it's God sovereign will that acts to create outcomes in the lives of each person
  - Obedience brings blessing
  - But regardless of whether we obey or not, the Lord's will be done
- After this dedication, Hannah praises the Lord in song, recorded in the first part of chapter 2

**1Sam. 2:1** Then Hannah prayed and said,  
 "My heart exults in the LORD;  
 My horn is exalted in the LORD,  
 My mouth speaks boldly against my enemies,  
 Because I rejoice in Your salvation.

**1Sam. 2:2** "There is no one holy like the LORD,  
 Indeed, there is no one besides You,  
 Nor is there any rock like our God.

**1Sam. 2:3** "Boast no more so very proudly,  
 Do not let arrogance come out of your mouth;  
 For the LORD is a God of knowledge,  
 And with Him actions are weighed.

**1Sam. 2:4** "The bows of the mighty are shattered,  
 But the feeble gird on strength.

**1Sam. 2:5** "Those who were full hire themselves out for bread,  
 But those who were hungry cease to hunger.  
 Even the barren gives birth to seven,  
 But she who has many children languishes.

**1Sam. 2:6** "The LORD kills and makes alive;  
 He brings down to Sheol and raises up.

**1Sam. 2:7** "The LORD makes poor and rich;  
 He brings low, He also exalts.

[1Sam. 2:8](#) “He raises the poor from the dust,  
 He lifts the needy from the ash heap  
 To make them sit with nobles,  
 And inherit a seat of honor;  
 For the pillars of the earth are the LORD’S,  
 And He set the world on them.

[1Sam. 2:9](#) “He keeps the feet of His godly ones,  
 But the wicked ones are silenced in darkness;  
 For not by might shall a man prevail.

[1Sam. 2:10](#) “Those who contend with the LORD will be shattered;  
 Against them He will thunder in the heavens,  
 The LORD will judge the ends of the earth;  
 And He will give strength to His king,  
 And will exalt the horn of His anointed.”

[1Sam. 2:11](#) Then Elkanah went to his home at Ramah. But the boy ministered to the LORD before Eli the priest.

- Hannah’s song sounds like it was sung right in Penninah’s face
  - This song is a close match to the one David sings at the end of 2Samuel
    - Both begin with a reference to the strength of the Lord as a horn and a rock
    - Both speak of a deliverer and salvation
    - Both end with a mention of His anointed
  - These two songs serve as bookends to the entire book of Samuel
    - And they both teach a similar lesson about the Lord and His ruling over His people
    - In fact, Hannah’s song serves as a roadmap for understanding the rest of this book and 2 Samuel
- Hannah starts by declaring she can speak boldly and find strength in the face of her enemies because she finds her joy in the salvation God brings
  - In v.2 she echoes that there is no other rock, no other god besides the Lord
    - Knowing that the Lord is true and is seated on His throne, men should cease their own boasting

- Men should recognize that the Lord is never not reigning over Creation
- Even when things seem to be going against us and the world is falling apart, the Lord is still the one orchestrating all these events
- He is a God of knowledge she says in v.3
  - He weighs every action He takes
  - In other words, everything God does has purpose and meaning
  - And the consequences of every action are considered and included in His planning
  - Simply put, there is never a “Plan B” with God
- Furthermore, the Lord places His strength on the side of the weak, not the mighty
  - There is a familiar phrase people throw around claiming it’s a quote from the Bible
    - They say “the Lord helps those who help themselves”
    - That statement does not appear in the Bible
    - More importantly, that *concept* doesn’t isn’t biblical either
  - The Lord is inclined not to help those who help themselves
    - Instead, He’s inclined to help those who know they can’t help themselves and appeal to Him for the help they need
    - And the Lord delights to assist those who gird themselves with His strength
  - In v. 5 Hannah points out that those who have plenty still hire themselves out to work to gain more
    - Meanwhile, those who are hungry are fed by the Lord
    - And those who have many children still languish because their children aren’t a comfort to them
    - While the barren woman is blessed with seven children she never expected

- The Lord helps those who can't help themselves
- And none of us can truly help ourselves, but sometimes we make the mistake of thinking we can
- And we run the risk of not leaving room for God to bless us in our dependence
- From here, Hannah moves to existential issues under God's control
  - He brings both life and death as he sees fit
    - He determines the destination of all men's souls, whether Hell or Heaven
    - He also sets the station of our lives
    - Some will be poor
    - Some will be rich
    - This is also in God's plan
  - But the Lord creates the poor and needy Hannah says so that He can show Himself strong and compassionate as He raises them up
    - And the Lord has the power to raise up the poorest and place them at the table of kings
    - He can take shepherd boys and make them king
    - For the Lord is in control of all men's lives and delights to show His power as He moves men like pieces on a chess board
- In v.9, Hannah moves finally into questions of God's grace in the lives of men
  - The Lord is working to keep the feet of His godly ones
    - Godly refers to those who by faith have been saved and made children of God
    - And these the Lord "keeps" so that they remain His forever
  - But those who wicked, which is all who do not know the Messiah sent to die in our place, will be silenced in darkness of Hell
    - The plan God has authored for our salvation works this way to preclude anyone from pointing to their own strength as a means of salvation

- No man will prevail by strength
- Instead, we must prevail in the strength of the Lord
- And that strength is found in the Anointed One sent on our behalf
  - In v.10 Hannah ends by declaring the coming Messiah as King for God's people
  - The Lord will judge the earth and give strength to His King
  - The anointed who will be exalted
  - This song forms a loose outline of the books of Samuel, and we'll refer back to it from time to time as we study the rest of the book
- To end tonight, in v.11 we're told that the family returns home but Samuel stays with Eli
  - The story follows Samuel to tell the story of his new home
    - He has brothers who serve as contrast to his godliness
    - And his new father, Eli, is a man with many problems of his own
  - Remember, this is the time of Judges when men did what was right in their own eyes
    - Furthermore, the men are weak leaders in their homes
    - Eli will represent that clearly
    - Nevertheless, the Lord is raising Samuel
    - So despite the poor family dynamic, Samuel turns out OK