

Week 29

1 Samuel

Key Verse: *No one is holy like the Lord, For there is none besides You, Nor is there any rock like our God. 1 Samuel 2:2 NKJV*

If you're reading the Old Testament and it's not leading you towards Jesus, you're heading the wrong way on a one way street. Our God is a saving God. In Old Testament history even though His people reject Him over and over, He sent messengers as representatives to bring them back to the place of repentance.

Oliver Cromwell said over three centuries ago, "What are all histories but God manifesting Himself." This is especially true of the Bible, because there we have the account of God in the history of mankind to bring about the true Savior of the world.

In the book of Judges we see there is no king for the nation of Israel. Israel was under anarchy (Webster-having no ruler; absence of government). Every tribe was independent of the other (Judges 17:6) and ruled by judges. These tribes of people were spread out over a large area of land. If anyone of these tribes was threatened by an enemy, volunteers from other tribes would come to their aid.

Judges could be described as a book of no "kings", and I Samuel could be described as a book of "man's" king because they demanded that a king rule over them.

As you read 1 Samuel you will see the good and the bad of men and women in history, but it is the Lord of history who accomplishes His purpose despite the actions of men.

Chapter 1 of 1 Samuel begins with the tears of a barren woman who had gone with her husband to Shiloh, to worship and sacrifice to the Lord. While there worshipping the Lord, Hannah (meaning woman of grace) presented herself as a living sacrifice. Because she gave out of a heart of unselfishness, the next generation would be planted. Her commitment was to God. She trusted Him and left an example of determined devotion to all mothers. God answered her prayer and uses her son Samuel to establish a new line of prophets after Moses and to anoint Saul, who failed with a heart of pride and David who succeeded with a heart for God.

The Lord is mentioned over sixty times in 1 Samuel chapters 1-3. Why? He is the main character! People and events in scripture are said to be "salvation history" and that history leads up to God's perfect plan to send a Savior into the world. He is the Lord of Hosts, and His perfect plan will be accomplished using people.

God desires to use each of us to accomplish His purpose. The question is, will we allow Him to? Those with a repentant heart, who are willing, submissive and obedient, can be used.

Within the historical narrative of 1 Samuel, key themes are found. One of them is the rise of monarchy (the undivided rule or absolute sovereignty by a single person) in Israel. This period of history clearly shows us that leaders must be lead by theocracy (the rule of God), not by religious traditions, culture, desires of men, or situations.

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1 Samuel 1-7

Day One: Read 1 Samuel 1:1-23

There are seven characters in this small portion of scripture, Elkanah, Hannah, Peninnah, Eli, Eli's sons and Samuel. Pay close attention to each one's role in this story.

1. Elkanah was a Levite who honored God but had fallen into the culture of his time. (1 Chronicles 6:16, 22-27). In 1 Samuel 1:2, what does it say he has done that goes against God's plan for marriage? (Genesis 2:24-25; Exodus 20:14; Malachi 2:15; 1 Corinthians 7:2)

2. Marriage is sacred according to God's Word, how is our current culture violating God's law?

Matthew 5:27; Exodus 20:14 _____

Roman 1:26-27; Leviticus 18:22 _____

Genesis 28:1; Deuteronomy 7:3-4 _____

3. Who did Elkanah love the most and why could she not have children?

As we look at the biblical events in history we see the hand of God at work even in barrenness as we recall also the stories of Sarah and Rachel. (Genesis 21:1-7; Genesis 30:22-24)

We all have longings and dreams that we would like to see fulfilled. Maybe it's children, a husband, a promotion, a number of things but just because God has not answered yet, does not mean He doesn't care. He may be saying wait for my perfect timing or I have something better in store for you that will fulfill My purpose. Trust Me.

