

THE BOOK OF 1 SAMUEL SERIES

Begins the period of Israel's monarchy

The story of Israel's kings, particularly Israel's greatest king, David

As inspirational as the life of Israel's greatest king David, in the end he ends up being a disappointment

We learn that no human king is good enough

1 Samuel ultimately points us to the true king we are all searching for, who rules with perfect love, righteousness and justice, and that is Jesus Christ, who is the King of kings and Lord of lords

THE STORY OF HANNAH (1 Samuel 1:1-2:11)

Hannah was the mother of the prophet Samuel, who anointed both King Saul and King David

1) Hannah's Problem

Hannah was married to a man named Elkanah, who also had another wife named Peninnah

Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children

Hannah's problem was that she was unable to bear children

Walter Brueggemann QUOTE

"Barrenness in any ancient text or narrative is the effective metaphor of hopelessness, for without children, there was no foreseeable future for yourself, for your family, or for your people. Barrenness meant there was no human power to invent a future at all."

Timothy Keller: Having children was good for society, family, economically, politically, militarily, culturally

Hannah's struggles affected her sense of identity

Children represented security, status and a hope for the future

Both women and men alike can relate to Hannah and her struggle

A lot of our anxieties have to do with an uncertain future

Peninnah, Elkanah's other wife, had children and was seen as a "rival" and "provoker" to Hannah who didn't have children

Peninnah represents all the people who hold our shortcomings and failures against us, who want to keep us down because it makes them feel better, instead of lifting us up

Hannah doesn't find her comfort and refuge in romantic love (the idea that a lot of our problems would be solved if we fell in love) or by succumbing to society and culture (by taking matters into your own hands and going after what you want no matter the cost because society says you need it)

2) Hannah's Prayer

Hannah ROSE (stood up, pulled herself together, got up)

1 Samuel 1:9-11 (ESV)

9 After they had eaten and drunk in Shiloh, Hannah rose. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat beside the doorpost of the temple of the Lord. 10 She was deeply distressed and prayed to the Lord and wept bitterly. 11 And she vowed a vow and said, "O Lord of hosts, if you will indeed look on the affliction of your servant and remember me and not forget your servant, but will give to your servant a son, then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life, and no razor shall touch his head."

Hannah poured out her soul BEFORE THE LORD

1 Samuel 1:15-16 (ESV)

15 But Hannah answered, "No, my lord, I am a woman troubled in spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have been pouring out my soul before the Lord. 16 Do not regard your servant as a worthless woman, for all along I have been speaking out of my great anxiety and vexation."

Hannah doesn't just pray TO the Lord, Hannah is praying BEFORE the Lord

- When you pray to the Lord, there can be distance
- I am here and God is WAY OVER THERE
- OR, God *IS* here, *BUT* I'm hiding

Hannah poured out herself before God

3) Hannah's Peace

Hannah's prayer led to peace, from sorrow to confidence

1 Samuel 1:17-18 (NIV)

17 Eli answered, "Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of him." 18 She said, "May your servant find favor in your eyes." Then she went her way and ate something, and her face was no longer downcast.

Something changed after Hannah was done praying

She went her way and ate something, AND HER FACE WAS NO LONGER DOWNCAST

It's IMPORTANT TO KNOW that Hannah was no longer sad and this is BEFORE she ever has a son

All Hannah knew was that God had heard her request and she left her life into his hands

Hannah does not bargain with God because it would not make sense for her to pray for a son and then offer him up to God for his whole life (lifelong Nazirite vow, which was usually a temporary vow). The would defeat all the reasons for her wanting a child as explained in the first point (Hannah's problem).

Something shifted where Hannah went from wanting a child for herself to now leaving it up to God and saying I KNOW YOU HEARD MY PRAYER. I submit myself to you. Now, if you bless me with a child, the child will be FOR YOU

Hannah put her faith in God and trusted in who God is, the one who cares for and hears the prayers of the weak and the one who lifts up the weak and makes them strong

1 Samuel 2:4-5 (NLT)

4 The bow of the mighty is now broken, and those who stumbled are now strong. 5 Those who were well fed are now starving, and those who were starving are now full. The childless woman now has seven children, and the woman with many children wastes away.

Dale Ralph Davis QUOTE

"God's tendency is to make our total inability his starting point. Our hopelessness and our helplessness are no barrier to his work. Indeed our utter incapacity is often the prop he delights to use for his next act. This matter goes beyond the particular situations of biblical barren women. We are facing one of the principles of Yahweh's *modus operandi*. When his people are without strength, without resources, without hope, without human gimmicks-then he loves to stretch forth his hand from heaven. Once we see where God often begins we will understand how we may be encouraged."

"This passage also teaches that true power is to be found not in one's position in society but in one's posture before God." (Robert D. Bergen in 1,2 Samuel, The New American Commentary)

Application Questions

- 1) Hannah's struggle for a son affected her sense of identity and worth because children represented security, status and a hope for the future. As such, both women and men alike can relate to Hannah and her struggle. A lot of our anxieties have to do with an uncertain future. What are some anxieties you personally struggle with?
- 2) What pressures do you personally face from the others (and yourself) that you feel like you need to live up to?
- 3) Penninah, Elkanah's other wife, had children and was seen as a "rival" and "provoker" to Hannah who didn't have children. Penninah represents all the people who hold our shortcomings and failures against us, who want to keep us down because it makes them feel better, instead of lifting us up. Who are the Penninah's in your life?
- 4) Hannah doesn't find her comfort and refuge in romantic love (the idea that a lot of our problems would be solved if we fell in love) or by succumbing to society and culture (by taking matters into your own hands and going after what you want no matter the cost because society says you need it). In what areas do you tend to find or are tempted to find your comfort and refuge (outside of God)?
- 5) Hannah "ROSE" and prayed "BEFORE" the Lord. That is different than just praying TO the Lord. It entails being in the very presence of God. When was the last time you poured out your soul before God? What were the circumstances that led to this?
- 6) Hannah's sorrow turned into confidence through her prayers as she experienced God as worthy of putting our faith in and as a God who cares and hears our prayers, especially from those who are weak. What are some attributes of God do you need to experience and put your faith in that you tend to struggle with?