4. After one of the festival meals in Shiloh, (1 Samuel 9-11) where did Hannah go? _____
What did she do? _____
What was her promise? _____

Eli the priest watched as Hannah poured out her heart to God without audible words. Thinking she was drunk with wine he reprimands her. (1 Samuel 1:13-14)

When we give our best to the Lord, it's not unusual to be criticized by people who should be encouraging. Consider Moses who met opposition not only from his sister and brother but those who had followed him out of Egypt (Numbers 12:1-3; Exodus 14:11). David danced before the Lord in praise for what God had done and was criticized by his wife (2 Samuel 6:20-21). Mary was criticized by one of the apostles for

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using the oil to anoint Jesus' feet (Luke 7:37-46). God commended all of these for giving their best acknowledging Him.

Eli was quick to judge Hannah for a heart of devotion, yet he was tolerant of the sins of his two sons as we will see in 1 Samuel 2:22-36. After Hannah explained why she cried out to God in such a manner, Eli took a step back.

5. Hannah laid her petition before the Lord with a pure heart. She was being honest with God about her desire for a son and she trusted Him to answer. Out of a heart of gratitude she gave that son back to the Lord before she ever held him. (Psalm 10:17; Psalm 9:10) Do you remember a time when your prayer was laid bare before the Lord? How was that prayer answered or are you still waiting on His answer? (You might want to share your answer with the group if you feel led. If not write it down for your own reflection.)

6. Why could Hannah leave that day with a different attitude than she came with? (1 Samuel 1:17-18) What happen when she returned home? (1 Samuel 1:20)

Hannah named her son Samuel. The Hebrew word sa-al means "asked" and sama means "heard", and el is one of the names for God, so Samuel's name means "heard of God" or "asked of God."

No doubt Hannah must have shared with her husband Elkanah the vow she had made to God and according to Numbers 30, he could have annulled her vow, but he didn't. The next three years when Elkanah goes to Shiloh to worship, Hannah asks if she can stay home and wean the boy. During this time Hannah prepares little Samuel for the time he will go live at the temple.

Prayer Focus: Use Psalm 66 to praise God for answered prayer.

Day Two: 1 Samuel 1:24-2:11; Psalm 113; Luke 1:46-55 - How can a heart once in sorrow spring forth in praise? When we are in the mourning process, we can scarcely conceive of joy coming out of it. But as we watch Hannah exercised her faith, we see her come forth with praise. Hannah's prayer is the fruit of an intimate relationship with God developed in the mist of trial. That is why she can give her son back to the Lord so easily, she trusts in the One her heart had always rejoiced in.

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7. After the child was weaned what took place? (1 Samuel:24-28)

It's hard to imagine what it would have been like to have this child for 3 years or more and then give him up. Hannah had dedicated this child to the Lord before she ever conceived him. She knew in her heart that he was never really hers but he was loaned to her to love and nourish. God was going to use him in the future of the nation.

8. Has there been a time you had to give up something or someone but were still able to praise the Lord through it? (example: a job, moving from family, a house, death in the family)

When Hannah and Elkanah left to take their son and give him to the Lord, they take with them the necessary sacrifices to worship the Lord. In Exodus 13:11-16, the first born son had to be redeemed by a sacrifice. Hannah and Elkanah was giving their son as a living sacrifice to the Lord, who would serve the Lord and Israel.

After leaving her son she burst into a song of praise. When the burnt offering began, the song of the Lord began also. (2 Chronicles 29:27-28)

9. Hannah, David and Mary the mother of Jesus, prayed similar prayers of praise expressing the attributes of God. What are some of the attributes listed in each prayer?

Hannah (1 Samuel 2:1-10)

David (Psalm 113)

Mary (Luke 1:46-55)

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Prayer Focus: Personalize Hannah's Prayer, 1 Samuel 2:1-10

Day Three: 1 Samuel 2:12-36; 3:1-12

The Wicked Son's of Eli - The messenger of God warns Eli of judgment to come upon his sons.

10. What prophetic message did the messenger of God give to Eli? (1 Samuel 2:31-36)

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11. Why did the messenger of God give Eli this message? (1 Samuel 2:12; 17; 22)

The Calling of Samuel - Samuel was most likely around twelve years old, and had never heard the voice of God. God speaks three times before he responds.

12. Why did Samuel not respond? (Samuel 3:7) What did Eli tell him to do?

Eli, after having the boy come to him three times, realized it must be God speaking to him. He told him how to respond. Samuel as a young boy had heard about God but did not know him personally. As God began to call Samuel, Samuel must respond to His call. The fourth time not only did He call, but He stood at the foot of Samuel's bed. This time Samuel answered, "Speak for your servant hears." God gave him a message that was pretty weighty for an adult, let alone a child. (When God can't find adults who are willing to listen and obey, sometimes He uses a child to fulfill His purpose.)

Samuel was committed to the tasks he had been assigned in the sanctuary and when he woke that next morning he went about his normal task. It was not until Eli asked Samuel what God's message was, that he shared. Eli had already been told judgment was coming; now all he could do was wait for that day. When that day came, his sons would perish and his family would lose the privilege of the priesthood in the same day.

Prayer Focus: Lord, give me the heart of a child.

Day Four: 1 Samuel 4-5 - God's judgment is sure and not only did it come upon the people of that day it will come in our day. Sin does not go unpunished. Repentance is necessary in order to turn God's wrath. This story reveals the folly of Israel's notion that possession of the ark automatically guaranteed victory over their enemies.

13. Who did Israel go to war against and what happened? (1 Samuel 4) (The Philistines were non-Jewish and were known as the seafaring nation. They inhabited the Mediterranean coast of Canaan during the period of the Book of Judges).

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14. What did Hophni and Phinehas carry into battle? What happened to this item?

15. What happened to Hophni and Phinehas? What caused Eli's death and how did he die?

16. Where did the Philistines take the Ark of the Covenant and where did they place it? Why did they want to get rid of the Ark of the Covenant? (1 Samuel 5:1-4)
(History tells us Dagon was the primary God of the Philistines and was the god of fertility and crops. The idol was represented in the combination of both man and fish. The symbol of a fish in human form was really meant to represent fertility and the vivifying powers of nature and reproduction).

Dagon was worshiped in the more general society of Canaanite peoples. The Philistine immigrants adopted this element of Canaanite religion. (Dagon was also considered to be the father of Baal. Baal eventually assumed the position of god of fertility, which Dagon had previously occupied).

There were two other cities that the Ark of the Covenant was taken to, what were the names of those cities and what happened in those cities? (1 Samuel 5:8-12)

17. If you are a Christian, the presence of God dwells within you. What are some idols that we can place before us that brings dishonor to God?

Prayer Focus: Ask God to reveal anything that you have placed above Him.

Day 5: 1 Samuel 6-7 - The next two chapters describe how the ark of God was captured by the Philistines and then, after God wreaked havoc on several Philistine cities, how it was returned to Israel. These stories reveal the folly of Israel's notion that possession of the Ark automatically guaranteed victory over their enemy.

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When Samuel called Israel to repentance and renewed dedication to the Lord, the Lord intervened mightily in Israel's behalf and gave victory over the Philistines. This portion reaffirms the authority of Samuel as a divinely ordained leader; at the same time it provides evidence of divine protection and blessing for God's people when they place their confidence in the Lord and live in obedience to their covenant obligations.

18. After the Ark of the Covenant had been among the Philistine people for seven months what did they do? (1 Samuel 6:20-21)

19. After the Chest of God came back to Israel there was great joy but it was short lived. Why did God strike down 70 men of Beth Shemesh (1 Samuel 7:1)

20. After 20 years in Kiriath Jearim, Israel realizes the hand of God has been removed. What did Samuel say that restoration and repentance would involve?

21. How did God protect Israel during their time of assembly at Mizpah?

22. 2 Chronicles 7:14 tell us how the protective hand of God can remain on our country. What does it say?

Prayer Focus: Pray for our country.